

Statement to the Press on the Haywood Verdict (July 28, 1907)

The verdict of acquittal is a gratifying surprise to Haywood's friends. Few were sanguine enough to expect it. Tried in a hostile community and by a jury of his political enemies, the best that was generally expected was a mistrial, based upon disagreement of the jury. The instructions of Judge Wood indicated a sharp turn in the trial in favor of the defendant. I am at a loss to understand it unless the pressure of powerful influences was brought to bear at this juncture in favor of acquittal.

My own opinion is that the mine owners and capitalists generally concluded they could not afford to risk conviction, for the reason that the public in general and the working classes in particular would not have stood for it. The original design of the Mine Owners' Association was the summary execution of Moyer, Haywood, and Pettibone. The utterly unexpected and unprecedented demonstration of protest on the part of organized labor thwarted the conspiracy and defeated its malign purpose.

The verdict not only vindicates the defendants, but it places President Roosevelt in an awkward position, which can only be relieved by an apology to the innocent men he condemned.

The fact that we are approaching a presidential election was fortunate for the defendant. The powerful interests back of the prosecution realized that a conviction would have a far-reaching effect upon the working class. Some time ago I suggested the nomination of Haywood as the candidate for the Socialist Party for president,¹ and now believe his nomination will be an acclamation, and that the working classes of the nation will rally to his support.

Wire report, published as "Eugene V. Debs Comments on Haywood's Trial and Talks Strongly in Doing So" in *Daily News-Democrat* [Paducah, KY], vol. 40, no. 226 (July 29, 1907), p. 2.

¹ The suggestion of a nomination of Big Bill Haywood for President by the Socialist Party was first made in "The Coming Climax in the Irrepressible Struggle for Emancipation" *Appeal to Reason*, May 18, 1907, reprinted above here.