
Statement on the Supreme Court's Verdict Upholding the Injunction

[May 27, 1895]

by Eugene V. Debs

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Terre Haute, Ind., May 27 [1895].— President Eugene V. Debs, of the American Railway Union, whose appeal case was acted upon today by the Supreme Court of the United States, was seen at his home tonight and said:

I know only of the decision as it appears in the evening dispatches, and, assuming that it is correctly reported, it appears the case was not decided on its merits, but that it was found that the Circuit Court, having final jurisdiction, its act was not reviewable by the Supreme Court, and therefore the writ [of habeas corpus] was denied. I expected a favorable decision, but I am not disappointed. After the decision by that tribunal upon the income tax bill I am not at all surprised to see the decision of the lower court affirmed in our case. Both decisions are absolutely in the interest of the corporations, syndicates, and trusts, which dominate every department of the federal government, including the Supreme Court.

Jefferson's prophecy is being literally fulfilled. The "sappers and miners," as he denominated them, are at work undermining the federal fabric. States rights are practically eliminated, while the right of a citizen to a trial by jury of his peers as vouchsafed by the constitution is broken down. Every federal judge now constitutes a tsar. The decision of the Supreme Court has crowned them and given them autocratic sway. They can now issue any kind of injunction restraining any man from doing anything and then deprive him of his liberty after simply going through the

farce of a hearing before the same judge issuing the injunction. Railroad corporations may now reduce wages and enforce any kind of conditions upon their employees without fear of resistance. If employees see fit to quit they can be put in jail for exercising this prerogative. And this infamous outrage has now the judicial sanction of the Supreme Court of the United States.

It is notoriously true that the people of this country, except a small minority that are direct beneficiaries of such monstrous perversions of justice, have no confidence in the Supreme Court. Not only this, but the criminal autocrats have no confidence in each other. To substantiate this, it is only necessary to read the scathing arraignment by Justice [John Marshall] Harlan of his judicial associates. I shall abide by the decision with perfect composure, confidently believing that it will hasten the day of the public ownership, not only of the railroads, but of all other public utilities. I view it as the death knell of the wage system. In the long run this decision will prove a blessing to the country.

Edited by Tim Davenport

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