

DAILY PEOPLE

VOL. 3, NO. 277.

NEW YORK, FRIDAY, APRIL 3, 1903.

ONE CENT.

EDITORIAL

“THE WABASH INJUNCTION.”

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WHAT has come to be known as the “Wabash Injunction” is as unique as it is an instructive page in the history of the American Labor Movement.

Upon certain sworn allegations, made by the President of the Wabash Railroad Company, Judge Elmer B. Adams, of the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Missouri, granted on March 3 a writ for a temporary injunction against the Brotherhoods of Locomotive Firemen and Railroad Trainmen, who were on the point of declaring a strike. On the first instant, the same magistrate dissolved the temporary restraining order. The language of this order was published yesterday in these columns; elsewhere in this issue will be found the language of the first, or temporary restraining order. From them it appears that:—

It was false that the officers of the Brotherhoods had engaged in an unlawful and malicious conspiracy to force an undesired strike upon the men;

It was false that the men were satisfied with their wages and conditions of service;

It was false that the contemplated strike was a deliberate conspiracy to interfere with the mail service of the United States.

In short, the order for a temporary injunction was an outrage, and the complaint on which it was issued a tissue of perjuries.

Is there anything new in either of these performances? Not in the least. Outrages without number in the shape of “injunctions” have been perpetrated before by the Courts. Workingmen in Rochester have been enjoined from contributing to the strike of fellow workingmen; workingmen in Chicago have been enjoined from dropping work; workingmen in Lynn just now are enjoined from making front against a manufacturer’s alleged Trades Union, the Tobin Union, whose officers’ only trade is to help the employers lower wages under the shield of “Labor”; workingmen have been enjoined

from exercising, even by a sound, the distinguishing mark of man above the brute,—speech. All these outrages have been perpetrated before; in no way is the Wabash outrage unique, as far as this goes. As a matter of course, none of the affidavits on which these previous injunction outrages were based differed from the affidavits upon which the Wabash outrage was a graft. Without exception they were perjuries. Neither in this respect, accordingly, is the Wabash injunction a novelty. Nevertheless, in the instance of the Wabash outrage, there IS a variation introduced to the tune. All the leading injunctions stood. The preliminary order was duly made permanent. Capitalist perjury and judicial impurity were, accordingly, endorsed as purity and truth, and the endorsement “saved appearances.” Not so now. The order of Judge Adams, vacating his own preliminary writ, self-brands him a reckless, untrustworthy magistrate, and his findings amount to a pronouncement of perjury against the complainant,—and yet the Judge looks fresh and chipper: no fear of impeachment troubles his mind; and by not a hint does he, as is his duty, call on the District Attorney to take cognizance of the perjurers, who, poor innocent that he is, “led him astray.” It is in this variation to the old tune that lies the uniqueness of the Wabash outrage. It did its work as effectively as all its predecessors. To proceed in the regulation way, “save appearances” and make it permanent, is now considered superfluous. It is thought that appearances need no longer be saved. On the contrary, by leaving appearances “unsaved” a new system of humbugging the working class is inaugurated. The working class is to be made to believe that it “won a glorious victory” by the dissolution of the injunction,—a dissolution AFTER the injunction had done its work to perfection, to as much perfection as its predecessors which were not dissolved;—a “victory” which the capitalist political job-holding and Roosevelt-pet Frank P. Sargent of the very Locomotive Firemen will, like Mitchell, earn his Judas pence to make the working class swallow.

The “Wabash Injunction” marks a new era. Watch it work!

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.

Uploaded November 2006