

The Illinois National Guard stands in front of the Arcade Building - a type of indoor shopping center for Pullman workers - on July 10th, 1894. The Illinois National Guard was sent by President Cleveland at the request of George Pullman. Illinois Governor Altgeld was against the idea of breaking the strike using the State National Guard. *Source: Chicago History Museum, Chicago Historical Society*



1. Why would the Illinois National Guard be in front of the Arcade Building, specifically?
2. Do you believe the workers were intimidated by seeing the NG in their town?
3. What does Cleveland's interference demonstrate about the government's attitude towards unions?
4. Who would benefit from the presence of the National Guard? Pullman or the workers?
5. What message do you think President Cleveland was trying to show to the rest of the nation by sending the National Guard to Pullman?

A photo of workers protesting Pullman on May 11th, 1894 by sitting in one of the train cars Pullman produced. *Source: Chicago History Museum, Chicago Historical Society*



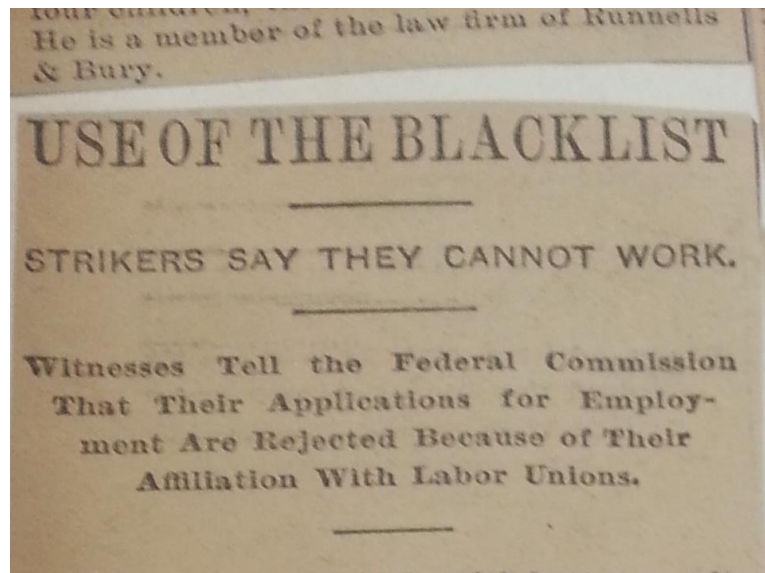
1. What message do you think these workers were trying to send Pullman?
2. Why would they chose such a relaxed position?
3. What do you think that the general public thought of this picture?

A photo of a fire happened on July 6th, 1894. A witness claimed to see rioters set fire to approximately 700 train cars in South Chicago. The witness was an Inter Ocean reporter. *Source: Chicago History Museum, Chicago Historical Society*



1. Why do you think people burnt down train cars?
2. What was the message behind such an act?
3. Do you think that this act was part of the reason the national movement failed? Why or why not?

This article was published after the strike and spoke of a commission consisting of railway management. The commission was in charge of labeling every strike leader with the use of witnesses - mostly ex-American Railway Union members and ex-railway workers. The list was then used to stop other railways from hiring the movement leaders. *Source: Chicago History Museum, Chicago Historical Society*



1. Why did companies care so much about a worker's affiliation with the labor movement?
2. What was the purpose of the blacklist?
3. Do you think that the blacklist was likely effective? Why or why not?

REACHES ITS CLIMAX

Crisis in the Great Strike and Boycott Comes this Evening

DEBS PLAYS HIS BEST CARD

Every Man He Can Control Is Ordered Out at 6 o'Clock

Final Test of Strength at Hand - Rock Island and Stockyards Employes Will Quit To-Night

The climax of the American Railway Unions's strike has been reached to-day. President Debs has played his last card and has exercised all the authority that is vested in him to tie up the railroads. A general order to strike everywhere was issued this morning. Men were told not to wait to communicate with the headquarters of the union, or to ask for authority or instructions, but to go out wherever they can do the slightest good. The advice has been generally followed, and by 6 o'clock to-night it is expected that every man who can be called out will have left his work. Then the supreme test of strength between the railroads and the union will come. If they can still operate their roads it will be because the American Railway Union has not the power to tie them up.

To meet this situation the representatives of the railroads entering Chicago have been in session nearly all day maturing their plans, and they are as confident of success as are the strikers. Both sides assert positively that victory has already practically perched upon their banners. The railway officials say they can and will run trains and the strikers say they cannot, and each side has facts

and figures that at least partially back it up.

Both Sides Determined

On the one hand, there is no question that the roads are badly crippled now; but on the other, it is equally certain that they are moving trains, and in some instances doing better than they were yesterday. Their representatives say that they are in the fight to the end and that they will cheerfully pay whatever it may cost to break the power of the American Railway Union and prove that it cannot dictate how the roads shall be managed. The Pullman affair is lost sight of entirely and the roads now consider it their own fight. They say they have men enough to man their trains and replace every man who has gone out. They claim to be determined and ready to spend whatever money is necessary, and so soon as all their plans are matured will undertake to send out every train - freight, suburban and through passenger - on schedule time.

The men, however, are just as determined and just as sanguine. They have already partially tied up the stockyards, and at 6 o'clock to-night say they will have it completely tied up. All of the switchmen employed there have agreed to go out then. They have also secured a victory in the case of the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul and the Mobile and Ohio. Both roads have agreed not to haul Pullman cars. But the victory is not so great as it seems, for the reason that neither of these roads did much Pullman business. The Mobile and Ohio's contract with Pullman just expired, so it was free to act, and the St. Paul road only has two cars under contract. The rest are its own property and consequently the boycott does not operate against them. tied up to-day than yesterday, but some of the other roads seem to be in better shape to-day. The Illinois Central has its

suburban service in much better condition and has sent out all its through trains so far. The Grand Crossing express trains are sunning on time and the road was able to bring all its suburban patrons down town as usual this morning.

Station Baggage Men Strike

The station baggage men on the Chicago and Eastern Illinois, the Wabash, the Grand Trunk, Louisville, New Albany and Chicago ... the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe roads, running into the Dearborn station, went out at noon to-day.

In regard to this Mr. Thomas said: "It is not known just how many have gone out, but probably the number will reach about twenty. However, there is not the slightest difficulty in filling their places and that will be done immediately. The delay resulting from this will amount to practically nothing."

With the exception of the Chicago and Eastern Illinois, all trains on these roads have gone out promptly to-day. The suburban service of that road has been somewhat crippled, but not materially so. The situation at the Dearborn station is quiet, and indicates that the worst of the trouble is over.

The Situation Elsewhere

In California Attorney General Olney has taken a hand in the fight and has wired the receivers of the Southern Pacific and the Santa Fe to proceed at once against any strikers who interfere with mail trains. He says that this refers to the entire train carrying mail and not merely to the mail cars. No other car on the train must be molested. The switchmen on the Southern Pacific have gone out, however, and that has crippled the road seriously.

From St. Louis comes the information

that particularly the entire Gould Southwestern system is tied up there, but at Milwaukee all trains are said to be moving without molestation. Little difficulty is experienced even in handling the freight trains. On the Wisconsin Central injunction notices are being posted as a warning to all not to interfere with the operation of the road and trains are being moved. The Northern Pacific is pretty well tied up, but the engineers are said to be anxious to haul trains.

President Debs is elated over the outlook and says he has no fear of arrest for contempt of court, as he has advocated peace at all times. But President Debs is no more sanguine than is Mr. Egan, who represents the railroads entering in Chicago in all strike matters. Mr. Egan summed up the stand taken by the roads as follows this morning.

"We have adopted the policy of no compromise and no surrender. It is now war to the end."

1. Why would the newspaper call Debs' plea for a national strike his "best card?"
2. Why do you think both sides of the strike were confident they would be successful? Explain both perspectives.
3. What is the biggest advantage that the General Managers' Association has over the American Railway Union?
4. Do you still believe that advantage for managers exists today? Provide an example.
5. Why was Chicago a key city in the strike?
6. How did the depression play into the General Managers' Association's favor?
7. Why would the federal government care if the whole train was moving and not only about the mail car?

Source: (Roosevelt University Archives, ILHS Archives, Pullman Journal)

Military and the Pullman Strike in the West

While most of the Pullman strike activity was centered in Chicago, this event affected railroads operating in 27 states. When mob action could not be controlled by local authority, President Cleveland deployed the U.S. Army as a result of pressure from the General Managers Association's headquarters in Chicago.

The cities of San Francisco, Los Angeles and Sacramento, California, were the areas most involved in the western states during the strike action. When rioting broke out in Los Angeles no state or local force was able to respond. On July 1, 1894, instructions were received in San Francisco to send a sufficient force to Los Angeles with orders to enforce the mandates of the U.S. Court and to stop obstruction of the U.S. mail. Within 48 hours trains of the Southern Pacific Railroad were again moving in the Los Angeles area. The soldiers were able to withdraw from the area on July 28.

In the switchyards of Sacramento, California, strike action reached a crescendo on July 11 with a train derailment due to sabotage by the strikers. The engineer and fireman on the locomotive were crushed to death. Three soldiers were killed and many others were injured. This, along with the interruption for several days of traffic between Sacramento and San Francisco generated increased hatred between the soldiers and the strikers. A few days after the wreck the troops attempted to maintain traffic at bayonet point in the Sacramento yards. The mob threw rocks at the troops and they responded by opening fire, which killed two men.

A more hostile attitude on the part of the strikers in the north of California made for an interesting situation. The activities of the strikers and unemployed peaked between July 4 and 12. Three thousand strikers stopped mail service in Sacramento. State militia arrive, but were useless as they sympathized with the strikers — they simply refused to move against the disorder. The U.S. Attorney in San Francisco wired for federal troops and stated that, "there is no doubt as to open insurrection at Sacramento."

Only four hundred regulars remained in the San Francisco-Sacramento region when it was necessary to move to stop the rioting in Sacramento. The Secretary of the Navy was required to supply five hundred Marines from San Francisco Mare Island Naval Station.

Peace was restored to Sacramento when the strikers faced a force of 1,400 men.

With the military units deployed in the Sacramento area there was concern for the safety of the San Francisco-Oakland area. Sailors and Marines under the commander of the Mare Island Naval Station were provided from the warships *Charleston*, *Monterey*, *Thetis*, and *Independence* which were located in San Francisco Bay. This group aided fifteen-hundred California Guardsmen in clearing the yards and other railroad property at Oakland. Trains were able to resume normal schedules on July 14.

On July 2 a potentially dangerous situation occurred in Colorado when a local sheriff who was sympathetic to the strikers stopped a U.S. Marshall and his force of eighty-five deputies from entering

1. What were some of the possible methods used to let railway workers from different states know about the strike?
2. How did these methods impact the outcome of the strike?
3. Why do you think California was so involved in the strike if they were on the other side of the country?
4. What do you think pushed the strikers to directly attack deputies in Colorado?
5. What was the direct result of the train derailment? Did the derailment and its results help the Pullman cause? The labor movement as a whole?
6. What was the General Managers' Association's method for fighting against the strike and boycott? Was it effective? Why?
7. Why would the Sacramento State Militia support the strikers' movement?
8. The end of the protests were beneficial to who? Why?
9. This article was written in 1993, nearly 100 years after the strike. How does that impact your reading of this article?

Raton to serve warrants. After a request to President Cleveland for help, one hundred and fifty troops arrived in the town on July 4. The troops escorted all trains for the next week. This resulted in the strikers backing down from their position of stopping trains moving in and out of Raton.

In Trinidad, Colorado, on July 2, fifty-two deputies were disarmed and assaulted by 300 strikers. Two days later, five companies from Fort Logan, Colorado, arrived in Trinidad. The deputies, now under the protection of the army, arrested 48 strike leaders and jailed them in Denver. This ended all strike activity in the Colorado region.

Between July 2 and July 6, the Northern Pacific railroad was subjected to interference with train movements between St. Paul, Minnesota, and the Puget Sound area of Washington. On July 6 the Army was ordered to reopen the railroad and troops were stationed at bridges and tunnels. For this operation a total of 1,000 men was required.

With protection by the various military forces, train operation between San Francisco and Ogden, Utah, was resumed and the strike in Sacramento ended July 22, 1894. At the end of the strike, soldiers were seen by some Americans as protectors of property and lives. Most labor groups and working-class Americans viewed the troops as strike-breakers working for politicians and corrupt industrialists. While the role of the military was controversial, it was accepted and was considered legal by the majority of Americans.

(From Clayton D. Laurie, "Extinguishing Frontier Brush Fires; U.S. Army's Role in Quelling the Pullman Strike in 1894," Journal of the West, vol. 32,

Jennie Curtis and the Origin of the Pullman Strike

This year, as visitors come to Pullman to mark the anniversary of the Pullman strike of 1894, it is an occasion for all of us to recall the dramatic events of one hundred years ago, many of which would have been forgotten if this commemoration had not been organized.

The story of Pullman is one of a "unique experiment", in the words of Almont Lindsey, who wrote the classic work on the subject in 1942 but of an experiment whose flaws led to a great upheaval and immense human suffering. Yet it is also a story of the extraordinary determination of quite ordinary people.

One of the most remarkable figures to emerge from the strike - and one of those who will be portrayed by an actress in this summer's commemoration - was Jennie Curtis, who had first gone to



I was earning on an average eighty cents a day, at the prices of 1894. It was very hard to have to work for such small wages as that, which would afford a person a mere existence. But the tyrannical and abusive treatment we received from our forewoman made our daily cares so much harder to bear... If she could make you do a piece of work for twenty-five cents less than the regular price, she would do so every time... She was getting \$2.25 a day and she did not care how much we girls made, whether we made enough to live on or not, just so long as she could figure to save a few dollars for the Company... No doubt she will remain in the employ of the Pullman Company, as that is just the kind of people they want at the heads of their departments - one who will help grind down their laborers."

The desire for gain at all costs revealed by Curtis in this letter, coupled with paternalism, was the fundamental cause of the dissatisfaction of the workers that resulted in the strike.

Among the major causes of dissatisfaction was the refusal of the Company to give tenants the right to own property in Pullman. The level of rents was considerably higher than the rents in nearby Kensington or Roseland - as much as \$17.00 per month. When wages were cut, as they were in the recession of 1893 leading up to the strike of 1894, the problem of rental fees was even more severe, as the company reduced wages sharply but refused to make any adjustments in rent, even going so far as to deduct rent from wages, leaving many workers with practically nothing to live on. Unfortunately, for workers such as

work as a seamstress at the Pullman Company at the age of 14, and was not yet twenty at the time of the strike. In a letter written to Rev. William Cardardine at the time of the events, Curtis recalled the conditions of workers for the Pullman Company in 1894: "...At the time the shops closed on account of the strike,

Curtis, wages for work and rental of accommodations were irrevocably tied together, as she wrote to Rev. Carwardine in the letter already cited: "...My father worked for the Pullman Company for ten years. Last summer he was sick for three months, and in September he died. At the time of his death we owed the Pullman Company about sixty dollars for rent. I was working at the time and they told me I would have to pay that rent, give what I could every pay-day, until it was paid... Many a time I have drawn nine and ten dollars for two weeks' work, paid seven dollars for my board and given the Company the remaining two or three dollars on the rent... Sometimes when I could not possibly give them anything, I would receive slurs and insults from the clerks in the bank, because Mr. Pullman would not give me enough in return for my hard labor to pay the rent for one of his houses and live."

Rev. William Carwardine, minister of the Methodist Church in Pullman, confirmed this appalling account in his own book on the strike: "... The scenes enacted at the bank during last winter (1893-94) were pitiable. Not only was the current rent urgently demanded, but back

rent was asked for... After deducting the rent, the men invariably had only one to six dollars on which to live for two weeks." Rev. Carwardine concluded: "Want and suffering was no uncommon picture" in the Pullman of 1894. It is therefore no surprise that the Pullman workers decided they could stand this treatment no longer. In the events that followed, it is again the eloquence of Jennie Curtis that exemplifies the determination of the Pullman workers and their union, the American Railway Union, founded by Eugene Victor Debs.

Curtis, according to William Adelman: "Jennie was a member of the grievance committee that called on George Pullman and Vice President Wickes to complain about the wage cuts and especially the higher percentage of cuts given to women workers in Pullman... Jennie also became a spokeswoman for all the Pullman unions, as well as a symbol for the strike, when she addressed the delegates to the American Railway Union Convention on June 12 in Ulrich's Hall in Chicago. She pleaded: 'Come along with us because we are not just fighting for ourselves, but for decent conditions for workers everywhere!'" It is wonderful to think of Jennie Curtis, not yet 20, dancing with Mayor Hopkins during the benefit for the strikers at the Market Hall on May 27, 1894. She must have been persuasive, because the mayor never supported the federal intervention that in the end broke the strike.

We all know the denouement of the strike: the intervention by President Cleveland, the armed militia and strike-breakers, the slow return of the workers to the Pullman shops, beaten down by the array of the forces against them. But the legacy of the Pullman strike is also that of the great courage demonstrated

by the workers and their supporters. Among these, we should keep a special place in our hearts for a great woman union leader - Jennie Curtis - and greet her as her incarnation passes by on the streets of Pullman this summer.

(Buder, Pullman: An Experiment in Industrial Order and Community Planning, 1880-1930. Oxford U. Press, NY, 1967
Carwardine, William H. The Pullman Strike. Charles H. Kerr, Chicago, 1894
Lindsey, The Pullman Strike. University of Chicago Press, Chicago.)
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1. What does Jennie Curtis' description of Pullman workers say about the American Dream?
2. What is an example of the American Dream for a worker during 1894?
3. Compare and contrast the 1894 American Dream to today's.
4. Do you see the living wage concern as relevant today?
5. Do you believe it was right for Pullman to charge Jennie Curtis her father's rent even though they were not allowed to own the home? Why or why not?
6. Should the rent have been cut during the economic hard times? Why or why not?
7. Why is Jennie Curtis' prominent involvement in the Pullman Strike significant in this era?

Source: Roosevelt University Archives, ILHS Archives, Pullman Journal

The American Railway Union and the Pullman Strike

That the Pullman strike at the Chicago facility should have happened in the summer of 1894 is not surprising. Given the financial circumstances of the workers, the unwillingness of company officials (most notably Thomas H. Wickes and George Pullman himself) to show any concern or attempt to ameliorate the situation, it is inconceivable from our vantage point that any other action could have been taken.

In one of those bizarre quirks of history, it was just the preceding summer that an organization called the American Railway Union (ARU) was founded. Its headquarters were also in Chicago and it was led primarily by Eugene V. Debs, a former railroad employee and editor of The Locomotive Fireman's Magazine. Membership was open to all white employees who served the railroad in any non-managerial capacity. On May 11, 1894, the Pullman workers struck the company and that evening the company closed its works.

One month later, the ARU held its first convention in Chicago. After attempts to talk with company officials and upon seeing first hand the conditions in Pullman itself, the convention voted to boycott the company by refusing to handle any trains with Pullman cars. The strike took effect on June 26, 1894.

At first it appeared as though nothing would happen. George Pullman himself watched the "Diamond Special" for St. Louis leave 12th Street Station that evening and pronounced the strike "ineffective." However, shortly after leaving

the station, switchmen refused to switch the Pullman cars and quit work. Others followed suit and some 3500 men from the Illinois Central Railroad walked off, thus paralyzing its operations.

The work stoppage did not end with the Illinois Central. The Chicago and Northwestern, Chicago, Burlington and Quincy, the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe, and the Union Stock Yards and Transit Company were also effected. Beyond this, many local unions saw the situation as a chance to air their own grievances. The strike was spreading to other roads not included in the original plan but its strongest support would be in the western and northwestern parts of the country where the strength of the American Railway Union lay. Additionally, most of the Pullman cars moved over this area and not to the East where other companies held contracts for sleepers. The ARU was in a struggle for its very existence and was now taking head on the General Managers' Association, an association of 24 railroads having terminals in Chicago. This was a formidable group comprised of the railroads already mentioned and more. Their strong financial backing and opposition to labor were well known and now the full hostility of this organization was directed at the ARU with determination to crush this organized labor union.

To this end railway managers in many eastern cities were called upon to establish agencies for hiring switchmen, towermen, and yardmen to be sent to Chicago as needed. Because of the ongoing depression, there was no shortage of available help and supply well exceeded demand. It was a major part of their strategy to draw the federal government into the fray and to change the perception of the strike as one between

worker and government rather than a battle between the railroads and labor. Any subterfuge was used as was the deliberate inconveniencing of the traveling public in order to arouse anger towards the strikers. Additionally, freight ~~for shipment was not accepted and halt-~~ amount of railroad traffic. For their part, the Managers' Association freely admitted to this and said they were at a standstill. They portrayed the situation as ominous and called for federal troops from Fort Sheridan to restore order. The Managers' Association maintained it was the government's duty to suppress the riots and "restore to the public the service which it is now deprived of by conspirators and lawless men." (Lindsey 1971: 144) It was now a fight between the U.S. government and the ARU.

The main problem as far as the U.S. government was concerned and their ultimate wedge for entering into the fray was the disruption of the U.S. mail. Debs and the ARU had maintained all along that they had no intention to interfere with the operation of mail trains on condition that no Pullman cars be attached. As the Pullman Company had contracts with the railroads, it would have been a contract violation and the railroad officials decided not to allow the operation of trains without a full complement of cars. The General Managers' Association was not slow in turning this to their advantage by using it to involve the federal government.

It did not take long after the strike began for the Postmaster General to begin receiving reports of mail being delayed at points throughout the West. Cairo, Illinois, was one of the first affected. A warning was issued to the Union to the effect that if necessary the whole force of the government would be

used to keep the mail moving. For Debs' part, he explained that the railroad strikers were not involved in this activity

responsible for demonstrations of solidarity by outsiders. Railroad officials, however, held fast to their position that mail trains would not depart without the full complement of cars and any interference with Pullman cars on such a train would be viewed as obstruction of the mail.

As these reports came in to the Postmaster General, they were passed along to the Attorney General of the United States. Richard Olney was the man in this position and was definitely not "a friend of labor." Prior to his appointment in this role, he had been a lawyer in Boston for the railroads with their interests as his specialty. Indeed, he had been on the boards' of directors of a number of large railroads. He had served their interests well and would continue to do so in his new position as Attorney General.

Olney had a relatively new weapon at his disposal, the "injunction," which he used to great effect. The basis for the injunction was a broad interpretation of the Sherman Anti-Trust Law of 1890. The Circuit Courts of the United States were invested with the power to issue restraining orders, based upon the rather ambiguous language of the law, whenever action was considered necessary to prevent violation of the law. The Court did acknowledge that men could legally combine and leave work. However, it denied to labor the right to unite for the purpose of inciting men to strike when such would be in violation of a contract of service or with intent of injuring the employer. This was seen by the judges as a conspiracy, against which the injunction could be used.

This injunction in its final form contained numerous allegations. By dis-

rupting the movement of mail and interstate commerce, the strikers were charged with conspiracy. The Palace car, as so

It should be noted that it was not just the action of the federal government alone which led to this crushing defeat for labor but also the refusal of certain key railroad "Brotherhoods" to go along with the strike. For various reasons the Order of Railroad Conductors, the Switchmen's Union, and the Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen did not support the strike. Indeed, the railroad trainmen executives lashed out at the whole purpose and plan of the ARU and defended the policy of the General Managers' Union, stating that the railroads took action in defence of Pullman contracts and not in defence of the labor policies of George Pullman. Labor had never suffered more disastrously.

(References from Stanley Buder's Pullman: An Experiment in Industrial Order and Community Planning, 1880-1930, 1967; Rev. William H. Carwardine's The Pullman Strike, reprinted 1973; Almont Lindsey's The Pullman Strike, 4th ed., 1971.)

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stated, was necessary to the successful operation of trains and above this the railroads had to use them or be in violation of Pullman contracts. Further, it held that force and intimidation was utilized to keep workers from filling positions left open by strikers and that violence towards railroad property had also been used as the strikers' weapons.

Among the actions the writ enjoined workers from doing, and there were many, was the sending of telegrams or any form of communication for the purpose of encouraging them to leave their duties as railroad employees. Although it is doubtful that Debs realized it at the time, this was a major blow to his ability to legally continue to direct the strike from his Chicago office. Several newspapers from across the country saw in this form of omnibus injunction a violation of popular rights and ran editorials to that effect.

On July 17th, Debs voluntarily surrendered himself to the court in Chicago for being in violation of the injunction. On July 18th, the cause of the ARU seemed doomed and the Pullman Company posted a notice that as soon as a new labor force could be employed, the works would reopen. All those except strike leaders were allowed to reapply for work at the same wage scales and same rents as existed prior to the strike. Additionally, they were required to surrender their membership in the ARU. On August 2nd, a convention of the ARU met in Chicago and bowed to reality. Thus was recognition of the defeat of the Union given and the ARU began to disintegrate.

It should be noted that it was not just the action of the federal government alone

1. Why do you think so many people supported the workers' movement?
2. How was the Pullman strike "a chance to air their own grievances?"
3. Why would the ARU be fighting for their existence?
4. How was the General Managers' Association a win and/or a loss for the labor movement?
5. The General Managers' Association drew attention from the federal government, why was this an effective method of fighting against the strikers?
6. Explain the connection between the Sherman Anti-Trust Law of 1890 and the injunction.
7. Why do you think the Attorney General be so invested in going against the labor movement if he no longer worked for the railroads?
8. Are there still cases of anti-union sentiment today by some government officials?
9. What did the ARU achieve at the end of the strike?
10. Why was the lack of participation from certain "railroad Brotherhoods" a key factor in the defeat of the ARU?
11. This article was written in 1994, what is the purpose of the article in contrast of a similar article written in 1894?