

"If it takes the entire army and navy to deliver a postal card in Chicago, that card will be delivered.": Labor, the Gilded Age, and The Pullman Strike

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Grade Level: 8th or 11th

Duration: 90 Minutes

Objectives:

1. Identify the causes, course and consequences of the Pullman Strike of 1894.
2. Determine the impacts the strike had on federal/presidential power, labor effectiveness, and the career of Eugene V. Debs.

Procedures:

1. Initiate the lesson by displaying a copy of **Resource Sheet 1** and asking students to explain. Solicit student responses and ask:
 - Why would the lack of rail traffic be such an issue?Explain to students that they will be serving as a member of Congress conducting a hearing on the events that led to this strike, and they will be asked to determine who/what was responsible for the problems stemming from the shut down of the railroads.
2. Introduce the key players and background on Pullman, the town of Pullman, the economic depression of 1894, the role of Eugene Debs. Information can be found at (<http://www.kentlaw.edu/ilhs/pullpar.htm>, <http://www.kentlaw.edu/ilhs/debstory.htm>, <http://history.osu.edu/Projects/1912/pullman.htm>, <http://www.stfrancis.edu/ba/ghkickul/stuwebs/btopics/works/PullmanStrike.htm>, <http://xroads.virginia.edu/~hyper/INCORP/pullman/pullman1.html>). Students should take notes on **Resource Sheet 4**.
3. Distribute to each student a copy of **Resource Sheet 2A-2K**. Inform students that they will be asked to represent this person's views regarding the events at Pullman at a Congressional Hearing investigating the strike.
4. Regroup so that students with the same sources are paired together. Have students discuss the source, compare answers to the questions, and decide what information they would like to present to Congress.
5. Call students to the stand by group (based on **Resource Sheet 2**). Use the following questions provided to structure their testimony. Students in the audience should take notes on the testimony on **Resource Sheet 4**. Potential questions for testimony:

Source A- William H. Carwardine, *The Pullman Strike*

- Who are you and what is your relationship to the events at Pullman?
- What are your feelings regarding Mr. Pullman?
- What or who do you believe caused the strike?
- What actions were taken that you feel made the situation at Pullman difficult to resolve?
- Is there anything else you would like to committee to know?

Source B: Richard T. Ely. "Pullman: A Social Study." *Harper's Magazine* 70 (February 1885): 452-466.

- Who are you and what is your relationship to the events at Pullman?
- Describe the town of Pullman?
- Is the town of Pullman as good as advertised?
- What or who do you believe caused the strike?
- Is there anything else you would like to committee to know?

Source C: Statement of the Pullman Strikers

- Who are you and what is your relationship to the events at Pullman?
- Why did you choose to go on strike?
- Is it true that Mr. Pullman reduced your wages but did not reduce rents within the town of Pullman?
- Are rents in Pullman higher or lower than rents in the surrounding towns?
- What are your feelings regarding Mr. Pullman and his treatment of his workers?
- Is there anything else you would like to committee to know?

Source D: Theodore Rhodie

- Who are you and what is your relationship to the events at Pullman?
- What has happened to your wages?
- What problems have been caused by the reduction in your wages?
- How were you treated by management?
- Is your rent in Pullman higher or lower than the rent in surrounding towns?
- Is there anything else you would like to committee to know?

Source E: George Pullman

- Who are you and what is your relationship to the events at Pullman?
- Why did you reduce the wages of your workers?
- What efforts were made, besides the reduction in wages, to make the company more competitive during the economic decline?
- Why didn't you lower the rents for workers living in Pullman?
- In your estimation, has the strike helped or hurt the workers?
- Is there anything else you would like to committee to know?

Source F: United States Strike Commission Final Report: Information about the Pullman Company

- Who are you and what is your relationship to the events at Pullman?
- What impact did the economic depression have on the Pullman Company?
- Do you believe that the choices made by the Pullman Company during the depression were in the best interests of the workers or management?
- What are your conclusions about the rents paid by Pullman workers?
- Is there anything else you would like to committee to know?

Source G: United States Strike Commission: The Congressional Perspective on the Causes of the Strike

- Who are you and what is your relationship to the events at Pullman?
- Why did the Pullman Company close its Detroit plant?
- Why does Congress feel that the Pullman Company was kept running during the depression?
- Why can't workers move from Pullman?
- What do you feel is more responsible for the strike: the actions of the union or of the Pullman Company?
- Is there anything else you would like to committee to know?

Source H: Grover Cleveland, *The Government in the Chicago Strike of 1894*. Princeton University Press, 1913.

- Who are you and what is your relationship to the events at Pullman?
- What or who do you believe caused the strike?
- Why do you feel you were justified in getting involved in a private matter occurring in one state?
- What does the mail have to do with a strike?
- Is there anything else you would like to committee to know?

Source I: The Federal Government and the Pullman Strike: Eugene V. Debs' Reply to Grover Cleveland's Magazine Article by Eugene V. Debs Written circa July 7, 1904. Published in *Appeal to Reason* (Aug. 27, 1904), pp. 1-2.

- Who are you and what is your relationship to the events at Pullman?
- What or who do you believe caused the strike?
- Why do you feel President Cleveland was not justified in getting involved in a private matter occurring in one state?
- What does the mail have to do with a strike?
- Is there anything else you would like to committee to know?

6. Conclude the testimony by asking:

- What issues seems to be debated by management and the workers?
- How do the views of labor and management differ?

7. Discuss the situation by asking:

- Do you agree with the actions of the workers to unionize?

- Do you believe that George Pullman had his workers best interests in mind when he created Pullman; reduced wages; etc.?
- Was President Cleveland Constitutionally justified in his use of federal troops to quell the strike?

Promote discussion by displaying a copy of **Resource Sheet 5** and asking student to interpret the cartoon and determine who the artists believes was most responsible for the problems at Pullman.

Assessment:

Assess students comprehension of the causes, course, and consequences of the Pullman Strike by distributing **Resource Sheet 6** and having students respond to the writing prompt.

“If it takes the entire army and navy to deliver a postal card in Chicago, that card will be delivered.”: Labor, the Gilded Age, The Pullman Strike

Notes on George Pullman, his town, the economy, Eugene Debs, and the strike:

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	Information from Testimony	Background on source	Information
A	William H. Carwardine. <i>The Pullman Strike</i>	This source was written by the Methodist Minister that served the workers in Pullman. The author lived in the town and he actively tried to aid the workers during negotiations	
B	Richard T. Ely. "Pullman: A Social Study." <i>Harper's Magazine</i> 70 (February 1885): 452-466.	Richard Theodore Ely was accused by the University of Wisconsin Board of Regents of supporting labor union strikes and teaching socialism. A hearing resulted in dismissal of these charges. It was shortly after this episode that he wrote the article on Pullman.	
C	Statement of the Pullman Strikers	This statement from a Pullman striker was delivered at the June 1894 Chicago convention of the American Railway Union (ARU).	
D	Testimony on the Part of Striking Employees Testimony by Theodore Rhodie	This statement from a Pullman striker was provided to a Congressional committee investigation the causes of the strike	
E	George Pullman	In this open letter in the <i>Chicago Herald</i> in June 1894, as the strike began, George Pullman explained his motives for cutting wages during the economic depression of 1893	
F	United States Strike Commission Final Report: Information about the Pullman Company	The information comes from the final report of the United States Strike Commission report on the 1894 strike at Pullman. The commission was made up of three members, none of which represented labor	
G	United States Strike Commission: The Congressional Perspective on the Causes of the Strike	The information comes from the final report of the United States Strike Commission report on the 1894 strike at Pullman. The commission was made up of three members, none of which represented labor.	
H	Grover Cleveland, <i>The Government in the Chicago Strike of 1894</i> . Princeton University Press, 1913.	Written by the former president nineteen years after the strike.	
I	The Federal Government and the Pullman Strike: Eugene V. Debs' Reply to Grover Cleveland's Magazine Article	This article was written for <i>McClure's Magazine</i> in reply to Cleveland, but the editor of that publication refused to publish it, although permitting	

**William H. Carwardine. *The Pullman Strike*. Chicago: Charles H. Kerr and Company, 1894. [format: book], [genre: history; letter; memoir; narrative]. Permission: Northern Illinois University
<http://lincoln.lib.niu.edu/file.php?file=carwardine.html>**

...Now the public mind reverts to the original cause. What made these intelligent employees at Pullman strike? Were they rash and inconsiderate, or were they driven to their course by certain conditions over which they had no control, and which justified them in their action?...

...wish to be fair and impartial. I have seen many things to admire as well as many to condemn. My sympathies have gone out to the striking employees. Never did men have a cause more just — never did corporation with equal pretenses grind men more unmercifully...

...a word regarding Mr. Pullman himself... find many things worthy of consideration. All honor to Mr. Pullman for the magnificent business sagacity in the development of the Pullman palace car idea. Few men are capable of bringing to a successful issue such marvelous results. It is no small thing for one man to be able to create a vast productive industry, which is one of the century's civilizing strides, and which, from a small beginning, has reached a market value of \$50,000,000. It takes brains to do that sort of thing, and Mr. Pullman as a financier is one of the brainiest men of his day.... am willing to accord honor to a man who has become rich as the result of the establishment of a great manufacturing industry. As a man of industry, possessed of a great idea and tenaciously clinging to that idea until he has wrought it out to completion, rising as a poor boy in an obscure village, to a great position as a business man, possessed no doubt with a desire to better his fellow-man, retaining a personal character which, we have every reason to believe, is honest and pure, he is an example in these things that we can hold up before the youth of our land, and bid them imitate.

But when Mr. Pullman, as a public man, stands before the world and demands of us that we regard him as a benefactor to his race... I fail utterly to see the point. The facts are not in harmony with the requirements, demanded... Determination and resolution have turned into arrogance and obstinacy. The same disposition that has kept him aloof in all these months and years of the past from the active life of his town and estranged him from the heart of his employees, is indicated in the cold and arrogant language of his ultimatum when appealed to by President and Mayor and public in general — "Nothing to arbitrate." What a golden opportunity this gentleman has had in the past years of his life to immortalize himself in the hearts of his countrymen, to work out some problem in the solution of the industrial question, to advance the true interest of his city and his country, and yet how utterly has he failed!

As all the facts come to light, it is plain that Mr. Pullman could have prevented the great strike, with its attendant consequences, without sacrificing either his dignity or his money. Appealed to by the city, state, and federal government, while thousands of dollars' worth of property was being destroyed, and the trade of half the country was paralyzed, human lives were being sacrificed, and bloody riot hung like a pall over the city and country, nevertheless this gentleman, having fled from the scene of action, in his secure and comfortable retreat by the seashore, absolutely refused to make even a formal concession. So utterly wrong was his attitude that it is no wonder that he has reaped the censure and universal condemnation of the press and public opinion of the country. He can never recover from the moral effects of his untenable and unpatriotic action.

As the champion of labor, standing in direct contrast to Mr. Pullman, is Mr. Eugene V. Debs, President of the American Railway Union... believe he is thoroughly sincere in the cause he advocates, a born leader, deliberate and self-possessed, somewhat of an enthusiast, a man of more than ordinary ability. I make no apology for his attitude in the matter of the "boycott," except that he was forced by the logic of his position into his fight with the Railroad Managers... Mr. Pullman was obstinate, Mr. Debs determined. I know that Debs has always counseled moderation, and positively demanded of his followers to commit no violence. Had all the strikers been of like mind, and had the mob elements, the rabble, and cheap foreign labor imported to this country by such gentlemen as the Railroad Managers, not taken advantage of the situation to commit violence, the condition of things would have been different. Until the American people will recognize the true merits of the laboring man's position and demands, until corporations shall cease to be tyrannical and millionaires arrogant, until there shall be more of the love of God and love for fellow-man in the hearts of rich and poor alike, then, and not till then, will society be rid of such men as Pullman and the mission of such as Mr. Debs will cease...

Let us review briefly the history of the strike... Then commenced the cutting of wages, and consequent abuse on the part of the local administration complained of so bitterly by the men. Mutterings of dissatisfaction, discontent and continual resentings of petty abuses were heard on all sides during the long and bitter winter... Repeated cutting of the wages with no corresponding reduction of rent exasperated the employees. I was aware that the men were being organized into local unions. Hearing of the success of the American Railway Union, and casting about for someone to champion their cause, these unions appealed to Messrs. Debs and Howard of the American Railway Union...

... proof thereof he agreed to permit an inspection of his books. He stated further that he could not reduce the rents of his houses. He agreed that none of the committee waiting on him should be discharged, and also stated that their grievances should be investigated.... Mr. Pullman had given out that he had taken contracts for new work at a loss, because out of love for his employees he desired to keep the shops open. Unfortunately, the men had never seen any evidences of paternal love on the part of Mr. Pullman in his previous dealings with them, and they could not disabuse their minds of the thought that perhaps he was keeping the shops open, and taking work at a loss in order to get his returns in rent. Also they felt that his refusal to reduce their rents was unjust....

... From the 11th of May, 1894, until the present writing (July 23rd, 1894) the Pullman strike has been a remarkable exhibition of orderliness and correct deportment. It has been a "model strike" so far as Pullman is concerned. Up to the evening of July 5th, in the seventh week of the Strike, not the slightest unusual infringement of law had taken place. The universal comment was complimentary to the decorum of the strikers... No wonder, for the strike leaders gave out repeatedly at their nightly meetings that order would be positively enforced, and warning was given to keep clear of the saloons in Kensington and Roseland...

...I presume that if I had lived in Chicago instead of Pullman, and knew nothing about the Pullman strike except what I read in three of the leading Chicago newspapers, I would have raised my hand in holy horror against these wicked Pullman strikers and all belonging to their side, and would have sustained Mr. Pullman and his company.

But living as I do in Pullman, having studied the situation carefully for two years, and being absolutely independent of the company and employees, I know enough to enable me to read between the lines of these beautiful Pullman statements and note the fallacies of their position.

I hold Mr. Pullman responsible for the whole situation by virtue of his presidency of the company, and the marvelous influence he exercises over the whole Pullman system. He is the King, and he demands to the full measure of his capacity all that belongs to the insignia of royalty. It is about as difficult for an ordinary man, one of his employees, to see Mr. Pullman as for a subject of Russia to see the Czar. Every official of his company is absolutely subject to his authority. He expects it. He will have it...

...Let the general public remember one thing which has caused the Pullman employees to stand in a wrong light before the world. They are quoted as wanting the wages of '93 for work done at a loss... The wages are paid every two weeks. Two checks are given to each employee — one a rent check, the other a pay check. Wages are paid at the bank. When they go to the bank to receive their two weeks' pay, the half month's rent is taken out, and the pay check cashed. The scenes enacted at the bank during last winter were pitiable. Not only was the current rent urgently demanded, but back rent was asked for under circumstances in many cases entirely uncalled for. After deducting rent, the men invariably had only from one to six dollars or so on which to live for two weeks.... The average cut in wages was 33 1-3 per cent; in some cases it was as much as 40 per-cent, and in many was fifty per cent. These cuts in wages without corresponding reduction in rents were very severe, and largely produced the dissatisfaction which resulted in the strike... In this whole question of wages the public must bear in mind that the wage difficulty was not the whole trouble. Other things being equal, the men could have borne with more grace the reduction of wages. But there was personal abuse and tyrannical dealing in the shops, no reduction of rents... It was, therefore, not surprising in many cases that the wages were so low that with the high rents they could not live.

When Mr. Pullman said that he had "nothing to arbitrate" he evidently must have forgotten for the time being the high rents and exorbitant prices demanded for water and gas in his "model town."... Mr. Pullman objects to the arbitration of his rents and compares himself and company to the ordinary real estate dealer. This is not a fair comparison. The Pullman Palace Car Company is so established that all its interests are clearly related one to another. The town of Pullman and the shops are inseparable. They are intimately related to each other. The demand of the men for reduction of rents is reasonable and ought to be heeded; above all, when they are expected to live in his houses, he should be willing, while cutting their income, to reduce their expenses

"If it takes the entire army and navy to deliver a postal card in Chicago, that card will be delivered.": Labor, the Gilded Age, and The Pullman Strike (B)

The Pullman Strike began May 11, 1894, with a walkout by Pullman Palace Car Company factory workers after negotiations over reduced wages failed. These workers appealed for support to the American Railway Union (ARU), which argued unsuccessfully for arbitration. On June 20, the ARU gave notice that beginning June 26 its membership would no longer work trains that included Pullman cars. The boycott, although centered in Chicago, crippled railroad traffic nationwide, until the federal government intervened in early July, first with a comprehensive injunction essentially

**Richard T. Ely. "Pullman: A Social Study." *Harper's Magazine* 70 (February 1885): 452-466.
Harper's Magazine 70 (February 1885): 452-66.**

...the most extensive experiment of this [to make life bearable for industrial workers] character is that now in progress at Pullman, Illinois. It is social experimentation on a vast scale, and this is its significance.

Pullman...was founded less than four years ago by the Pullman Palace Car Company, whose president and leading spirit is Mr. George M. Pullman. Its purpose was to provide both a centre of industry and homes for the employé[sic] of the company and such additional laborers as might be attracted to the place by other opportunities to labor...

The questions to be answered are these: Is Pullman a success from a social standpoint? Is it worthy of imitation? Is it likely to inaugurate a new era in society? If only a partial success, what are its bright features and what its dark features?

Very gratifying is the impression of the visitor who passes hurriedly through Pullman and observes only the splendid provision for the present material comforts of its residents...

...Contrary to what is seen ordinarily in laborers' quarters, not a dilapidated door-step nor a broken window, stuffed perhaps with old clothing, is to be found in the city. The streets of Pullman, always kept in perfect condition, are wide and finely macadamized, and young shade trees on each side now ornament the town, and will in a few years afford refreshing protection from the rays of the summer sun.

...A public square, arcade, hotel, market, or some large building is often set across a street so ingeniously as to break the regular line, yet without in convenience to traffic. Then at the termination of long streets a pleasing view greets and relieves the eye--a bit of water, a stretch of meadow, a clump of trees, or even one of the large but neat workshops.

The interior of the houses affords scarcely less gratification than their exterior. Even the humblest suite of rooms in the flats is provided with water, gas, and closets, and no requisite of cleanliness is omitted...

Outside of the home one finds other noteworthy provisions for the comfort, convenience, and well-being of the residents in Pullman. There is a large Markethouse...The dealers in meat and vegetables are concentrated in the Markethouse. The finest building in Pullman is the Arcade...In the Arcade one finds offices, shops, the bank, theatre, library, etc. As no shops or stores are allowed in the town outside of the Arcade and Markethouse all shopping in Pullman is done under roof--a great convenience in wet weather, and a saving of time and strength. The theatre, situated in the Arcade as just mentioned, seats eight hundred people, and is elegantly and tastefully furnished...

The library, which opens on this balcony, contains six thousand volumes, the gift of Mr. Pullman, and numerous periodicals, among which were noticed several likely to be of special importance to mechanics, such as the *Railway Age*, the *Iron Age*, *Scientific American* and *Popular Science Monthly*...

...The educational facilities of Pullman are those generally afforded in larger American villages by the public-school system. The school trustees are elected by the citizens, and rent of the Pullman Company a handsome building, which harmonizes in architecture and situation with the remainder of the town...

The Pullman companies retain everything. No private individual owns to-day a square rod of ground or a single structure in the entire town. No organization, not even a church, can occupy any other than rented quarters...

...It should be constantly borne in mind that all investments and outlays in Pullman are intended to yield financial returns satisfactory from a purely business point of view. The minimum return expected is six per centum on expenditure, and the town appears to have yielded a far higher percentage on cost up to the present time...

It pays also in another way. The wholesome, cheerful surroundings enable the men to work more constantly and more efficiently. The healthy condition of the residents is a matter of general comment. The number of deaths has been about seven in a thousand per annum, whereas it has been about fifteen in a thousand in the rest of Hyde Park.

...The wages paid at Pullman are equal to those paid for similar services elsewhere in the vicinity. In a visit of ten days at Pullman no complaint was heard on this score which appeared to be well founded. Unskilled laborers--and they are perhaps one-fourth of the population--receive only \$130 a day; but there are other corporations about Chicago which

pay no more, and Pullman claims to pay only ordinary wages. Many of the mechanics earn \$2 50 or \$2 75 a day, some \$3 and \$4, and occasionally even more. Those who receive but \$130 have a hard struggle to live, after the rent and water tax are paid. On this point there is unanimity of sentiment, and Pullman does comparatively little for them, and the social problem in their case remains unsolved. They are crowded together in the cheap flats, which are put as much out of sight as possible, and present a rather dreary appearance, although vastly better than the poorer class of New York tenements...

...One is the perfect system of sewerage, similar to that which has been found so successful in Berlin, Germany. The sewerage is all collected in a great tank under the "water tower," and then pumped on to a large garden farm of one hundred and seventy acres, called the "Pullman Farm." ...

...Considerable care is taken to find suitable employment for those who in any way become incapacitated for their ordinary work. A watchman with a missing arm was seen, and a position as janitor was found for a man who had become partially paralyzed. These are but examples. Men temporarily injured receive full pay, save in cases of gross carelessness, when one dollar a day is allowed. Employés[sic] are paid with checks on the "Pullman Loan and Savings Bank," to accustom them to its use and encourage them to make deposits.

...In the way of material comforts and beautiful surroundings, Pullman probably offers to the majority of its residents quite as much as they are in a position to enjoy, and in many cases even more. There are those who do not feel it a hardship to live in a dark alley of a great city, and there are men and women at Pullman incapable of appreciating its advantages. But they are learning to do it, and many who go away dissatisfied return, because they cannot find elsewhere that to which they have become accustomed there. The pure air and perfect sanitary condition of the houses and of the entire city are more and more valued...

...Nobody regards Pullman as a real home, and, in fact, it can scarcely be said that there are more than temporary residents at Pullman. One woman told the writer she had been in Pullman two years, and that there were only three families among her acquaintances who were there when she came. Her reply to the question, "... It is indeed a sad spectacle. Here is a population of eight thousand souls where not one single resident dare speak out openly his opinion about the town in which he lives. One feels that one is mingling with a dependent, servile people. There is an abundance of grievances, but if their lives in Pullman one man who would give expression to them in print over his own name, diligent inquiry continued for ten days was not sufficient to find him.

...The desire of the American to acquire a home is justly considered most commendable and hopeful. It promotes thrift and economy, and the habits acquired in the effort to pay for it are often the foundation of a future prosperous career. It is a beginning in the right direction. Again, a large number of house owners is a safeguard against violent movements of social discontent. Heretofore laborers at Pullman have not been allowed to acquire any real property in the place. There is a repression here as elsewhere of any marked individuality. Everything tends to stamp upon residents, as upon the town, the character expressed in "machine made." Not only are strikes regarded as the chief of social sins...but individual initiative, even in affairs which concern the residents alone, is repressed. Once several of the men wanted to form a kind of mutual insurance association to insure themselves against loss of time in case of accident, but it was frowned down by the authorities, and nothing further has been heard of the matter. A lady attempted to found a permanent charitable organization to look after the poor and needy, but this likewise was discouraged, because it was feared that the impression might get abroad that there was pauperism in Pullman.

In looking over all the facts of the case the conclusion is unavoidable that the idea of Pullman is un-American. It is a nearer approach than anything the writer has seen to what appears to be the ideal of the great German Chancellor. It is not the American ideal. It is benevolent, well wishing feudalism, which desires the happiness of the people, but in such way as shall please the authorities...Pullman ought to be appreciated, and high honor is due Mr. George M. Pullman. He has at least attempted to do something lasting and far-reaching, and the benefits he has actually conferred upon a laboring population of eight thousand souls testify that his heart must be warm toward his poorer brother. Mr. Pullman has partially solved one of the great problems of the immediate present, which is a diffusion of the benefits of concentrated wealth among wealth-creators.

"If it takes the entire army and navy to deliver a postal card in Chicago, that card will be delivered.": Labor, the Gilded Age, The Pullman Strike (C)

The Pullman Strike began May 11, 1894, with a walkout by Pullman Palace Car Company factory workers after negotiations over reduced wages failed. These workers appealed for support to the American Railway Union (ARU), which argued unsuccessfully for arbitration. On June 20, the ARU gave notice that beginning June 26 its membership would no longer work trains that included Pullman cars. The boycott, although centered in Chicago, crippled railroad traffic nationwide, until the federal government intervened in early July, first with a comprehensive injunction essentially forbidding all boycott activity and then by dispatching regular soldiers to Chicago and elsewhere. The soldiers joined with local authorities in getting the trains running again. ARU president Eugene Victor Debs was arrested and subsequently

Statement of the Pullman Strikers

Mr. President and Brothers of the American Railway Union: We struck at Pullman because we were without hope. We joined the American Railway Union because it gave us a glimmer of hope. Twenty thousand souls, men, women, and little ones, have their eyes turned toward this convention today, straining eagerly through dark despondency for a glimmer of the heaven-sent message you alone can give us on this earth.

In stating to this body our grievances it is hard to tell where to begin. You all must know that the proximate cause of our strike was the discharge of two members of our grievance committee the day after George M. Pullman, himself, and Thomas H. Wickes, his second vice-president, had guaranteed them absolute immunity. The more remote causes are still imminent. Five reductions in wages, in work, and in conditions of employment swept through the shops at Pullman between May and December, 1893 the last was the most severe, amounting to nearly 30 percent, and our rents had not fallen. We owed Pullman \$70,000 when we struck May 11. We owe him twice as much today. He does not evict us for two reasons: One, the force of popular sentiment and public opinion; the other because he hopes to starve us out, to break through in the back of the American Railway Union, and to deduct from our miserable wages when we are forced to return to him the last dollar we owe him for the occupancy of his houses.

Rents all over the city in every quarter of its vast extent have fallen, in some cases to one-half. Residences, compared with which ours are hovels, can be had a few miles away at the prices we have been contributing to make a millionaire a billionaire. What we pay \$15 for in Pullman is leased for \$8 in Roseland; and remember that just as no man or woman of our 4,000 toilers has ever felt the friendly pressure of George M. Pullman's hand, so no man or woman of us all has ever owned or can ever hope to own one inch of George M. Pullman's land. Why, even the very streets are his. . . . He may debar any man . . . from walking in his highways. And those streets; do you know what he has named them? He says after the four great inventors in methods of transportation. And do you know what their names are? Why, Fulton, Stephenson, Watt, and Pullman. . . .

When we went to tell him our grievances he said we were all his "children." Pullman, both the man and the town, is an ulcer on the body politic. He owns the houses, the schoolhouses, and churches of God in the town he gave his once humble name. The revenue he derives from these, the wages he pays out with one hand—the Pullman Palace Car Company, he takes back with the other—the Pullman Land Association. He is able by this to bid under any contract car shop in this country. His competitors in business, to meet this, must reduce the wages of their men. This gives him the excuse to reduce ours to conform to the market. His business rivals must in turn scale down; so must he. And thus

the merry war—the dance of skeletons bathed in human tears—goes on, and it will go on, brothers, forever, unless you, the American Railway Union, stop it; end it; crush it out.

Our town is beautiful. In all these thirteen years no word of scandal has arisen against one of our women, young or old. What city of 20,000 persons can show the like? Since our strike, the arrests, which used to average four or five a day, has dwindled down to less than one a week. We are peaceable; we are orderly, and but for the kindly beneficence of kindly-hearted people in and about Chicago we would be starving. We are not desperate today, because we are not hungry, and our wives and children are not begging for bread. But George M. Pullman, who ran away from the public opinion that has arisen against him, like the genie from the bottle in the Arabian Nights, is not feeding us. He is patiently seated beside his millions waiting for what? To see us starve. We have grown better acquainted with the American Railway Union these convention days, and as we have heard sentiments of the noblest philanthropy fall from the lips of our general officers—your officers and ours—we have learned that there is a balm for all our troubles, and that the box containing it is in your hands today only awaiting opening to disseminate its sweet savor of hope

George M. Pullman, you know, has cut our wages from 30 to 70 percent. George M. Pullman has caused to be paid in the last year the regular quarterly dividend of 2 percent on his stock and an extra slice of 1 1/2 percent, making 9 1/2 percent on \$30,000,000 of capital. George M. Pullman, you know, took three contracts on which he lost less than \$5,000. Because he loved us? No. Because it was cheaper to lose a little money in his freight car and his coach shops than to let his workingmen go, but that petty loss, more than made up by us from money we needed to clothe our wives and little ones, was his excuse for effecting a gigantic reduction of wages in every department of his great works, of cutting men and boys and girls; with equal zeal, including everyone in the repair shops of the Pullman Palace cars on which such preposterous profits have been made. . . .

We will make you proud of us, brothers, if you will give us the hand we need. Help us make our country better and more wholesome. Pull us out of our slough of despond. Teach arrogant grinders of the faces of the poor that there is still a God in Israel, and if need be a Jehovah—a God of battles. Do this, and on that last great day you will stand, as we hope to stand, before the great white throne "like gentlemen unafraid."

Source: Statement of the Pullman Strikers, U.S. Strike Commission, *Report and Testimony on the Chicago Strike of 1894* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1895), 87–88. Reprinted in Thomas G. Manning, *The Chicago Strike of 1894* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1960), 2–4. From: <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5307/>.

"If it takes the entire army and navy to deliver a postal card in Chicago, that card will be delivered.": Labor, the Gilded Age, The Pullman Strike (D)

The Pullman Strike began May 11, 1894, with a walkout by Pullman Palace Car Company factory workers after negotiations over reduced wages failed. These workers appealed for support to the American Railway Union (ARU), which argued unsuccessfully for arbitration. On June 20, the ARU gave notice that beginning June 26 its membership would no longer work trains that included Pullman cars. The boycott, although centered in Chicago, crippled railroad traffic nationwide, until the federal government intervened in early July, first with a comprehensive injunction essentially forbidding all boycott activity and then by dispatching regular soldiers to Chicago and elsewhere. The soldiers joined with local authorities in getting the trains running again. ARU president Eugene Victor Debs was arrested and subsequently

Testimony on the Part of Striking Employees Testimony by Theodore Rhodie

August 16, 1894, Theodore Rhodie, being first duly sworn, testified as follows:

7. (Commissioner Wright): Are you one of the strikers at Pullman?

Ans. Yes, sir.

8. (Commissioner Wright): State what led you to strike, the cause, etc., in your own way?

Ans. About four years ago I had a job and there was another class of work they wanted me to do that nobody else could make a day's wages out of on piecework, and they wanted me to work in partnership with two or three or four other men, as many as might be necessary, to carry on that class of work, and whatever we made we were to divide equally, and I was to kind of oversee the work, that it was done properly and got out at the right time. I told them I would take the job under consideration and would see if I could get along with it, but if I could not make wages at it I would want my old place back. After they got me at it once I told them several times I did not like the job and would like to have my old place back, but I could not get it back; I was told I had to stay there or else get out. We get so after working a number of years at a certain class of work that we can make from \$2.65 to \$2.80 per day, working 10 3/4 hours per day; for work that I got \$9 per hundred last fall I only got \$4.25 at the time we struck. They kept cutting me down from last fall on the same kind of work and on the same amount of work we could not make \$1.25 per day out of it; I told the foreman it was impossible to make anything at it, and he said if I didn't like it I could quit. There are also many other things which led us to strike? the abuse, and I owe them for rent and I could not pay it, and I was in debt to my grocery man, to my butcher, and so on all along the line, and it was impossible for any of us to make a living.

9. (Commissioner Kernan): When you used the word abuse, what did you mean?

Ans. From the abuse the foreman gave us. They would talk to the men as though they were dogs. For instance, one time the foreman came up to me ? he was looking after some sash? and he said he understood there should no more sash come up. I told him if that was the case he should give the men in the cabinet shop an order not to send any up; that I had nothing to do with it; that I could not interfere with another man's business; that I was only to attend to my own department. He said, "Why don't you fix it?" I said, "I can not fix it.: He said, "Why can't you paint it up?" I said, "I can not do it and make a good job out of it." Then he said, "You had better ask somebody that can." I said, "Well, I will ask you. I have worked at this business now for twelve years, and I try to do the best I can, and will leave it to my foreman here whether I am doing my work as good as it can be done, or if they have anybody else here that can do it any better." He said, "If you can not do any better work than that you will have to quit," and said he was going to get somebody from St. Louis. Finally, he got a man from St. Louis and put him at it, but after it was done and went in the cars it was brought back, and I had to fix it up. The man from St.

Louis did not do it as good as I did. I had to fix it over, and when I asked for pay for doing it the answer was, "Oh, we have a contract. You understood we were to see that the work was done right, and because you did not do it right was the reason you had to do it over again."

10. (Commissioner Kernan): Didn't you get any pay for the time our spent fixing it over?

Ans. No, sir; these men experiment a good deal at our expense. For instance, they will buy new material without knowing anything about how it is going to work up, and if the work turns out bad the workmen have to turn right around and fix it up so as to make it go out, and if they ask for extra pay they will not give it; lots of times they get English varnish in there which can not be use in the shops only when the atmosphere strikes it just right; if the air is a little damp, the varnish goes back on us, and of course, it then cause a great deal of unnecessary work which should not be done. We have to do the job over again, sometimes two or three times, and get nothing for it. If you ask the management to pay you for the time, they say, no, they can not do that; but they can ask you to do the work for nothing, and if you don't lie to do it you can quit.

11. (Commissioner Wright): Do you live in one of the Pullman houses?

Ans. Yes, sir.

12. (Commissioner Wright): What rent do you pay?

Ans. Fifteen dollars rent and 71 cents for water.

13. (Commissioner Wright): How many rooms and what other accommodations do you have?

Ans. I have five rooms, part of a cellar, and part of a back yard.

14. (Commissioner Wright): How does the price you pay compare with the rent of similar houses with similar accommodations in adjoining localities?

Ans. You could get the same accommodations, I believe, at from \$7 to \$8 per month.

15. (Commissioner Wright): How large a lot of land belongs to your house?

Ans. I should say the frontage of those houses is from 16 to 20 feet.

16. (Commissioner Wright): How deep?

Ans. Thirty to 35 feet; that is, the house; the lot is deeper; I could not say just how deep.

17. (Commissioner Wright): Were you a member of any of the committees which attempted to secure a settlement of the difficulties at Pullman?

Ans. Yes, sir.

18. (Commissioner Wright): State what your experience was with reference to those efforts.

Ans. We sent a committee up to the management and they said they could do nothing for us.

19. (Commissioner Kernan): Were you on any of them?

Ans. No, sir.

20. (Commissioner Wright): I thought you said you were on a committee? we only want what you know of your own knowledge.

Ans. Well, I had nothing whatever to do with that part of it; I only know we sent committees there and they brought back reports.

21. (Commissioner Worthington): About how much did you earn in the month of April, 1894?

Ans. I could hardly tell that, but I know I did not have much left after my rent was taken out.

22. (Commissioner Worthington): About how much did you have after paying your rent?

Ans. From \$12 to \$15 every two weeks.

23. (Commissioner Worthington): Are you a man of family?

Ans. Yes, sir.

24. (Commissioner Wright): How long since you have paid any rent?

Ans. I believe I owed \$2 or \$3 for back rent before we went on the strike and I have not paid any since that.

25. (Commissioner Wright): Has there been any effort to collect any rent out of the tenants?

Ans. There was day before yesterday, I believe.

26. (Commissioner Wright): What form did that effort take?

Ans. I was not home, but they asked my wife if I was going to pay any rent; my wife told them that I would pay rent as soon as I could get work and earn enough to pay it; that I had no work and had no money, but would pay the rent as soon as I could get money enough to pay it.

**Source: United States Strike Commission. *Report on the Chicago Strike of June-July, 1894.* Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1895. (Call number: HD5325.R12 1894 .C582).
From: http://www.chipublib.org/003cpl/hf/pullman_strike5.html**

"If it takes the entire army and navy to deliver a postal card in Chicago, that card will be delivered.": Labor, the Gilded Age, The Pullman Strike (E)

The Pullman Strike began May 11, 1894, with a walkout by Pullman Palace Car Company factory workers after negotiations over reduced wages failed. These workers appealed for support to the American Railway Union (ARU), which argued unsuccessfully for arbitration. On June 20, the ARU gave notice that beginning June 26 its membership would no longer work trains that included Pullman cars. The boycott, although centered in Chicago, crippled railroad traffic

Reply of the Pullman Company

In the first week of May last there were employed in the car manufacturing department at Pullman, Ill., about 3,100 persons. On May 7, a committee of the workmen had an interview by arrangement with Mr. Wickes, vice-president, at which the principal subject of discussion related to wages, but minor grievances as to shop were also presented, and it was agreed that another meeting should be held on the 9th of May, at which all the grievances should be presented in writing. The second meeting was held. As to the complaints on all matters except wages, it was arranged that a formal and thorough investigation should be made by Mr. Wickes, to be begun the next day, and full redress was assured to the committee as to all con-plaints proved to be well founded.

The absolute necessity of the last reduction in wages, under the existing condition of the business of car manufacturing, had been explained to the committee, and they were insisting, upon a restoration of the wage scale of the first half of 1893, when Mr. Pullman entered the room and addressed the committee, speaking, in substance as follows:

"At the commencement of the very serious depression last year, we were employing at Pullman 5,816 men, and paying out in wages there \$305,000 a month. Negotiations with intending purchasers of railway equipment that were then pending for new work were stopped by them, orders already given by others were canceled, and we were obliged to lay off, as you are aware, a large number of men in every department, so that by November 1, 1893, there were only about 2,000 men in all departments, or about one third of the normal number. I realized the necessity for the most strenuous exertions to procure work immediately, without which there would be great embarrassment, not only to the employees and their families at Pullman, but also to those living in the immediate vicinity, including between 700 and 800 employees who had purchased homes and to whom employment was actually necessary to enable them to complete their payments.

"I canvassed the matter thoroughly with the manager of the works and instructed him to cause the men to be assured that the company would do everything in its power to meet the competition which was sure to occur because of the great number of large car manufacturers that were in the same condition, and that were exceedingly anxious to keep their men employed. I knew that if there was any work to be let, bids for it would be made upon a much lower basis than ever before. (NOTE.—The selling prices of passenger, baggage, box, refrigerator and street cars in the last two years have fallen by percentages, varying in the separate classes, from 17 to 28, the average reduction, taking the five classes together, being 24 percent.)

"The result of this discussion was a revision in piecework prices, which, in the absence of any information to the contrary, I supposed to be acceptable to the men under the circumstances. Under these conditions, and with lower prices upon all materials, I personally undertook the work of the lettings of cars, and by making lower bids than other manufacturers I secured work enough to gradually increase our force from 2,000 up to about 4,200, the number employed, according to the April pay rolls, in all capacities at Pullman.

"This result has not been accomplished merely by reduction in wages, but the company has borne its full share by eliminating from its estimates the use of capital and machinery, and in many cases going even below that and taking work at considerable loss, notably the 55 Long Island cars, which was the first large order of passenger cars let since the great depression and which was sought for by practically all the leading car builders in the country. My anxiety to secure that order, so as to put as many men at work as possible, was such that I put in a bid at more than \$300 per car less than the actual cost to the company. The 300 stock cars built for the Northwestern road and the 250 refrigerator cars now under construction for the same company will result in a loss of at least \$12 per car, and the 25 cars just built for the Lake Street elevated road show a loss of \$79 per car. I mention these particulars so that you may understand what the company has done for the mutual interests and to secure for the people at Pullman and vicinity the benefit of the disbursement of the large sums of money involved in these and similar contracts, which can be kept up only by the procurement of new orders for cars, as you know, about three fourths of the men must depend upon contract work for employment.

"I can only assure you that if this company now restores the wages of the first half of 1893, as you have asked, it would be a most unfortunate thing for the men, because there is less than sixty days of contract work in sight in the shops under all orders and there is absolutely no possibility, in the present condition of affairs throughout the country, of getting any more orders for work at prices measured by the wages of May 1893. Under such a scale the works would necessarily close down and the great majority of the employees be put in idleness, a contingency I am using my best efforts to avoid.

"To further benefit the people of Pullman and vicinity we concentrated all the work that we could command at that point, by closing our Detroit shops entirely and laying off a large number of men at our other repair shops, and gave to Pullman the repair of all cars that could be taken care of there.

"Also, for the further benefit of our people at Pullman we have carried on a large system of internal improvements, have expended nearly \$160,000 since August last in work which, under normal conditions, would have been spread over one or two years. The policy would be to continue this class of work to as great an extent as possible, provided, of course, the Pullman men show a proper appreciation of the situation by doing whatever they can to help themselves to tide over the hard times which are so seriously felt in every part of the country.

"There has been some complaint made about rents. As to this I would say that the return to this company on the capital invested in the Pullman tenements for the last year and the year before was 3.82 percent. There are hundreds of tenements in Pullman renting for from \$6 to \$9 per month, and the tenants are relieved from the usual expenses of exterior cleaning and the removal of garbage, which is done by the company. . . ."

On the question of rents, while, as stated above, they make a manifestly inadequate return upon the investment, so that it is clear they are not, in fact, at an arbitrarily high figure, it may be added that it would not be possible in a business sense so to deal with them.

The renting of the dwellings and the employment of workmen at Pullman are in no way tied together. The dwellings and apartments are offered for rent in competition with those of the immediately adjacent towns of Kensington, Roseland, and Gano. They are let alike to Pullman employees and to very many others in no way connected with the company, and, on the other hand, many Pullman employees rent or own their homes in those adjacent towns. The average rental at Pullman is at the rate of \$3 per room per month. There are 1,200 tenements, of varying numbers or rooms, the average monthly rental of which is \$10; of these there are 600 the average monthly rental of which is \$8. In very many cases men with families pay a rent seemingly large for a workman, but which is in fact reduced in part, and often wholly repaid, by the subrents paid by single men as lodgers.

On May 10, the day after the second conference above mentioned, work went on at Pullman as usual, and the only incident of note was the beginning by Mr. Wickes, assisted by Mr. Brown, the general manager of the company, of the promised formal investigation at Pullman of the shop complaints.

A large meeting of employees had been held the night before at Kensington, which, as was understood by the company, accepted the necessity of the situation preventing an increase of wages; but at a meeting of the local committee held during the night of May 10 a strike was decided upon, and accordingly the next day about 2,500 of the employees quit their work, leaving about 600 at work, of whom very few were skilled workmen. As it was found impracticable to keep the shops in operation with a force thus diminished and disorganized, the next day those remaining were necessarily laid off, and no work has since been done in the shops.

The pay rolls at the time amounted to about \$7,000 a day, and were reduced \$5,500 by the strike, so that during the period of a little more than six weeks which has elapsed the employees who quit their work have deprived themselves and their comrades of earnings of more than \$200,000.

Source: Reply of the Pullman Company, U.S. Strike Commission, *Report and Testimony on the Chicago Strike of 1894* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1895), 578-80. Reprinted in Thomas G. Manning, *The Chicago Strike of 1894* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1960), 4-7. From: <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5306>.

"If it takes the entire army and navy to deliver a postal card in Chicago, that card will be delivered.": Labor, the Gilded Age, The Pullman Strike (F)

The Pullman Strike began May 11, 1894, with a walkout by Pullman Palace Car Company factory workers after negotiations over reduced wages failed. These workers appealed for support to the American Railway Union (ARU), which argued unsuccessfully for arbitration. On June 20, the ARU gave notice that beginning June 26 its membership would no longer work trains that included Pullman cars. The boycott, although centered in Chicago, crippled railroad traffic

United States Strike Commission Final Report: Information about the Pullman Company

This is a corporation organized in 1867, with a capital of \$1,000,000. It has grown until its present paid-up capital is \$36,000,000. Its prosperity has enabled the company for over twenty years...to lay up a surplus of nearly \$25,000,000 of undivided profits. From 1867 to 1871 dividends ranging from 9 1/2 to 12 per cent per annum were paid. For the year ending July 31, 1893, the dividends were \$2,520,000, and the wages \$7,223,719.51. For the year ending July 31, 1894, the dividends were \$2,880,000, and the wages \$4,471,701.39.

The business of the company is:

1. The operation of its cars upon about 125,000 miles of railroad, being about three fourths of the railway mileage of the country...
2. The manufacture and repair of such cars.
3. The manufacture of cars of all kinds for the general market.
4. The care and management, as owner and landlord, of the town of Pullman.

In 1880 the company bought 500 acres of land, and upon 300 acres of it built its plant and also a hotel, arcade, churches, athletic grounds, and brick tenements suitable for the use of its employees. The town is well laid out and has a complete sewerage and water system. It is beautified by well-kept open spaces and stretches, flower beds, and lakes... The main object was the establishment of a great manufacturing business upon a substantial money making basis. Efficient workmen were regarded as essential to its success, and it was believed that they could be secured, held in contentment, and improved as such for their own sakes and for the benefit of the company by the accommodations and surroundings that were provided...

The company provides and pays a physician and surgeon by the year to furnish to injured employees necessary treatment and drugs. It is, however, also a part of his employment to secure from the injured party a written statement as to the causes of injury, and it is his custom to urge the acceptance of any offered settlement. If suit follows, the doctor is usually a witness for the company. We have no evidence that the doctor has ever abused his confidential relation toward the injured employees; but the system is admirably conceived from a business standpoint to secure speedy settlement of claims for damages upon terms offered by the company and to protect the company from litigation and its results.

Prior to June, 1893, all went well and as designed; the corporation was very prosperous, paid ample and satisfactory wages, as a rule, and charged rents which caused no complaint. During this period those defects in the system which have recently come to the surface and intensified differences, such, for instance refusal to permit the employees to buy land in Pullman and build homes there caused no disturbance.

As the result of the Pullman system and its growth, when the depression of 1893 came...we find on the one side a very wealthy unyielding corporation, and upon the other a multitude of employees of comparatively excellent character and skill, but without local attachments or any interested responsibility in the town, its business, tenements, or surroundings.

The conditions created at Pullman enable the management at all times to assert with great vigor its assumed right to fix wages and rents absolutely, and to repress that sort of independence which leads to labor organizations attempts at mediation, arbitration, strikes, etc.

U.S. Strike Commission Report, Senate Executive Document No. 7, 53d Congress, 3d session, pp. xxi-xxiii. From: <http://www.museum.state.il.us/exhibits/athome/1850/voices/curtis/car.htm>

"If it takes the entire army and navy to deliver a postal card in Chicago, that card will be delivered.": Labor, the Gilded Age, The Pullman Strike (G)

The Pullman Strike began May 11, 1894, with a walkout by Pullman Palace Car Company factory workers after negotiations over reduced wages failed. These workers appealed for support to the American Railway Union (ARU), which argued unsuccessfully for arbitration. On June 20, the ARU gave notice that beginning June 26 its membership would no longer work trains that included Pullman cars. The boycott, although centered in Chicago, crippled railroad traffic

United States Strike Commission: The Congressional Perspective on the Causes of the Strike

PULLMAN'S Palace Car Company is in the market at all times to obtain all possible contracts to build cars. Its relations with railroads, its large capital and surplus, its complete and well-located plant and efficient management enable it at all times to meet all competitors on at least equal terms...

The depression of 1893 naturally affected the business at once... Matters grew worse until, in the fall of 1893, the company closed its Detroit shops, employing about 800, and concentrated its contract and repair business at Pullman. The company and the railroads had a surplus of cars...hence pending orders were canceled and car building stopped, except as occasional straggling contracts were obtained at prices which averaged less than shop cost....

The cut in wages during this period [September 1893 - May 1894] averaged about 25 per cent....

During all of this reduction...none of the salaries of officers, managers, or superintendents were reduced....

In its statements to the public...the company represents that its object[ive]...was to continue operations for the benefit of its workmen and of trades people in and about Pullman and to save the public from the annoyance of interrupted travel. The commission thinks that the evidence shows that it sought to keep running mainly for its own benefit as a manufacturer, that its plant might not rust, that its competitors might not invade its territory, that it might keep its cars in repair, that it might be ready for resumption when business revived with a live plant and competent help, and that its revenue from its tenements might continue.

RENTS

If we exclude the aesthetic [beauty] and sanitary features at Pullman, the rents there are from 20 to 25 per cent higher than rents in Chicago or surrounding towns for similar accommodations. The aesthetic features are admired by visitors, but have little money value to employees, especially when they lack bread...

The company's claim that the workmen need not [rent] its tenements and can live elsewhere if they choose is not entirely tenable. The fear of losing work keeps them in Pullman as long as there are tenements unoccupied, because the company is supposed, as a matter of business, to give a preference to its tenants when work is slack... While reducing wages, the company made no reduction in rents. Its position is that the two matters are distinct, and that none of the reasons urged as justifying wage reduction as an employer can be considered by the company as a landlord...

On the evening of May 10 the local unions met and voted to strike at once... As soon as the strike was declared the company laid off its 600 employees who did not join the strike, and kept its shops closed until August 2. During this period the Civic Federation of Chicago, composed of eminent citizens in all kinds of business and from all grades of respectable society, called upon the company twice to urge conciliation and arbitration. The company reiterated the statement of its position, and maintained that there was nothing to arbitrate; that the questions at issue were matters of fact and not proper subjects of arbitration. The Civic Federation suggested that competition should be regarded in rents as well as in wages. The company denied this. Wages and rents were to it separate matters; the principles applicable to one had no relation to the other. Later it gave the same answer to a committee of its employees. Upon June 15 and 22 it declined to receive any communication from committees of the American Railway Union, one proposition being that the company select two arbitrators, the court two...

Excerpted from U. S. Strike Commission Report, Senate Executive Document No. 7, 53d Congress, 3d session, pp. xxxii-xxxix. From:
<http://www.museum.state.il.us/exhibits/athome/1850/voices/curtis/strike.htm>

"If it takes the entire army and navy to deliver a postal card in Chicago, that card will be delivered.": Labor, the Gilded Age, and The Pullman Strike (H)

The Pullman Strike began May 11, 1894, with a walkout by Pullman Palace Car Company factory workers after negotiations over reduced wages failed. These workers appealed for support to the American Railway Union (ARU), which argued unsuccessfully for arbitration. On June 20, the ARU gave notice that beginning June 26 its membership would no

Grover Cleveland, *The Government in the Chicago Strike of 1894*. Princeton University Press, 1913.

...a very determined and ugly labor disturbance broke out in the city of Chicago. Almost in a night it grew to full proportions of malevolence and danger. Rioting and violence were its early accompaniments...the carriage of the United States mails was interrupted, interstate commerce was obstructed, and railroad property was riotously destroyed.

The strike on the part of the employees [of the Pullman Company]...was provoked by the reduction of wages...The American Railway Union was organized in the summer of 1893...during the months of March, April, and May 1894 4000 [Pullman workers] were enrolled in the American Railway Union.. It was the membership of these workmen in the Railway Union, and the union's consequent assumption of their quarrel, that gave it the proportions of a tremendous disturbance, paralyzing the most important business interests, obstructing the functions of the Government, and disturbing the social peace and order.

...a resolution was passed [by the American Railway Union] that unless the Pullman Palace Car Company should adjust the grievances of its employees before noon of the twenty-sixth day of June, the members of the American Railway Union would refuse to handle Pullman cars and equipment...the twenty-sixth of June arrived without change in the attitude of the parties to the Pullman controversy; and thereupon the order made by the American Railway Union forbidding the handling of Pullman cars became operative throughout the entire membership...the same railroad companies which had contracted to use these Pullman cars upon their lines had contracts with the United States government for the carriage of mails, and were of course also largely engaged in interstate commerce...

...two days after the beginning of the strike information was received at Washington...the mails were completely obstructed, and that the strikers refused to permit trains to which Pullman cars were attached to run over the lines...In these circumstances it would have been a criminal neglect of duty if those charged with the protection of governmental agencies and the enforcement of orderly obedience and submission to Federal authority...

...[the suggestion from the attorney general to apply for an injunction from the federal courts ordering the American Railway Union to stop their strike started] the inauguration of legal proceedings in a regular and usual way to restrain those prominently concerned in the interference with the mails and the obstruction of interstate commerce, basing such proceedings on the proposition that, under the Constitution and laws these subjects were in the exclusive care of the Government of the United States...and on further ground that under an act of Congress [the Interstate Commerce Act] conspiracies in the restraint of trade or commerce among the several states were declared illegal...

...it should not be inferred...that it had been definitely determined that the use of military force was inevitable. It was still hoped that the effect of the injunction would be such that this alternative might be avoided.

...the successful assertion of national authority was conclusively indicated when on the twentieth day of July the last of the soldiers of the United States who had been ordered for duty...were withdrawn from Chicago...

...I hope I have been successful thus far in my effort to satisfactorily exhibit the extensive reach and perilous tendency of the conclusion under consideration, the careful promptness which characterized

the interference of the government, the constant desire of the national administration to avoid extreme measures, the scrupulous limitation of its interference to purposes which were clearly within its constitutional competency and duty...

"If it takes the entire army and navy to deliver a postal card in Chicago, that card will be delivered.": Labor, the Gilded Age, and The Pullman Strike (I)

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**The Federal Government and the Pullman Strike:
Eugene V. Debs' Reply to Grover Cleveland's Magazine Article
by Eugene V. Debs
Written circa July 7, 1904.
Published in *Appeal to Reason* (Aug. 27, 1904), pp. 1-2.**

The Cause of the Pullman Strike

That Mr. Cleveland knows nothing about the Chicago strike except what has been told him by the railroads and their emissaries, that he has not even read the report of his own Strike Commission, is apparent from the very beginning of his article. He says, "The strike was provoked by a reduction of wages." This is not true. The fact is that although wages had been repeatedly reduced the employees did not strike. They appointed a committee to meet the officials and ask why, if their wages had to be reduced, the high rents they were obliged to pay the Pullman company were not correspondingly lowered. Failing to secure redress, they called upon Mr. Pullman himself. He promised to investigate. They returned happy. The following day the committee were discharged, and thereupon all the employees laid down their tools and walked out of the shops. That is what provoked the strike and the report of the Strike Commission proves it.

Had the Strike Won.

...there is available proof sufficient to make it clear to the unprejudiced mind, to the honest man who seeks the truth, that the United States government, under the administration of President Grover Cleveland, was at the beck and call of the railroad corporations, acting as one through the "General Managers' Association," and that these corporations, with the federal courts and troops to back them up, had swarms of mercenaries sworn in as deputy marshals to incite violence as a pretext for taking possession of the headquarters of the American Railway Union by armed force, throwing its leaders into prison without trial, and breaking up a strike that was fairly won without a blow being struck, and breaking down the union that was victorious — maligning, browbeating, and persecuting its peaceable and law-abiding members and putting the railroad corporations in supreme control of the situation...

Cleveland's First Move.

...How did President Cleveland begin operations in the Chicago strike? Among the first things he did, as he himself tells us, was to appoint Edwin Walker as special counsel for the government. Who was Edwin Walker? "An able and prominent attorney," says Mr. Cleveland. Is that all? Not quite. At the time President Cleveland and his Attorney General, Richard Olney, designated Edwin Walker, upon recommendation of the railroads, as special counsel to the government, for which alleged service he was paid a fee that amounted to a fortune, *the said Edwin Walker was already the regular counsel of the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railway...*

Walker's Appointment.

What is the significance of such an appointment under such circumstances? Can it be in doubt a single moment? Does it not indicate clearly that the railroads controlled the government, that President

Cleveland did the bidding of the General Managers' Association by appointing as special counsel of the government their own attorney to prosecute the striking employees and use the powers of the government to crush them into submission? Can there be any shadow of doubt about it in the mind of any candid man?

Why the Mails were Obstructed.

Here is the situation: There is a conflict between the General Managers' Association, representing the railroads, and the American Railway Union, representing the employees. Perfect quiet and order prevail, as I shall show, but the railroads are beaten to a standstill, utterly helpless, cannot even move a mail car, simply because their employees have quit their service and left the premises in a body. Note also that the employees were willing to haul the mail trains, and all other trains, refusing only to handle Pullman cars until the Pullman Company should consent to arbitrate its disagreement with its striking and starving employees. But the railroad officials determined that if the Pullman cars were not handled the mail cars should not move. This is how and why the mails were obstructed and this was the pretext for federal interference. In a word, President Cleveland, obedient to the railroads, took sides with them and supported them in their conflict with their employees and supported them in their conflict with their employees with all the powers of the federal government.

Brazen Defiance of the Law by Railroads.

The railroad corporations are notorious for their brazen defiance of every law that is designed to curb their powers or restrain their rapacity. The railroad corporations have their lobby at Washington and at every state capital; they bribe legislators, corrupt courts, debauch politics, and commit countless other legal and moral crimes against the commonwealth. The railway employees are a body of honest, useful, self-sacrificing, peace-loving men, who never have and never will be guilty of the crimes committed by their corporate masters. And yet President Cleveland serves the corporate masters and exalts and glorifies the act while he attempts to absolve the criminals and fasten the insufferable stigma upon honest men. Nothing further is required to demonstrate beyond all cavil the capitalist class character of our present government.

The Strike Commission's Report.

Now for a few facts about the strike. It began May 11th, 1894, and was perfectly peaceable and orderly until the army of "thugs, thieves, and ex-convicts," as Superintendent of Police Brennan called them in his official report to the Council of Chicago, were sworn in as deputies by the United States marshal at the command of Edwin Walker, attorney of the General Managers' Association and special counsel to the government... Let it be noted that the railway employees, that is to say labor, the working class, had no representative on this commission. From the report they issued we quote as follows:

ARU Leaders Advise Against Strike

It is undoubtedly true that the officers and directors of the American Railway Union did not want a strike at Pullman and advised against it... (pg. XXXI)

Yet the people were told over and over and still believe that Debs ordered the strike.

Railroads Set the Example.

It should be noted that until the railroads set the example a general union of railroad employees was never attempted. (pg. XXXI) The refusal of the General Managers' Association to recognize and deal with such a combination of labor as the American Railway Union seemed arrogant and absurd, when we consider its standing before the law, its assumptions, and its past and obviously contemplated future action. (pg. XXXI) ...the rents (at Pullman) are from 20 to 25 percent higher than rents in Chicago or surrounding towns for similar accommodations. (pg. XXXV)

Strike Commission Contradicts Cleveland.

The strike occurred on May 11th [1894], and from that time until the soldiers went to Pullman, about July 4th, 300 strikers were placed about the company's property, professedly to guard it from destruction or

interference. This guarding of property in strikes is, as a rule, a mere pretence. Too often the real object of guards is to prevent newcomers from taking the strikers' places, by persuasion, often to be followed, if ineffectual, by intimidation and violence. The Pullman Company claims this was the real object of these guards.

These strikers at Pullman are entitled to be believed to the contrary in this matter, because of their conduct and forbearance after May 11th. It is in evidence and uncontradicted that no violence or destruction of property by strikers or sympathizers took place at Pullman, and that until July 3rd (when the federal troops came upon the scene) no extraordinary protection was had from the police or military against even anticipated disorder. (pg. XXXVIII)

This paragraph from the report of Mr. Cleveland's own commission is sufficient answer to Mr. Cleveland's article. It is conclusive, crushing, overwhelming.

Disturbances Started by Deputy Marshals.

The first trouble instigated by the deputy marshals was the signal for the federal court injunctions, and they came like a succession of lightning flashes. Next, the general offices of the American Railway Union were sacked and put under guard and communication destroyed. (Later Judge Grosscup rebuked the federal satraps who committed their outrageous crime, but he did not pretend to bring them to justice.) Next, the leaders of the strike were arrested, not for crime, but for alleged violation of an injunction. Next, they were brought into court, denied trial by jury, pronounced guilty by the same judge who had issued the injunction, and sent to jail from 3 to 6 months.

The Government Serves the Corporations.

Here we have it, upon the authority of President Cleveland's own commission, that the United States government under his administration furnished the railroad corporations with government officers, in the form of deputy marshals, to take the places of striking employees, operate the trains, and serve in that dual capacity in any way that might be required to crush out the strike. This is perhaps more credit than the ex-President expected to receive. His own commission charges him, in effect, with serving the railroads as strikebreaker by furnishing government employees to take the places of striking railroad men and arming them with pistols and clubs and with all the authority of government officials. Page after page bears testimony of the disreputable character of the deputy marshals sworn in to the number of several thousand and turned loose like armed bullies to "preserve the peace."

Strike Leaders Exonerated by Commission.

Particular attention is invited to the following, which appears upon page XLV: There is no evidence before the commission that the officers of the American Railway Union at any time participated in or advised intimidation, violence, or the destruction of property. **They knew and fully appreciated that as soon as mobs ruled the organized forces would crush the mobs and all responsible for them in the remotest degree, and that this means defeat.** And yet they all served prison sentences.

If it takes the entire army and navy to deliver a postal card in Chicago, that card will be delivered.": Labor, the Gilded Age, The Pullman Strike

The Pullman Strike began May 11, 1894, with a walkout by Pullman Palace Car Company factory workers after negotiations over reduced wages failed. These workers appealed for support to the American Railway Union (ARU), which argued unsuccessfully for arbitration. On June 20, the ARU gave notice that beginning June 26 its membership would no longer work trains that included Pullman cars. The boycott, although centered in Chicago, crippled railroad traffic nationwide, until the federal government intervened in early July, first with a comprehensive injunction essentially

United States Strike Commission: The American Railway Union

This is an association of about 150,000 railroad employees, as alleged, organized at Chicago on the 20th of June, 1893, for the purpose of including railway employees born of white parents in one great brotherhood.

The theory underlying this movement is that the organization of different classes of railroad employees (to the number of about 140,000) upon the trade-union idea has ceased to be useful or adequate; that pride of organization, petty jealousies, and the conflict of views into which men are trained in separate organizations under different leaders, tend to defeat the common object of all, and enable railroads to use such organizations against each other in contentions over wages, etc.; that the rapid concentration of railroad capital and management demands a like union of their employees for the purpose of mutual protection; that the interests of each of the 850,000 railroad employees of the United States as to wages, treatment, hours of labour, legislation, insurance, mutual aid, etc., are common to all, and hence all ought to belong to one organization that shall assert its united strength in the protection of the rights of every member.

In March, 1894, the employees of Pullman's Palace Car Company, being dissatisfied with their wages, rents, and shop treatment for the first time in the history of the town, sought organization, and joined the American Railway Union in large numbers...

The Pullman Company is hostile to the idea of conferring with organized labor in the settlement of differences arising between it and its employees....

Since the strike, withdrawal from the American Railway Union is required from those seeking work. The company does not recognize that labor organizations have any place or necessity in Pullman, where the company fixes wages and rents... The laborer can work or quit on the terms offered; that is the

limit of his rights... This position secures all the advantage of the concentration of capital, ability, power, and control for the company in its labor dealings, and deprives the employees of any such advantage or protection as a labor union might afford. In this respect the Pullman Company is behind the age.

To admit the Pullman shop employees, however, into the American Railway Union as "Persons employed in railway service" was not wise or expedient. The constitution can not fairly be construed to include as eligible members those who build cars and run them in and out over private switches... To reach out and take in those so alien to its natural membership as the Pullman employees was, in the inception of the organization at least, a mistake. This mistake led the union into a strike purely sympathetic and aided to bring upon it a crushing and demoralizing defeat.

It is undoubtedly true that the officers and directors of the American Railway Union did not want a strike at Pullman, and that they advised against it, but the exaggerated idea of the power of the union, which induced the workmen at Pullman to join the order, led to their striking against this advice. Having struck, the union could do nothing less, upon the theory at its base, than support them...

Excerpted from U. S. Strike Commission Report, Senate Executive Document No. 7, 53d Congress, 3d session, pp. xxiii-xxvii. From:
<http://www.museum.state.il.us/exhibits/athome/1850/voices/curtis/aru.htm>

OLD SOURCES NOZT USED ANY LONGER

"If it takes the entire army and navy to deliver a postal card in Chicago, that card will be delivered.": Labor, the Gilded Age, The Pullman Strike

Review the source and list the reasons President Cleveland provides to explain his actions. Be specific in your notes.

Eugene V. Debs, American Railway Union

The railroad corporations would rather have destroyed their property and seen Chicago perish than see the American Railway Union triumphant in as noble a cause as ever prompted...

Men, women, and children were on the verge of starvation at the “model city” of Pullman. They had produced the fabulous wealth of the Pullman Corporation, but they, poor souls, were compelled to suffer the torment of hunger pangs in the very midst of the abundance their labor had created.

A hundred and fifty thousand railroad employees, their fellow members in the American Railway Union sympathized with them, shared their earnings with them, and after trying in every peaceable way they could conceive of to touch the flint heart of the Pullman Company—every overture being rejected, every suggestion denied, every proposition spurned with contempt—they determined not to pollute their hands and dishonor their manhood by handling Pullman cars and contributing to the suffering and sorrow of their brethren and their wives and babes. And rather than do this they laid down their tools in a body, sacrificed their situations and submitted to persecution, exile and the blacklist; to idleness poverty, crusts and rags, and I shall love and honor these moral heroes to my last breath...

From Debs, Eugene. *Debs: His Life, Writing and Speeches*. Chicago, 1908, pp. 181-205. In, Beebe, Ralph. *The Worker and Social Change: The Pullman Strike of 1984*. Lexington, Massachusetts, D.C. Heath and Company, 1970.

Resource Sheet 2H

"If it takes the entire army and navy to deliver a postal card in Chicago, that card will be delivered.": Labor, the Gilded Age, The Pullman Strike

Review the source and describe how the author feels about Eugene Debs, the American Railways Union (ARU), and the strike. What does the author feel should be done with the strikers and why? Be specific in your notes.

SUPPRESS THE REBELLION.

***Harper's Weekly* Editorial—July 14, 1894**

A POWERFUL conspiracy is at work over large sections of the country striving to subvert the government of law and to impose on the nation the decrees of the conspirators... EUGENE V. DEBS and his fellow-demagogues long ago avowed that they would unite in an association the railway working-men of the country, so that all should obey a single will, promising that them a general suspension of traffic and intercourse ordered by its head would so evidently portend the utter ruin of the nation that the mere threat of it would extort from every community and every employer of labor compliance with its demands. They have prosecuted this plan with wonderful vigor, until now, believing that their organization is strong enough to defy opposition; they have made a wanton display of their power, in order to terrorize society and show themselves its masters. There is no longer even the empty pretext, with which the PULLMAN boycott began, of a wrong done to somebody which the public were to be forced to force somebody else to redress. The avowed aim of the American Railway Union, with its allies, the Knights of Labor and kindred associations, is to subjugate the people of the United States, to extort from the nation the control and management of its high ways, intercourse, and commerce...

Much hair-splitting has been done in discussing the lawfulness of the course pursued by the managers of this so-called "strike." Their boast from the first was that they would stop all traffic, and extort their demands by the consequent general suffering. In pursuance of this end they took the measures which were best adapted to secure it. They distinctly announced their purposes, and then "called out" one after another of the bodies of working-men whose services are most essential. But the number of unemployed and unorganized laborers was so great that the mere cessation of work by the members of the unions would not suffice. Their places could be filled in a short time by men in extreme need of employment. Throughout the region of the strike, accordingly, the followers of DEBS began a systematic effort to carry out his declared policy and to obey his implied orders. They established a reign of terror over their fellow-workers who were unwilling to join them, or who, because they and their families were starving could not afford to forego their wages. No man must be permitted to do the work they had abandoned. On every line of railroad affected by the strike violence was used or threatened to any extent which was necessary to obstruct it. Property was destroyed and life imperiled without scruple. The general situation for several days, as recognized by the labor leaders and by the entire public, was one of open war, to the extent that the railroad companies were exerting all the means in their control to keep their lines open, with an ample force of willing workmen ready to serve them, while the strikers and their allies, including every disorderly and dangerous element of the population, confronted them at all points with force and prevented the movement of trains. Volunteer workmen were assaulted and injured, switches were turned, couplings detached and broken, station-houses burned, engines and cars destroyed, and in at least one case a committee appointed for the purpose by a meeting of union men made a destructive attack on railway property.

Through all this time DEBS and his fellow-councilmen continued to announce daily through the press that they countenance no violence, and to call on the men to exercise simply their individual right of refusing to work. This impudent falsehood is taken seriously by some journalists, whose credulity is too great to be sincere. No adult who has ever learned to read is so silly as to be imposed on by it. Yet when writers in daily journals assure the public that any interference with this conspiracy by the authorities is an extreme measure, that a "compromise" is desirable with the strikers, that, in particular, the use of force by the United States to prevent a commercial blockade is a questionable strain upon the constitutional powers of the government, it is time to give clear expression to the principles of public law applicable to this emergency, though not so much of special learning in the law as of simple candor and of the commonsense of mankind is needed to understand them.

The purpose of interfering with the trade and intercourse of the community is an unlawful purpose. When men combine to affect an unlawful purpose, even by acts each of which may be in itself no offence, they are guilty of conspiracy, and all who abet them, knowing their purpose, share the guilt. When the traffic with which they aim to interfere crosses State lines, the offence is against the general government, which has exclusive control of commerce between the States. When the methods pursued by these men are such that violence, disorder, the destruction of property and life, result from them as their natural and probable consequences, the men are themselves guilty of the crimes they have provoked, and caused. When an organized and armed body of men resist by force or threats the officers of the national government in their efforts to enforce the laws and to protect traffic which crosses State lines, they are guilty of levying war against the United States; and every one who instigates or abets them, by word or deed, lends aid and comfort to the enemies of the republic, and is, not only morally, but legally, a traitor to his country.

...The lesson of the supremacy of law must be taught promptly, effectually, and to all. If the first lesson must be given by the bayonet and the bullet, it will be in every way cheapest and best to administer it in the first clear case of resistance to authority. When order is restored, and it becomes an undisputed fact that any man wishing to do an honest day's work on a railroad or elsewhere shall be free to do so, in spite of DEBS and all his minions, it will be time enough to consider the other aspects of this great social disturbance. Crush the terrorism which forbids working-men to earn bread for their families, and soon the arrogant plot to stop the commerce of a nation in order to glorify and strengthen a few irresponsible demagogues will die out of itself. The normal course of the markets will be restored, the mails will go forward, industrious citizens can freely go out to their work and return to their homes, a hundred thousand families now suffering by the enforced idleness of their heads will again be properly fed, and all the countless wheels of commerce will cheerfully turn again. But, most important of all, the most serious menace which during this generation has been directed against the free society of this land will have ended in a failure so complete that it cannot be renewed. These events disclose a real danger to our institutions and to civilization itself; but it lies only in this, that some public men, and even some journalists, are weak enough in mind and character to suggest a compromise with crime, a yielding of the majesty of law before the dictates of a mob. That way lies ruin. One step in that direction is a sacrifice of what makes the republic glorious in its past or worth preserving for its future. Until the rebellion is suppressed, all differences of opinion concerning its origin, or the merits of the parties to the dispute out of which it grew, are irrelevant to the issue of the hour, and must wait for the future.

Present action must clear the field for future discussion.

Resource Sheet 21

"If it takes the entire army and navy to deliver a postal card in Chicago, that card will be delivered.": Labor, the Gilded Age, The Pullman Strike

Review the source and list the reasons Governor John Altgeld provides to explain his feelings about federal intervention into the strike, his feelings about President Cleveland's actions, and what should be done to resolve the crisis. Be specific in your notes.

Letters between Illinois' Governor John P. Altgeld and President Grover Cleveland

Honorable Grover Cleveland, President of the United States
Washington, D.C.
July 5, 1894

Sir:

I am advised that you have ordered Federal troops to go into service in the State of Illinois. Surely, the facts have not been correctly presented to you in this case, or you would not have taken this step, for it is entirely unnecessary, and, as it seems to me, unjustifiable...

So far as I have been advised the local officials have been able to handle the situation. But if any assistance were needed, the State stood ready to furnish 100 men for every one man required, and stood ready to do so at a moment's notice. Notwithstanding these facts the Federal government has been applied to by men who had political and selfish motives for wanting to ignore the state government...

At present some of our railroads are paralyzed, not by reason of obstruction, but because they cannot get men to operate their trains. For some reason they are anxious to keep this fact from the public, and for this purpose they are making an outcry about obstructions in order to divert attention....

...I submit that local self-government is a fundamental principle of our Constitution. Each community shall govern itself so long as it can and is ready and able to enforce the law, and it is in harmony with the fundamental principle that the statute authorizing the President to send troops into the States must be construed; especially is this so in matters relating to the exercise of the police power and the preservation of law and order.

To absolutely ignore a local government in matters of kind, when the local government is ready to furnish assistance needed, and is amply able to enforce the law, not only insults the people of this state [Illinois] by imputing them an inability to govern themselves, or an unwillingness to enforce the law, but is in violation of a basic principle of our institutions. The question of Federal supremacy is in no way involved. No one disputes it for a moment, but, under our Constitution, Federal supremacy and local self-government must go hand-in-hand, and to ignore the latter is to do violence to the Constitution.

As Governor of the State of Illinois, I protest against this, and ask then immediate withdrawal of the Federal troops from active duty in this state. Should the situation at any time get so serious that we cannot control it with the state forces, we will promptly ask for Federal assistance, but until such time, I protest, with all due deference, against this uncalled for reflection upon our people, and again ask the immediate withdrawal of these troops. I have the honor to be yours respectfully,

Jon P. Altgeld
Governor of Illinois
Executive Mansion, Washington
July 5, 1894

Honorable John P. Altgeld, Governor of Illinois

Sir:

Federal troops were sent to Chicago in strict accordance with the Constitution and the laws of the United States, upon the demand of the post-office department that obstruction of the mails should be removed, and upon the representations of the judicial officers of the United States that the process of the federal courts could not be executed through the ordinary means, and upon competent proof that conspiracies existed against commerce between the states. To meet these conditions, which are clearly within the province of Federal authority, the presence of Federal troops in the city of Chicago was deemed not only proper, but necessary, and there has been no intention of thereby interfering with the plain duty of the local authorities to preserve the peace of the city.

Grover Cleveland

Honorable Grover Cleveland, President of the United States
Washington, D.C.
July 6, 1894

Sir:

Your answer to my protest involves some startling conclusions and ignores and evades the question at issue—that is that the principle of local self-government is just as fundamental in our institutions as is that of Federal supremacy.

...You calmly assume that the executive has the legal right to order federal troops into any community of the United States, in the first instance, whenever there is the slightest disturbance, and that he can do this without any regard to the question as to whether that community is able to and ready to enforce the law itself...

...It is also a fundamental principle in our government that except in times of war that the military shall be subordinate top the civil authority...The troops you have ordered to Chicago...are acting directly under military orders issued from military headquarters at Washington, and in so far as these troops act at all, it is military government.

...Federal troops have now been on duty for over two days, and although the men were brave ad the officers valiant and able, yet their presence proved to be an irritant because it aroused the indignation of a large class of people, who, while upholding law and order, had been taught to believe in local self government and, therefore, resented what they regarded as unwarranted interference.

...believing that the state is amply able to take come of the situation and to enforce the law, and believing that the ordering of the troops was unwarranted, I again ask their withdrawal.

John P. Altgeld

Resource Sheet 2J

"If it takes the entire army and navy to deliver a postal card in Chicago, that card will be delivered.": Labor, the Gilded Age, The Pullman Strike

Review the source and list the reasons President Cleveland provides to explain his actions. Be specific in your notes.

President Grover Cleveland

The Constitution requires that the United States shall protect each of the States against invasion, “and on application of the legislature, or of the executive (when the legislature cannot be convened), against domestic violence.” There was plenty of domestic violence in the city of Chicago and in the State of Illinois during the early days of July, 1894; but no application was made to the federal government for assistance...

Section 5298 of the Revised Statutes of the United States provides: “Whenever, by reason of unlawful obstructions, combinations or assemblages of persons, or rebellion against the authority of the United States, it shall become impracticable in the judgment of the President to enforce, by the ordinary course of judicial proceedings, the laws of the United States within any state or territory, it shall be lawful for the President to call forth the militia of any or all of the States, and to employ such parts of the land or naval forces of the United States as he may deem necessary to enforce the faithful execution of the laws of the United States...and Section 5299 provides: “Whenever any insurrection, domestic violence, unlawful combinations or conspiracies in any State...opposes or obstructs the laws of the United States, or the due execution thereof...it shall be lawful for the President, and it shall be his duty, to take such measures, by the employment of the militia, or the land and naval forces of the United States...for the suppression of such insurrection, domestic violence, or combinations.”

...This official [Governor John Altgeld of Illinois] not only refused to regard the riotous disturbances within the borders of his State as a sufficient cause for an application to the Federal government for its protection “against domestic violence” under the mandate of the Constitution, but he actually protested against the presence of Federal troops sent into the state upon the general government’s own initiative...

From: Cleveland, Grover. *Presidential Problems*. New York, 1904, pp. 93-95, 109-110, 115-117. In, Beebe, Ralph. *The Worker and Social Change: The Pullman Strike of 1894*. Lexington, Massachusetts, D.C. Heath and Company, 1970.