

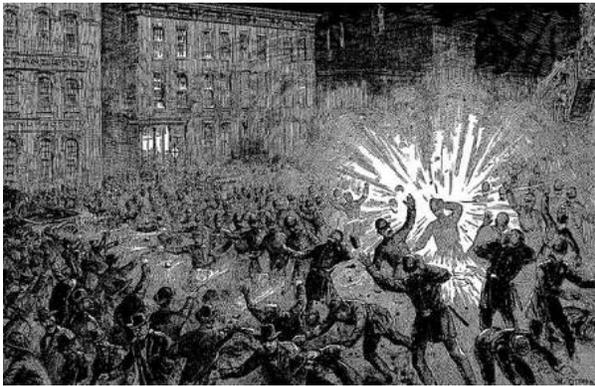
# Haymarket Affair

1886

Chicago with its strong labor movement had the nation's largest demonstration on Saturday, May 1, 1886, when reportedly 80,000 workers marched up Michigan Avenue arm-in-arm carrying their union banners. The Eight-Hour Day Movement caught the imagination of worker across the country.

On Monday, May 3, the peaceful scene turned violent when the Chicago police attacked and killed picketing workers at the McCormick Reaper. This attack by police provoked a protest meeting which was planned for Haymarket Square on the evening of Tuesday May 4.

While the events of May 1 had been well planned, the events of the evening of May 4 were not. Most speakers failed to appear. Instead of starting at 7:30 pm, the meeting was delayed for about an hour. Instead of the expected 20,000 people, fewer than 2,500 attended. Even the Parsons' left early due to the weather.



The Haymarket meeting was almost over and only about two hundred people remained when they were attacked by a hundred and seventy-six policemen carrying Winchester repeater rifles. Then someone, unknown to this day, threw the first dynamite bomb ever used in peacetime history of the United States. The police panicked, and in the darkness many shot at their own men. Eventually, seven policemen died, only one directly accountable to the bomb. Four workers were also killed.

In Chicago, labor leaders were rounded up, houses were entered without search warrants and union newspapers were closed down. Eventually eight men, representing a cross section of the labor movement were selected to be tried.



On August 20, 1886, the jury reported its verdict of guilty with the death penalty by hanging for seven of the Haymarket Eight, and 15 years of hard labor for Neebe. Governor Oglesby changed the sentences of Samuel Fielden and Michael Schwab to imprisonment for life. Although 5 of the 8 were still to be hung the next day, on the morning of November 10, Louis Lingg was found in his cell, his head half blown away by a dynamite cap.

In June of 1893, Governor John P. Altgeld pardoned the 3 men still alive and condemned the entire judicial system that had allowed this injustice.

Passages from *The Story of the Haymarket Affair* by William J. Adalman, essay available in full in "The Day Will Come" booklet

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