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# FREEDOM

1886 : CENTENARY YEAR : 1986

ANARCHIST MONTHLY

VOL 47 No 4 MAY 75p



MAY DAY SPECIAL  
HAYMARKET CENTENARY

# FREEDOM

1886 : CENTENARY YEAR : 1986

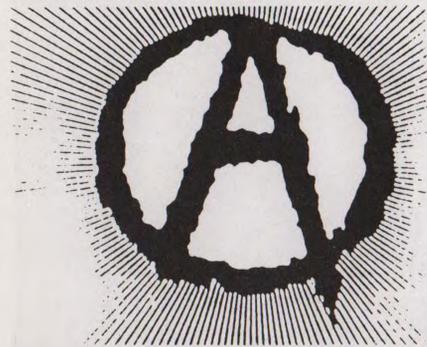
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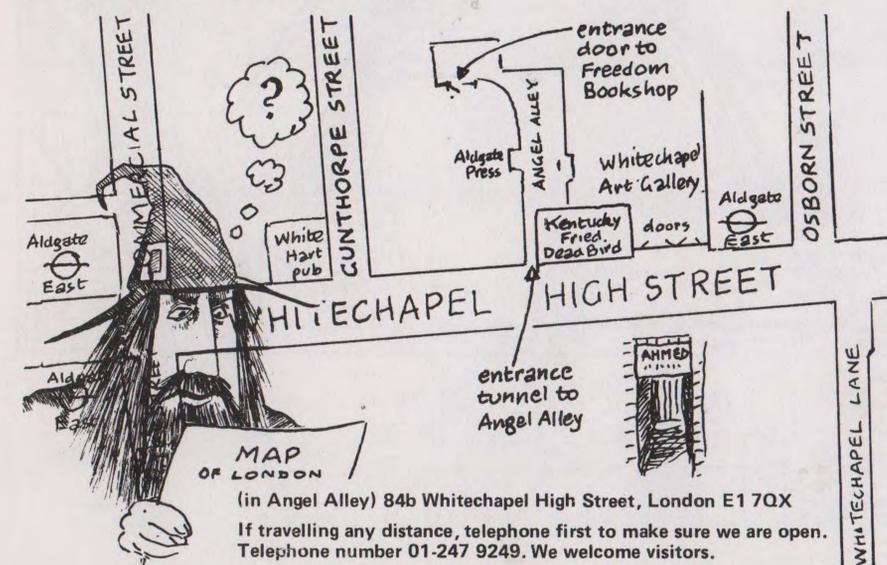
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**THE OPEN DOOR POLICY:** *Freedom* welcomes news, reports and comradely contributions to genuine anarchist debate. Articles give the individual opinions of their authors. Only articles specifically signed **the editors** reflect the shared view of the *Freedom* Collective.

**CONTRIBUTORS PLEASE NOTE:** *Freedom* is a professionally typeset paper, which means that articles for *Freedom* need to be typed, on one side only, triple spaced with a large margin down both sides of the page. Neat handwritten material should be on lined paper using every other line. Keep your own copy rather than ask us to return the original. Letters — up to 400 words, articles — usually 1,000 words.



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#### Our Centenary, October 1986

THE Centenary edition of *Freedom* will be a collection of new anarchist writing, intended to show readers of the present and the future the state of anarchist thought in 1986. It will be more of a book than a magazine; *Freedom* subscribers will receive it as part of their subscription, but it will also go on the Freedom Press book list, probably priced at £2 or £2.50.

We are communicating with various anarchist writers whom we know, and a few artists, to ask for contributions. We are aware, however, that the anarchist writers whom we know are not the only good ones. Mostly we know the well-known people and the *Freedom* contributors, and we see many original and useful contributions in, for instance, the proliferating local anarchist magazines, written often anonymously by comrades whom we do not yet know.

So this is a public invitation to submit articles for inclusion in the *Freedom* Centenary issue. Up to 900 words preferred. Deadline for submissions Saturday 9 August (we hope to start printing during August). No guarantees of publication for anybody, but everything carefully considered.

#### Freedom contacts list

WE are revising the contacts list. Please send deletions, additions and amendments by mid-May please. (If you have already sent them, be on the safe side, send them again).

#### Bookshop notes

*The Autobiographies of the Chicago Martyrs*, ed. Philip Foner, is available from Freedom Bookshop, price £4.75. Also available *The Haymarket Speeches 1895-1910 of Voltairine de Cleyre*, with notes by Paul Avrich and illustrations by Siporin, price £2.00. Paul Avrich's superb *The Haymarket Tragedy*, reviewed by NW in *Freedom* November 1984, is not in stock but can easily be ordered for anyone willing to pay £29.40.

*Dynamite* by Louis Adamic (1931), subtitled *A Century of Class Violence in America 1830-1930*, and reprinted by Rebel Press in 1984 is £4.50. Add 10% postage (20% overseas), cheques to Freedom Press.

## Libya TERRORISM ON BOTH SIDES



AS ANARCHISTS, we do not support governments — not the American government, not the Libyan government and not the British government — neither do we support nationalism. The latest episode of violence in Libya can only confirm our view that nation states far from creating peace are the major cause of violence in the world.

Tragically this is a view that very few people in the world share with us. Nevertheless we believe that it is the only sane and rational view for a person who is genuinely concerned about violence.

Let us state our view clearly. We do not support nation-states because they have always led to bloodshed through war and exploitation. Some 55 million people died in the Second World War. Since then a further 35 to 40 million people have died in wars around the world. And they tell us that this has been a period of peace. As if this were not enough, the shadow of nuclear war hangs over all our heads.

In the face of these horrifying figures the violence caused by 'terrorists' fades into insignificance. Two people died in a

West Berlin disco frequented by US army personnel. Many more than two people died in the US reprisal raid. The killing will continue as long as we continue to support governments. The responsibility for the current violence belongs not only to President Reagan and Mrs Thatcher but also to all those who lend their support to murder by voting. The act of voting gives carte blanche to those in power to do as they please. A vote for Labour or the Alliance legitimises the government elected as much as a Tory vote.

If we hand over power to others to act in our name, we should not be surprised if they use and abuse that power. It is no good complaining and protesting after the event. There can be no end to violence unless people take control of their lives and are willing to take responsibility.

The US government condemns terrorism while supporting the contras against Nicaragua. It invokes International Law while deliberately flouting it by mining the coast of Nicaragua. It speaks of freedom and human rights while supporting

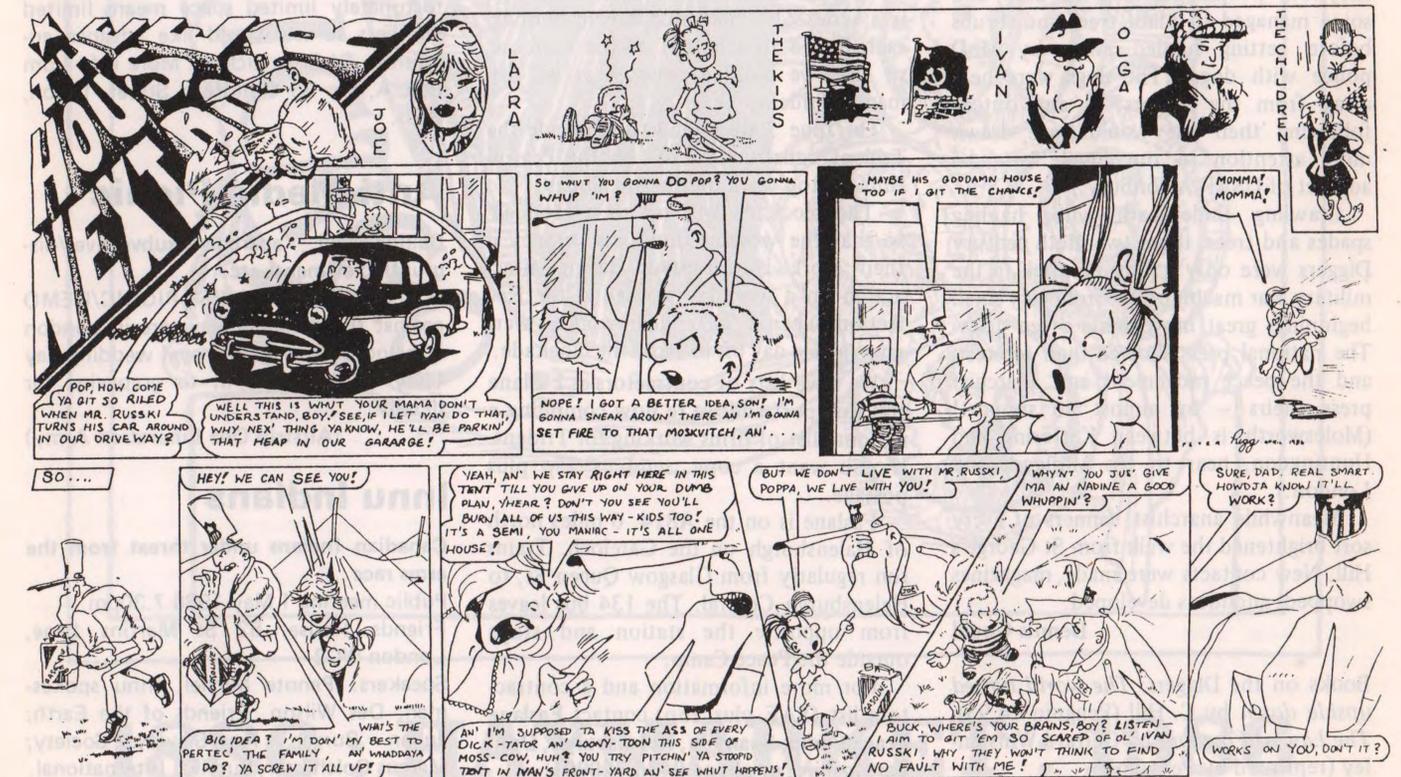
dictatorships in Central and South America. It tells us that the attack on Libya will reduce terrorism while US embassies round the world are put on alert against terrorism. Mrs Thatcher's decision to allow bases in Britain to be used for the attack makes British citizens more vulnerable, not less. While being horrified by terrorist attacks on innocent civilians both governments casually dismiss civilian deaths in Libya as part of the price that has to be paid in the fight against terrorism — exactly the same arguments used by terrorists.

They talk about Libyans sending arms to the IRA while ignoring the fact that both the US and Britain are involved in a massive arms trade. Indeed, ex-CIA agents were involved in organising US arms sales to the Libyan government.

Is there a difference between the violence of states and those of 'terrorists'? Yes there is. It is one of scale. Terrorism is the response of those who are relatively weak and can therefore cause only minor damage. Governments however, with massive resources, can inflict violence on an enormous scale. That is all, there is no difference of essence.

Finally, let us note that the violence of states is impersonal and institutionalised. When soldiers kill they do so because they are paid to. All attempts are made to disguise what they are doing by the use of euphemisms such as 'collateral damage' — an expression which refers to the killing of civilians.

As anarchists, we are for a more human and personal world, where violence cannot be centralised and used on the scale it is being used today. JKA



## Diggers Walk

The Diggers Walk: St George's Hill to Molesworth, 20 to 29 March 1986.

IN 1649 Gerrard Winstanley led a small group of levellers, ranters, and quakers, who attempted to squat wastelands and common lands, and became known as 'The Diggers' from their attempt to dig on St. George's Hill, Surrey. Other groups of Diggers were active elsewhere; one group wrote the *Wellingborough Declaration*, recently reprinted in a fine local paper the *Northampton Libertarian*.

In 1986 another group of radical 'diggers' gathered at St George's Hill to begin a walk across country, through London and Wellingborough, to Molesworth, to dig up land now inside the military 'weldmesh' wire. They came from Leeds, Derby, Reading, Winchester, Oxford, and Cambridge.

About fifty people gathered not far from the original Diggers site (now a private golf course). A sod of turf was cut and carried on route. Digging tools were collected along the way, later to be sent to Eritrea. Overnight stops were in various community and church halls. Musicians and street entertainers accompanied the walkers for short distances. Leaflets were pushed through doors en route.

The final lunch stop was at a barn in Molesworth village, belonging to a supporting farmer. There people grabbed a spade each, and trudged through heavy clay soil to the base perimeter, not far from the Rainbow Village site. Some fifty-four people got into the base, and some managed to plant trees and shrubs before getting hauled away by MoD police with dogs. (The dogs were held away from the diggers, as any outcry following their use would have drawn more attention to the missile base, an adjunct of USAF Alconbury.)

Crawling underneath wire, hauling spades and trees, these twentieth century Diggers were only a tiny pinprick in the military war machine. But from very small beginnings great movements often grow. The national press showed their interest, and the peace movement and anarchist press theirs — by almost no support! (Molesworth is between Kettering and Huntingdon, near to the Midlands and London.)

Meanwhile anarchist banners of every sort brightened the walk from St George's Hill. New contacts were made, magazines swapped, and ideas developed.

Dennis Gould



26 and 27 April at Lewisham Odeon, Loampit Vale, London SE13. Buses 36, 36b, 47, 54, 108, 108b, 180, 185, 199; British Rail Lewisham. Details from All Systems Go!, c/o 121 Bookshop, 121 Railton Road, London SE24.

## Events

### Rainbow Campaign

May 31 — June 2 The Yellow Action at Faslane

FROM May 31 to June 2 the Yellow Action is happening at Faslane. The Yellow Action is the third action in Faslane Peace Camp's Rainbow Campaign to stop Trident. The Rainbow Campaign is a series of 7 mass non-violent actions, each linked to a colour of the rainbow, so that we build a rainbow as we dismantle Trident.

On June 2 we intend to blockade the Trident construction site on the Peaton Hill, to stop work on the site all day.

The blockade will be on a Monday, so that the workers don't lose money if their work is disrupted. Having direct action on a weekday worked at the Red Action, when 1,500 civilian workers were given a paid day off to avoid the blockade.

We have lists of contractors at Faslane and Coulport and we're now compiling a national list of firms working for Trident. If you want a copy, send us 25p plus postage.

Faslane is on the A814, 6 miles north of Helensburgh on the Gareloch. Trains run regularly from Glasgow Queen St, to Helensburgh Central. The 134 bus leaves from opposite the station and stops outside the Peace Camp.

For more information and a contractors list (SAE plus 25p) contact **Faslane Peace Camp, Shandon, Helensburgh, Dunbartonshire**, or phone 0436 820901.

## Midlands Network

A MIDLANDS Anarchist Network is being formed after the conference in Nottingham earlier this month. Groups already involved are Bradford, Birmingham, Chesterfield, Coventry, Leamington, Lincoln, Nottingham, Sheffield, Sheffield Blackberry, Leeds, Huddersfield, Black Country As, Stafford, Warwick and others.

The Network exists for spreading information and initiatives, skill sharing, organising and mutual support between groups and individuals in the region. It will also enable us to meet up and organize, both politically and socially, which only happens rarely at the moment.

Quarterly 'delegate' meetings will be held, after which a newsheet will be produced and distributed to those on the contact list. The first of these will be in Leamington on May 24th.

Each winter there will be a conference and each summer a 'camp', the first to be held in Sheffield at the end of August.

Anyone in the region wishing to be involved should send a S.A.E. and a donation (unless it's for a prisoner) to receive the newsheet quarterly. The first is already out and is available c/o **Box A Mushroom Bookshop, 10 Heathcoat St, Nottingham**.

## Get-Together

All Sun and Mon 18th/19th May at 33 Guildford Street, Luton. Price £3.00, discussions/films/social/vegan meals inclusive. Accommodation available (unfortunately limited space means limited numbers so we would like advance enquiries). SAE for tickets. More info from Box A, c/o 33 Guildford Street, Luton, Beds.

## Anti-Media Picnic

Calling all anarchists/subversives/disgruntled elements etc. A SECRET ANARCHIST PICNIC/DEMO against the media somewhere in London is being organised for royal wedding day (July 23rd), listen in to grapevine for details.

(Airstrip One Liberation Army)

## Innu Indians

Canadian Indians under threat from the arms race

Public meeting 1 May 1986 7.30pm Friends House, 52 St Martins Lane, London WC2

Speakers: Penote Michel, Innu spokesman; Des Wilson, Friends of the Earth; Julian Burger, Anti-Slavery Society; Marcus Colchester, Survival International.



# 1886 : HAYMARKET : 1986

# Haymarket and May Day a centennial history 1886-1986

HAYMARKET is one of the most dramatic episodes in the history of the labour movement and especially of the anarchist movement in the United States and indeed the world. As well as its immediate impact, it had a permanent effect through the establishment of May Day as the international festival of the labour movement. Its centenary is therefore worth marking with a full account of the events and their implications from the anarchist point of view.

## American labour before 1886

The situation which eventually led to the Haymarket affair was the result of three main factors – the rapid industrialisation of the United States after the mid-nineteenth century, accompanied by a great increase in the wealth and power of the capitalist class; the parallel increase in the size and poverty of the working class; and the continuous polarisation and intensification of the struggle between the two classes, in the context of the tradition of hysteria and violence in American public life.

The industrialisation of the United States on a large scale began after the Civil War of 1861-1865. The growth of industry led to the accumulation of huge fortunes by a few and the extension of working discipline to the many, and this led to the beginning of a labour movement on the pattern of Western Europe, fed by growing immigration. From the start both American capitalism and American trade unionism were particularly extreme in their methods, the two sides resorting to violence including assassination in many industrial conflicts all over the country. At the same time there was a strong tradition of secrecy and conspiracy on both sides, and the great capitalist trusts were matched by clandestine labour organisations – thus the first large American trade union (the Knights of Labor, formed in 1869) operated underground for several years.

The already bitter class struggle was considerably embittered by the great trade depression of 1873-1879, which involved bankruptcies, wage reductions, unemployment, lock-outs, homelessness and starvation, the response being strikes, demonstrations, riots and murders. There was a long tradition of utopian or communitarian socialism in the United States, but revolutionary socialism on the European pattern came relatively late. The trade union movement showed even less interest in politics than it did in Britain, and the International Working Men's Association (the First International) had little support, even after the General

Council was moved to New York in 1872 to keep it out of the hands of the anti-authoritarians.

But during the crisis of the mid-1870s the first significant socialist organisation in the United States was founded as the Social Democratic Working Men's Party in 1874, and in 1876 it joined the remnants of the IWMA and other socialist bodies to form the Working Men's Party. This was deeply divided by conflicts between reformists and revolutionaries, advocates of trade union action and of electoral political action, English-speakers and German-speakers, and so on, but it played an important part in the growing agitation.

In 1877 a rail strike in the East spread across the rest of the country and also into other industries, becoming known as the Great Strike, and involving major riots which became pitched battles between strikes and demonstrators on one side and police and soldiers on the other. Although the strikes were eventually broken, the broad movement was strengthened. The WMP increased in size and activity and became the Socialistic Labor Party.

The SLP was equally divided by the old conflicts. In particular there were angry controversies over cooperation with other political parties and over armed struggle. From 1878 many socialists favoured not only political action but also electoral alliances with other parties, especially the liberal Greenback Party, and the SLP was involved in fighting elections at all levels. But it achieved little success, often being cheated out of what success it had, and from 1880 there was increasing disillusion with such activity. From 1875 some socialists reacted to the violent methods of the bosses and the authorities by forming armed clubs, involving drilling and shooting practice, and open displays of weapons on demonstrations. In 1879 this was made illegal in Illinois, and the socialist organisations officially accepted the ban, but many members continued to support armed struggle in theory and also in practice.

## Social revolutionaries and anarchists

As a result of left-wing opposition to the moderate line of the leadership and most of the rank-and-file of the socialist organisations, so-called 'social revolutionary' organisations began to appear from 1880. This development was stimulated by the International Social Revolutionary Congress in London in July 1881, which was attended mainly by European anarchists but also by several American socialists, and which supported the policy of 'propaganda by deed' and tried in vain to revive the International. This was followed by a Social Revolutionary Congress in Chicago in October 1881, which led to the formation of the Revolutionary Socialist Party. At the same time a short-lived International Workmen's Association (the 'Red International') was formed in the West in 1881 by Burnette G. Haskell, an eccentric revolutionary socialist; one of its secretaries was William C. Owen, a British journalist in California, who was later active in the anarchist movement both in the United States and in Britain (where he worked for *Freedom*). The final stimulus came at the end of 1882, when Johann Most, the German revolutionary socialist who had moved towards anarchism and produced *Die Freiheit* in London for several years, emigrated to the United States and transferred *Die Freiheit* to New York.

A special unifying Congress of the Socialists of North America was held in Pittsburgh in October 1883. This accepted what was known as 'the Chicago idea', a revolutionary trade unionism which anticipated the later revolutionary syndicalism of Europe and the Industrial Workers of the World of America, and it adopted the Pittsburgh Manifesto, mainly drafted by Most, which called for revolutionary libertarian socialism – a combination of Marxist economics and Bakuninist politics. The RSP was re-formed as the International Working People's Association (the 'Black International') which became in effect a militant anarchist socialist party.

This drift towards revolutionary and libertarian socialism coincided with a new trade depression of 1883-1886, which resembled that of the previous decade. This time militant trade unionists began to break away from the established labour organisations, especially in Chicago, where in 1884 they seceded from the Amalgamated Trades and Labor Assembly and formed a revolutionary Central Labor



The Haymarket bomb, 4 May 1886 (as portrayed in *Harper's Weekly*).

Union, which was closely associated with the IWPA. The class struggle was particularly polarised in Chicago, the bosses and authorities using Pinkerton agents, police and soldiers to attack rebellious workers, frequently killing them. A notoriously brutal policeman was John Bonfield, whom the liberal mayor Carter Harrison tried to dismiss for his activities but who was instead promoted.

By the end of 1885 the IWPA had about 100 branches and 5,000 members all over the country. The majority were immigrants, especially from Germany, and the main concentrations of membership were in New York and Chicago. Although the best-known leader was Most in New York, the most active sections were in Chicago, where the main figures were Albert Parsons and August Spies, who dominated the English-speaking and German-speaking sections respectively and edited their papers the *Alarm* and the *Arbeiter-Zeitung*. They were both veteran socialists who had taken a leading part in electoral politics and trade union activity and had become convinced anarchists. Other leading figures in the English-speaking American Group were Samuel Fielden and William Holmes (both from Britain), Dyer D. Lum and James D. Taylor, and several women including Lucy Parsons (Parson's black wife), Lizzie Holmes and Sarah Ames. Other leading figures in the German Group were Michael Schwab, Oscar Neebe and Rudolph Schnaubelt. The latter also had a more militant faction, the Autonomists, which favoured terrorism and was led by George Engel and Adolph Fischer; and there were independent advocates of terrorism such as Louis Lingg and William Seliger.

The cult of violence on both sides went to remarkable extremes. The bosses

and the authorities, with the enthusiastic support of the press, encouraged a vigilante mentality involving a virtual lynch law. The revolutionary socialists and militant trade unionists responded by turning from violence as a means of defence to violence as a means of attack, and moved on to the use of terrorism by explosives. The best-known advocate of such methods was Most, and in July 1885 he published a standard work on the subject – *Revolutionary War Science: A Little Handbook of Instruction in the Use and Preparation of Nitroglycerine, Dynamite, Guncotton, Fulminating Mercury, Bombs, Fuses, Poisons, &c, &c*. This was widely circulated and serialised, and its concluding message was taken literally: 'Proletarians of all countries, arm yourselves! Arm yourselves by whatever means you can. The hour of battle is near.'

Virtually all the leaders of the anarchist and syndicalist organisations took the same line, especially in Chicago, and even those who – like Most – never took part in violence themselves were closely involved in encouraging those who did take part. The approval of violence was expressed in very provocative ways, on a personal as well as a political level. On 15 November 1884 C. S. Griffin wrote an article in the *Alarm* ending: 'Assassination properly applied is wise, just, humane, and brave. For freedom all things are just.' On 21 February 1885 Gerhard Lizius wrote a letter in the *Alarm* beginning: 'Dynamite! Of all the good stuff, this is the stuff.' On 7 May 1885 the *Chicago Tribune* reported a speech by Lucy Parsons, including a passage which became famous: 'Let every dirty, lousy tramp arm himself with a revolver or knife, and lay in wait on the steps of the palaces of the rich and stab or shoot the owners as they come out.

Let us kill them without mercy, and let it be a war of extermination and without pity.'

## The eight-hour day and May Day

Thus the scene was set by the widening and deepening class struggle and the mutual extremism of both sides; but Haymarket was actually precipitated by the relatively moderate demand for the eight-hour day. Campaigns for shorter working hours began in the United States during the industrialisation of the late 1860s, and led to several Federal and State laws. But such laws had little effect, being generally ignored or evaded, and the average working week remained six ten-hour days (50 per cent more than the average today), and many workers spent up to 90 hours a week in their jobs. During the early 1880s the trade union movement therefore decided to campaign for more effective action to win a real eight-hour day.

A congress of the non-socialist Federation of Organised Trades and Labor Unions held in Chicago in November 1884 proposed that the eight-hour day should become the legal working day and that it should be imposed by direct action by the workers. At the suggestion of Gabriel Edmonston, a delegate from Washington DC, it was agreed that this should take effect from 1 May 1886. Here it is necessary to consider the traditional significance of this particular day.

May Day began as one of the spring festivals of the pagan world. Maia (a word cognate with and originally meaning *mother*) was a deity in classical Greece and Rome. In Greek mythology she was a daughter of Atlas and the mother of Hermes; but in Roman religion she was a spring goddess who gave her name to the month we still call May. The associated festival – the Floralia or Florales – was one of the traditional vegetation rituals of ancient Europe, versions appearing in every country at every age, surviving in many places into our own time. In Rome it was a festival of flowers and fun (celebrated, according to Ovid, in a highly indecent way), and everywhere it was a cheerful celebration of youth and joy at the coming of summer.

May Day continued into the Christian era, despite the opposition of all the churches and attempts to absorb it into Pentecost (known in England as Whitsunday). In England it was a day for young men and women to go 'maying', welcoming the dawn with May-songs and May-games, presided over by a Queen and King of the May, or a May Lady and May Lord, or a May Bride and May Groom, all decorated with symbolic May-flowers or May-wreaths, May-garlands or May-bushes, drinking from a May-bowl or May-cup, dancing round a suggestive May-pole, and

**Attention Workingmen!**

**MASS-MEETING**

**TO-NIGHT, at 7.30 o'clock,**

**HAYMARKET, Randolph St., Bet. Desplaines and Halsted.**

Good Speakers will be present to denounce the latest atrocious act of the police, the shooting of our fellow-workmen yesterday afternoon.

**Workingmen Arm Yourselves and Appear in Full Force!**  
THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

**Achtung, Arbeiter!**

Große

**Massen-Versammlung**

**Heute Abend, 7 1/2 Uhr, auf dem**

**Haymarkt, Randolph-Straße, zwischen Desplaines- u. Halsted-Str.**

Gute Redner werden den neuesten Schurkenstreich der Polizei, indem sie gestern Nachmittag unsere Brüder erschoss, geißeln.

**Arbeiter, bewaffnet Euch und erscheint massenhaft!**  
Das Executiv-Comite.

performing mock marriages and other rituals. Christians and others in authority might disapprove, but young people insisted on getting up at dawn to enjoy themselves year after year.

May Day was mixed up with the Germanic festival of Walpurgis and the Celtic festival of Beltane, when witches flew and fires were lit; but the main tradition for more than two thousand years remained one of youthful innocence and renewed fertility, with obvious feminist overtones, and there was little effective interference from the religious or social establishment. The festival survived long after its supernatural connections had faded away, and it remained a virtually non-religious ceremony marking the annual reunion of Humanity with Nature and the rebirth of love and life.

May Day would therefore have been a highly suitable occasion for festivity in the great secular movements of the past couple of centuries, and the strange thing is perhaps that it took so long for the connection to be made. In the French Revolution it was indeed proposed as a feast of Love or Nature, but this wasn't put into practice; though the appropriate month in the exquisite new Revolutionary Calendar invented by Fabre d'Eglantine in 1793 was called Floréal.

Later the British utopian socialists sometimes gave it special significance, but

this never lasted. When William Benbow made his imaginative proposal for a Grand National Holiday in 1832 to establish the New Order, he suggested no particular date; but when Robert Owen announced the New Moral World in 1833, he suggested that it should begin on 1 May 1834. However, the date passed and was forgotten, as the Grand National Consolidated Trades Union, the first mass working-class movement in the world, fell apart in ruins. The date was next seriously announced half a century later and several thousand miles to the West.

In several parts of North America May Day was called Moving Day, being a conventional day to move house or change jobs, and several of the laws for shorter working hours came into effect on 1 May. But the connections between the traditional May Day and Moving Day or between Moving Day and the modern May Day have never been conclusively established.

The proposal to impose the eight-hour day by direct action on 1 May 1886 was repeated in 1885, and began to spread throughout the American labour movement, originally in the moderate unions and parties but eventually in the militant ones too. For some time the revolutionary socialists and anarchists opposed what they considered to be a reformist demand, and the IWPA and

CLU held back from the growing campaign until the beginning of 1886, when it became so large and so serious that they felt it was better to join and advocate a more radical view of working hours from within rather than from outside. Even then they always saw it only as a transitional demand, and insisted on the need both to take it by force and also to go beyond it to more revolutionary action altogether. Typically Albert Parsons, who had supported the eight-hour day during his moderate socialist period in 1878, attacked it in 1885, but supported it again in 1886. Yet although the anarchist support for the campaign was delayed and limited, it was enthusiastic and energetic, and in Chicago the IWPA and CLU took over the leadership and organisation several months before the fatal date.

**Haymarket and the Red Scare**

On 1 May 1886, a Saturday, there were strikes and demonstrations across the United States, involving hundreds of thousands of workers. In Chicago about 40,000 people went out on strike, and there were marches and meetings all day, the largest being those organised by the IWPA and CLU. But there were no serious incidents, and the next day, a Sunday, was relatively calm.

Real trouble began on the following day, a Monday, especially at the McCormick Reaper Works, where there had been an anti-union lock-out since February, and where Pinkertons and police were protecting scab workers from the sacked strikers. At the end of the working day on 3 May, there was a pitched battle, during which the police deliberately fired revolvers into the crowd, killing at least two people and injuring many more. After witnessing the carnage, August Spies produced a bilingual leaflet calling for revenge. During the evening this was widely distributed, and at the same time the militant leaders decided to hold a protest meeting the next evening in the large Haymarket square.

On the morning of 4 May Adolph Fischer produced a bilingual leaflet calling the meeting; a line calling for workers to come armed was later deleted, but some copies of the original version were circulated. During the day the atmosphere remained tense, and there were running battles in several places. The evening meeting began late, and it was so badly attended that the organisers moved the few hundred people present around the corner into Desplaines Street; so the Haymarket tragedy ironically didn't happen in Haymarket at all — or of course on May Day.

The meeting was completely peaceful from beginning to end. Despite the leaflets, few people came armed, and the speakers — Spies, Parsons and Samuel

Fielden — all explicitly discouraged violence, despite their eloquent indignation about the recent events. Mayor Harrison, who sincerely believed both in free speech and in public order, was present until near the end, when he went to the nearest police station to say that the meeting was quiet, and then went home. The crowd began to leave while Fielden was finishing his speech, after 10.00 pm, and only a couple of hundred people were left when the meeting was suddenly confronted by an equally large contingent of armed policemen led by Bonfield.

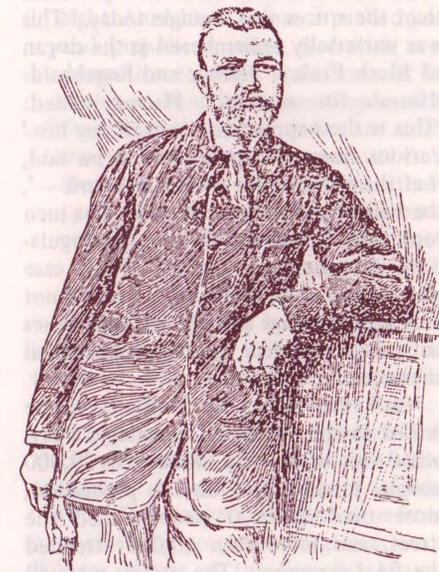
There was never any serious doubt that the violence at Haymarket was planned, provoked, and largely perpetrated by the police, even though it didn't go quite as they had intended. The meeting was ordered to disperse, and the police prepared to charge, when without warning a single dynamite bomb was thrown into their ranks, the explosion killing one policeman and wounding several others. The police immediately responded by firing their revolvers into the crowd. In the confusion, seven policemen were killed and about sixty injured, mostly by their own bullets, and about the same number of civilians were killed and injured by the police.

No one was ever caught or tried for throwing the bomb, or has ever been conclusively identified as doing so. Indeed after a century it is still completely uncertain who was responsible, and the true answer will probably never be known. The right immediately suspected an anarchist, and the left immediately suspected an agent-provocateur, but neither side could find any direct evidence either way. The man who was named at the time, Rudolph Schnaubelt, was present at the Haymarket meeting, was among the many arrested and released soon afterwards before any charges were brought, and fled to Canada, to England, and then to Argentina, where he lived for several decades. Frank Harris's journalistic novel about the case, *The Bomb* (1908), repeated the accusation against him, but all that anyone could prove was the circumstantial evidence of his presence and flight. Several leading anarchists, including some closely involved at the time, always insisted that the bomber was not Schnaubelt but another anarchist who also fled; the likeliest candidate, who was named publicly half a century later, seems to be one of the German Autonomists, George Schwab (no relation to Michael), who also escaped from the scene and survived for several decades.

But the important point is not so much that the bomber was never identified as that the identity of the bomber was irrelevant to what happened after Haymarket. What happened was the first Red Scare in American history — though

by no means the last, the experience being repeated at the time of the assassination of President McKinley in 1901 and during the IWW movement before the First World War, at the time of the Russian Revolution after the First World War (when Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman were deported and Sacco and Vanzetti were framed), and again during the Cold War after the Second World War (when the McCarthyist movement led to Hiss being framed and the Rosenbergs being judicially murdered).

A White Terror seized the United States, and especially Chicago. The press and politicians reached new heights of hysteria, the business community raised large sums of money, and the police made hundreds of raids and arrests, especially of people who were anarchists or foreigners or both. Civil liberties were virtually suspended for two months, and although nearly everyone arrested was quickly released, the atmosphere was that of a town in the American West or South dominated by a posse or lynch mob. The scene was set for a show trial and a purge of the revolutionary left.



Rudolph Schnaubelt.

**The martyrdom**

During the next eighteen months a small group of anarchists were turned into the Chicago Martyrs. On 27 May a grand jury indicted ten people for the murder of the one policeman known to have been killed by the bomb — Albert Parsons, August Spies, Michael Schwab, Samuel Fielden, George Engel, Adolph Fischer, Oscar Neebe, Louis Lingg, William Seliger, and Rudolph Schnaubelt. Parsons was the only fully native American; Fielden came from England (Todmorden, on the Yorkshire-Lancashire border); Neebe, though born in New York, spent his childhood in Germany, and the rest were German immigrants. Schnaubelt was

never caught, and Seliger gave evidence for the prosecution; the eight who were eventually put on trial were the vulnerable hard core of anarchist leadership in the Chicago labour movement, and they were now deliberately framed for murder and most of them murdered in revenge. If Most had ventured near Chicago he would undoubtedly have suffered the same fate; as it was, he had already been arrested, tried, and imprisoned for a year in New York for his inflammatory propaganda during the crisis.

The trial lasted for two months, beginning on 21 June. Parsons, who had managed to escape arrest, joined his comrades on the first day, voluntarily risking and eventually losing his life out of solidarity. The judge, Joseph E. Gary, was openly prejudiced against the defendants from beginning to end. The jury was openly packed. Much of the prosecution testimony was obviously perjured, but even then there was no convincing evidence linking any of the defendants directly or indirectly with the bomb. Instead they were accused of being accessories to murder on the grounds that their political propaganda had incited revolutionary violence and might have influenced the unknown bomber. On 20 August all eight were found guilty of murder and seven were sentenced to death, Neebe being sentenced to fifteen years' imprisonment.

The verdicts and sentences won general approval in Chicago and the country at large. On 7 October the judge denied a request for a re-trial, but then allowed the defendants to make long and remarkable speeches before confirming their sentences on 9 October. On 2 November the defence appealed to the Illinois Supreme Court, and in the long interval a growing campaign of solidarity began to spread across the country and then the world. Non-anarchist socialists and non-socialist anarchists, though repudiating the methods of the anarchist socialists, supported the cause of the defendants. Liberals, at first hostile to both, began to swing in their favour as doubts about the trial increased.

The eight defendants remained continuously active in Cook County Jail, receiving hundreds of visitors, including many outsiders, such as the British socialists Eleanor Marx and Edward Aveling, who visited the United States in autumn 1886 and strongly defended the Chicago Martyrs in public on both sides of the Atlantic, despite their equally strong opposition to anarchism.

On 14 September 1887 the Illinois Supreme Court rejected the appeal and fixed the executions for 11 November. During the few remaining weeks the campaign for reprieve reached its peak. An Amnesty Association mobilised respectable opinion, getting support from many leading Americans, including such labour



Albert Parsons.



August Spies.



Adolph Fischer.



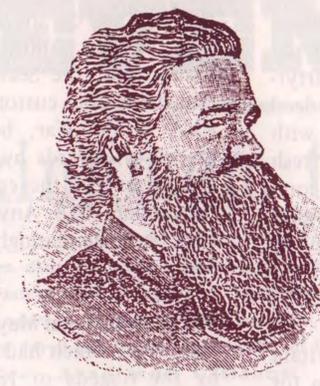
George Engel.



Louis Lingg.



Michael Schwab.



Samuel Fielden.



Oscar Neebe.

leaders as George Schilling and Samuel Gompers, such ethical leaders as Moncure Conway and Felix Adler, such intellectual leaders as William Dean Howells and Robert G. Ingersoll. Some people on the left refused to give their support, sacrificing much of their reputations — especially Henry George and Terence Powderly — but virtually the whole left, including most socialists and radicals, joined the campaign, holding meetings and demonstrations and sending protests and petitions to the end.

On 27 October the defence appealed to the United States Supreme Court, which ruled on 2 November that it had no jurisdiction. Neebe was transferred to the Illinois State Prison at Joliet. On 3 November Ingersoll, who was the best-known freethinker in the country but neither a socialist nor an anarchist, correctly prophesied: 'After these six or seven men have been, in accordance with the forms of the law, strangled to death, there will be a few pieces of clay, and about them will gather a few friends, a few admirers — and these pieces will be buried, and over the grave will be erected a monument, and those who were executed as criminals will be remembered by thousands as saints.'

A final campaign for clemency was directed at the Governor of Illinois, Richard J. Oglesby. On 3 November appeals to him were made by Fielden, Schwab, and Spies — though the latter soon withdrew his. Engel, Fischer, and Lingg refused to make any communication at all. Parsons, the least unpopular of the defendants because of his American origin and his attractive personality, could almost certainly have won a reprieve, but he refused to beg for mercy, and instead demanded justice, insisting on his innocence. On 10 November Lingg managed to kill himself with a dynamite bomb which had been smuggled into his cell by Lum, dying of head injuries after six hours. Later that day Oglesby reprieved Fielden and Schwab, commuting their sentences to life; they were transferred to Joliet on 12 November.

On 11 November 1887, Black Friday, an anarchist plan to attempt to free the condemned men by force was prevented by their own opposition. Their families were prevented from visiting them and held in custody all day. Just before midday the four men (who all refused the services of chaplains) were hanged in the jail in the presence of nearly 200 witnesses. Spies said: 'The time will come when our silence will be more powerful than the voices you strangle today.' This was universally remembered as the slogan of Black Friday. Fischer and Engel said: 'Hurrah for anarchy!' Fischer added: 'This is the happiest moment of my life.' Parsons began to speak, but as he said, 'Let the voice of the people be heard —', the will of the people was done. The men took several minutes to die of strangulation. A remarkable feature of the case was that all eight defendants showed not only great courage and dignity at all times but also complete purity of personal character.

On 13 November the five martyrs were buried in the Waldheim cemetery, a few miles west of the city. More than 20,000 people joined the funeral procession, more than 200,000 people lined the street, and more than 10,000 attended the final ceremony. The coffins were all decorated in red — black hadn't yet become the accepted anarchist colour.

Almost at once a profound reaction began. Having tasted blood, the establishment felt shame. The Chicago Martyrs were increasingly compared with John Brown, whose violent attacks on slave-owners were punished by his execution in 1859 but helped to precipitate the Civil War and abolish slavery, and whose soul goes marching on in popular memory to this day. The grave became a popular shrine, and on 25 June 1893 a ceremony was held to dedicate a large bronze monument designed by Albert Weinert, with Spies's last words carved on the front.

Then on the next day, 26 June 1893 the new liberal Governor of Illinois, John P. Altgeld (himself born in Germany), pardoned and released the three prisoners,

and at the same time issued a long statement condemning the whole trial — the brutality of the police, the behaviour of the judge and prosecution, the packing of the jury, and the perjury of the witnesses — and establishing the innocence of all eight defendants. The three survivors took some part in politics, but drifted away from the anarchist movement.

A monument to the Chicago policemen killed in the riot was erected in Desplaines Street in 1889, but far from becoming a shrine it became the target of repeated vandalism. It was moved several times but still attacked, being blown up twice during the campaign against the Vietnam War, and finally moved into the police headquarters in 1972.

In the United States the general effect of Haymarket was to exorcise anarchism from the labour movement; but the particular effect on many individuals was to excite or intensify their radical convictions — as in the cases of Emma Goldman, Alexander Berkman, Voltairine de Cleyre, William D. Haywood — and the final result was to increase the polarisation of the left and the marginalisation of anarchism. Outside the United States the effect was less equivocal, and in Britain the growing anarchist movement was given a considerable boost by the experience of Haymarket.

#### Haymarket and Britain

The British left was not as large or as militant or as divided as the American, but it responded with outrage and energy to the Haymarket affair. The left-wing press in Britain was very well-informed about events in the United States — much more so than the capitalist press — having close contacts with comrades across the Atlantic. Most had immigrated to England in 1878 and had been active in London before being imprisoned here in 1881 and then emigrating to the United States in 1882, and he kept contact with the German community. James Blackwell of the Social Democratic Federation was in the United States in 1886 and Henry Charles of the Socialist League was there

in 1887, and they sent regular reports to *Justice* and *Commonweal* respectively; both later became anarchists (and Blackwell helped to edit *Freedom*).

The progress of the American movement in general and of the Haymarket case in particular was closely followed in the several socialist and also in the fewer anarchist papers. The first English-language anarchist paper in this country, Henry Seymour's *The Anarchist*, gave the subject front-page headlines month after month — 'Chicago!!!' (June 1886), 'The doctrine of dynamite' (July 1886), 'War to the knife!' (September 1886), 'Murder!' (November 1886), 'Revenge, bloody revenge!' (December 1887) — and strongly defended not only the accused anarchists but the policy of anarchist terrorism.

*Freedom*, which began publication in the middle of the case, took a more careful line. The first issue contained the following editorial comment:

The United States can boast the possession of republican institutions, manhood suffrage, trial by jury, police and military nominally servants of the People's will, all the programme of political liberty in fact. Nevertheless there is no country in the world where the toiling masses are met by more arbitrary and brutal ferocity when they show any decided intention to free themselves from the control of the possessors of wealth. Take the current year, during which the workers have made a push for closer union, higher wages and the eight-hours' day. In all cases they have begun by peaceful resistance to their masters' tyranny. How have they been met? In spring, firing upon unionists on strike and wholesale evictions of strikers' families. All through the summer, severe sentences upon working-class boycotting, though employers are permitted to boycott unionists at their pleasure. Finally, in August, seven men condemned to death, simply because they hold and proclaim the duty of every honest man to resist oppression by every means in

his power. A bomb has been flung, by some person unknown, amongst the police preparing to charge a peaceable meeting at Chicago; preparing to shoot and beat down the people, men, women and children, as they had done the day before. The property owners are terrified at the energy of the protest against their authority, and clamour for some vengeance which may strike terror into the rebels. Hence the mock trial of the eight Anarchists before a packed jury and prejudiced judge, and their condemnation to death in defiance of the evidence. It is by proceedings such as these that the ruling classes are aiding the emancipation of the enslaved from the superstitious reverence for authority. And in this knowledge our brave comrades go gladly to meet their fate.

(December 1886)

In Britain all the left-wing organisations supported the agitation against the sentences, culminating in a joint meeting at South Place on 14 October 1887; a vivid account of this event appears in J. H. Mackay's political novel about the British anarchist movement, *The Anarchists* (1891). The speakers included representatives of all the progressive organisations — William Morris of the Socialist League, James Blackwell of the Social Democratic Federation, Annie Besant of the National Secular Society, Bernard Shaw of the Fabian Society, Stewart Headlam of the Christian Socialist Guild of St Matthew, George Standring of the Radical Federation, Stepniak of the Russian Populists, and Peter Kropotkin and Charlotte Wilson of the Freedom Group.

At the same time a petition was sent to Governor Oglesby with the signatures of many progressive intellectuals, including Walter Besant, Ford Madox Brown, Edward Carpenter, Walter Crane, William Morris, E. Nesbit, William Rossetti, Olive Schreiner, Bernard Shaw, Oscar Wilde — and a single Member of Parliament, Cunninghame Graham.

Bloody Friday in Chicago was followed two days later by Bloody Sunday in Lon-

don, — the great riot of 13 November 1887, when armed soldiers and police attacked marchers trying to demonstrate in Trafalgar Square against unemployment and Coercion in Ireland; a smaller riot occurred the following Sunday. In the fighting hundreds of people were injured and three were killed. William Morris wrote for them his great 'Death Song', with the refrain:

Not one, not one, nor thousands  
must they slay,  
But one and all if they would dusk  
the day!

It seemed for a time as if the American experience were about to be repeated, and both sides expected the revolution to break out. Morris used the episode as the centre of his account of 'How the change came' in his political utopia *News from Nowhere* (1890). The crisis subsided, the revolution receded, but Haymarket was not forgotten.

#### Remembering Haymarket

After Bloody Friday, *Freedom* published a full-page black-bordered tribute, beginning and ending as follows:

November 11th will henceforward be a red-letter day in the Socialist calendar. Red, for it is stained with the blood of some of the most earnest and devoted men who ever championed the cause of the people. Memorable, because that quarter of an hour's legal murder will do more to shake the blind faith of the masses in law and authority than the eloquence of years.

'Our silence is more powerful than speech,' said August Spies, as the fatal white hood shut the world of men for ever from his eyes. And he was right. The abominable injustice which has sent eight Anarchist Socialists to death and imprisonment merely for their opinions has arrested for those opinions the attention of the civilised world ....

That silence and that horror will bear stern fruit in the coming strife of classes. Our comrades have not died in

vain. Well might Adolph Fischer exclaim, as he stood beneath the gallows: 'This is the happiest moment of my life. Long live Anarchy!' The martyrdom which crowned his life has indeed inspired those for whom he died with fresh indignation against wrong, fresh devotion to freedom. He and his comrades have perished that the principles they represent may live for ever in the hearts of men.

(December 1887)

In 1888 Lucy Parsons came to Britain as the guest of the Socialist League for the commemoration of the first anniversary of Bloody Friday. She spoke at several meetings around the country, and made a profound impact, her dark hair and skin accentuated by her black clothes, and her beautiful face and voice reinforcing her passionate rhetoric. *Freedom* reported:

In England this first anniversary has been rendered the more impressive by the visit of our honoured comrade Lucy Parsons, who had addressed great and enthusiastic meetings in London, Norwich, Ipswich and Edinburgh; everywhere stirring a deeper chord of social and revolutionary feeling by her noble personality and the simple directness of her heart-felt eloquence. Everywhere the workers have met her with the enthusiastic sympathy due to her suffering, her courage and her devotion. Everywhere she has caused those who heard her to realise the true-hearted earnestness of the men and women who have been most energetic in the Chicago labour movement, and deepened the sense of solidarity between them and the English workers.

(December 1888)

Ironically, during the next few years Lucy Parsons moved away from anarchism and propaganda by deed towards syndicalism and the general strike. Later she joined the Socialist Party and the Industrial Workers of the World, and eventually became a fellow-traveller with the Communist regime in Russia and worked with the Communist Party until her death in 1942. Johann Most never abandoned anarchism, but after Haymarket he did abandon propaganda by deed, and during the 1890s strongly opposed it.

For many years afterwards, whatever socialists and even anarchists may have felt about the politics of Haymarket, the anniversary of Bloody Friday — what Charles Mowbray in 1892 called the anarchist Good Friday — was commemorated by left-wing organisations around the world, in much the same way as the anniversary of the Paris Commune on 18 March. Meetings and demonstrations were held, articles and pamphlets were pub-

lished, the biographies of the martyrs and the history of the case were repeated. This custom continued in the United States until the Second World War, but elsewhere the custom died out by the First World War, being ironically displaced afterwards by Armistice Day, the anniversary of the end of the war on 11 November 1918. Anyway, by this time it had been increasingly replaced by May Day.

#### The international May Day

May Day, which had been overshadowed by the tragedy of 1886-1887, was soon revived and then established on a permanent basis. During 1888 the moderate American Federation of Labor, which had emerged from the Federation of Organised Trades and Labor Unions in 1886, resumed the campaign for the eight-hour day, and in December 1888 it

called for a national day of strikes and demonstrations on 1 May 1890 — a repeat of the campaign four years before, without the militant anarchists and syndicalists. This time the movement became international as well as national, partly because of the impact of Haymarket, though the memory of the anarchist martyrs was played down and the eight-hour day aspect was played up.

Already in November 1888, during the International Trades Union Congress in London, a Belgian socialist called Edouard Anseele had proposed international labour demonstrations in May 1889, and an unknown delegate had amended the date to 1 May 1890. The proposal was lost, but the idea was discussed in several labour congresses in several countries during the next few months, winning growing support. The final decision came in 1889, during the

celebration of the centenary of the French Revolution.

During July 1889 there were two simultaneous international socialist congresses in Paris — a moderate one attended mainly by parliamentarist socialists, and a radical one attended mainly by Marxists, Blanquists and anarchists (the British delegates including Keir Hardie and Edward Carpenter, William Morris and Frank Kitz, Eleanor Marx and Edward Aveling). The latter founded the Second International; and in the closing session it also made two other lasting decisions on the suggestion of a French socialist called Raymond Lavigne. The first was to hold a day of international labour demonstrations in 1890; the second — after considering 18 March (the proclamation of the Paris Commune in 1871) and 14 July (the fall of the Paris Bastille in 1789) — was to choose 1 May, in solidarity with the American labour movement. So 1 May 1890 was proclaimed as a worldwide demonstration of labour solidarity in the struggle for the eight-hour day, the example of the Chicago Martyrs being almost forgotten except by the anarchists.

In the event the demonstrations were very successful in many countries, involving peaceful marches and meetings in most places, though fights and riots in some, and the occasion was repeated in 1891. This time they were even more successful, leading to serious conflict with the authorities in many places. The riot in Paris started the series of events leading to the Bomb Era and the official persecution of the anarchist movement, and the riots in Italy and Spain had an important influence on developments in the anarchist movement. The demonstrations were repeated again in 1892, and with the sanction of the Second International May Day became the annual festival of the whole labour movement, especially in Europe and Latin America.

Elsewhere things were sometimes different. Australia already had a labour day, marking the achievement of the eight-hour day as early as 1856, which became an official holiday on various dates in spring and autumn in various places; New Zealand followed suit. Most ironically, in the United States and Canada May Day was abandoned soon after it was revived, mainly because of the opposition to socialism in the labour movement, dominated for many years by Samuel Gompers of the AFL, which had actually initiated the revival of May Day. It was replaced by Labor Day, which had been proposed by the Knights of Labor back in 1882 as a sort of industrial equivalent of a harvest festival on the first Monday in September; this was made a national holiday in 1894, and is still celebrated today.

In Britain there was typical confusion and compromise from the start. The first

# REVENGE!

## Workingmen, to Arms!!!

Your masters sent out their bloodhounds — the police — they killed six of your brothers at McCormicks this afternoon. They killed the poor wretches, because they, like you, had the courage to disobey the supreme will of your bosses. They killed them, because they dared ask for the shortening of the hours of toil. They killed them to show you, "Free American Citizens", that you must be satisfied and contented with whatever your bosses condescend to allow you, or you will get killed!

You have for years endured the most abject humiliations; you have for years suffered unmeasurable iniquities; you have worked yourself to death; you have endured the pangs of want and hunger; your children you have sacrificed to the factory-lords — in short: You have been miserable and obedient slave all these years: Why? To satisfy the insatiable greed, to fill the coffers of your lazy thieving master? When you ask them now to lessen your burden, he sends his bloodhounds out to shoot you, kill you!

If you are men, if you are the sons of your grand sires, who have shed their blood to free you, then you will rise in your might, Hercules, and destroy the hideous monster that seeks to destroy you. To arms we call you, to arms!

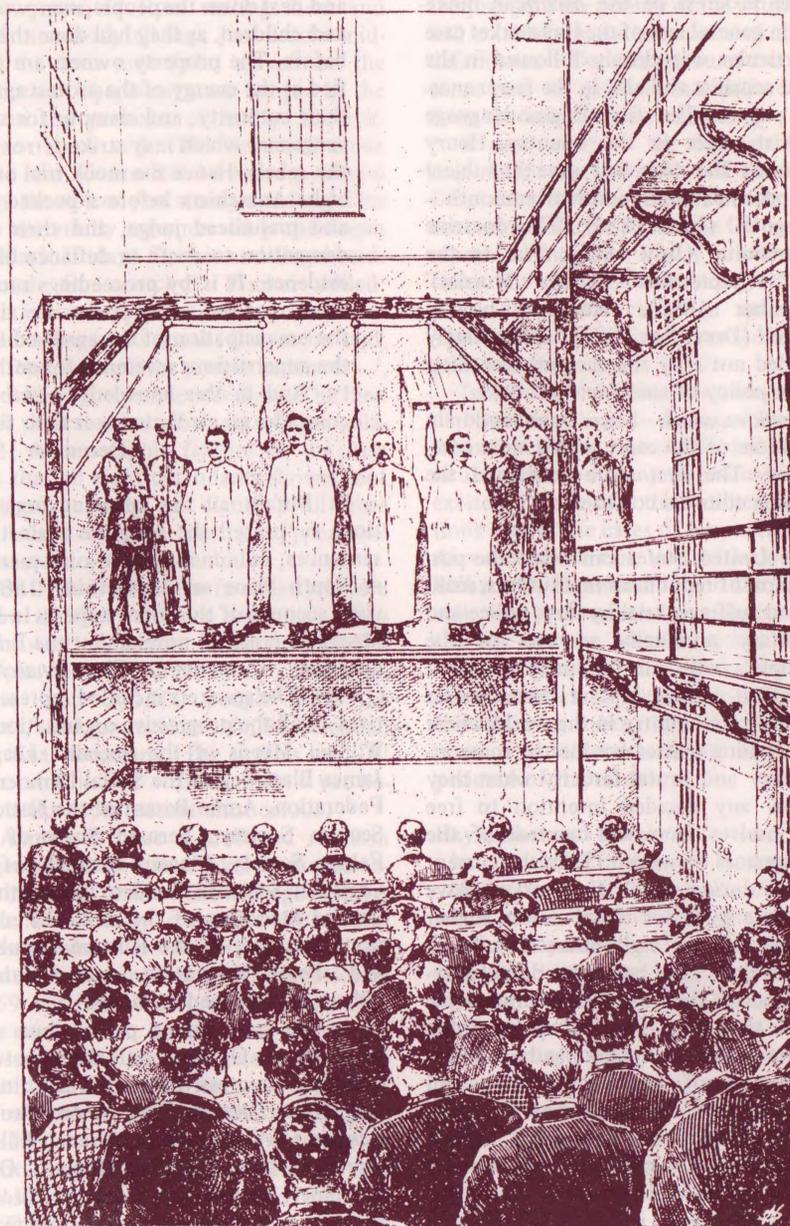
Your Brothers.

# Rache! Rache!

## Arbeiter, zu den Waffen!

Arbeitendes Volk, heute Nachmittag mordeten die Bluthunde Eurer Ausbeuter & Eurer Brüder draussen bei McCormicks. Warum mordeten sie dieselben? Weil sie den Muth hatten, mit dem Voss unzufrieden zu sein, welches Eure Ausbeuter ihnen beschließen haben. Sie forderten Brod, man antwortete ihnen mit Blei, eingedenk der Thatsache, daß man damit das Volk am wirksamsten zum Schweigen bringen kann! Viele, viele Jahre habt Ihr alle Demuthigungen ohne Widerstand ertragen, habt Euch vom frühen Morgen bis zum späten Abend geschunden, habt Entbehrungen jeder Art ertragen, habt Eure Kinder selbst geopfert — Alles, um die Schatzkammern Eurer Herren zu füllen, Alles für sie! Und jetzt, wo Ihr vor sie hintretet, und sie erucht, Eure Würde etwas zu erleichtern, da heben sie zum Dank für Eure Opfer ihre Bluthunde, die Polizei, auf Euch, um Euch mit Bleitugeln von der Unzufriedenheit zu kurieren. Wagt, mit Fragen und beschwören Euch bei Allem, was Euch heilig und werth ist, rächt diesen schrecklichen Mord, den man heute an Euren Brüdern beging, und vielleicht morgen schon an Euch begangen wird. Arbeitendes Volk, Hercules, Du bist am Scheideweg angelangt. Wofür entscheidest Du Dich? Für Sklaverei und Hunger, oder für Freiheit und Brod? Entscheidest Du Dich für das Letztere, dann säume keinen Augenblick; dann, Volk, zu den Waffen! Vernichtung den menschlichen Bestien, die sich Deine Herrscher nennen! Rücksichtslose Vernichtung ihnen — das muß Deine Lösung sein! Denn der Helden, deren Blut den Weg zum Fortschritt, zur Freiheit und zur Menschlichkeit gebührt — und strebe, ihre Wärbung zu werden!

Eure Brüder.



Black Friday, 11 November 1887.

international May Day, in 1890, fell on a Thursday, and the revolutionary socialists and anarchists wished to observe it on the same day as their comrades elsewhere, so they held a march through London in the afternoon and a meeting at Clerkenwell Green in the evening on 1 May. But the reformist socialists and Marxists, and above all the trade unionists, decided not to take time off work but to observe it instead on the nearest Sunday, so they held a huge meeting in Hyde Park on 4 May.

Thus was set the pattern which has lasted ever since — the great mass of the British labour movement celebrating on Sunday, and only a tiny minority of revolutionary socialists and anarchists occasionally insisting on May Day itself, or else intervening in the main event with

radical speeches or heckling and occasionally provoking fights. (Similar difficulties arose in Germany at an early stage.)

It should be emphasised that the anarchists were never happy about May Day, and from the start resisted the concentration on the eight-hour day and the suppression of the memory of the Chicago Martyrs. *Freedom* repeatedly expressed such doubts. At the time of the first May Day, it argued for direct rather than parliamentary action, for the achievement of shorter working hours by strikes rather than laws, and as part of a revolutionary rather than reformist programme (May 1890). At the time of the second May Day it commented:

For us conscious revolutionary Anarchists, the movement, coming as it

UNITED SOCIALIST SOCIETIES.  
 "Our Silence will be more Powerful than our Speech."  
**CHICAGO MARTYRS**  
 And **BLOODY SUNDAY.**

It has been decided to keep in memory the Cruel Murders legally committed by the United States Government in Chicago last November, when five men were killed and three imprisoned (two for life, one for fifteen years), as well as those of the three men killed by our own Government in Trafalgar Square on the same date, and the many others who were then imprisoned for maintaining in both cases the right of Free Speech.

The following amongst other Meetings will be held in London:—

**On Saturday, November 10,**

A Meat Tea will be provided at St. Paul's Cafe, St. Paul's Church Yard, E.C., at 7 p.m. Tickets 1s. 6d. each. Tickets will be issued at 6d. each for those who cannot attend tea, in order to hear an address to Mrs. Parsons and her reply. Cunninghame Grahame, M.P., in the Chair. Songs will be sung by the Choir during the evening.

**SUNDAY, NOV. 11.**

**REGENT'S PARK** - - - **11.30 a.m.**  
**HYDE PARK** - - - **3 p.m.**

**MONDAY, NOV. 12.**

**WORNUM HALL,** Store Street, Tottenham Court Road, at 7.30 p.m.

**SUNDAY, NOV. 18.**

**VICTORIA PARK** - - - **3 p.m.**

These Meetings will be addressed by MRS. PARSONS, of Chicago, U.S.A. (Wife of one of the Murdered Men), Cunninghame Graham, M.P., Prince Kropotkin, Dr. Merlino, William Morris, F. Kitz, J. Blackwell, John Burns, C.A. V. Conybeare, M.P., Rev. S. D. Headlam, several of the Trafalgar Square Victims, in addition to many other speakers.

All communications and information can be obtained from the Secretary, Commemoration Committee, 13 Farringdon Rd., E.C.

does from the midst of the workers, endeared to us by the blood of some of our best and bravest at Chicago, must have a peculiar interest. But for that reason we have to be all the more careful we do not permit ourselves to be led away by the movement into the paths of reaction, following the footsteps of the Social Democrats. We must not let the movement use us, we must use the movement. For us it can be nothing more than an opportunity. We have no desire to create another workers' annual holiday. On the contrary we wish to do away with the system of holidays and working days altogether and make men free and equal so that they may take their holidays when they will, just as the exploiting classes do today. The first of

May will lose all its significance and degenerate into a sort of universal Bank Holiday if it is to be established as a regular thing. It is only valuable to the workers now because it is a revolutionary menace against the capitalists. When the capitalists no longer make elaborate preparations to put down insurrections on the first of May, it will no longer be worth the while of the workers to celebrate the day.

(May 1891)

And at the time of the third May Day it commented: 'We may yet see the May Day of the Anarchist, no master over men, no government of man over man, but freedom and individual liberty for all' (June 1892). But in practice the anarchists of Britain as of most other countries were swept along by the tide of support

for May Day as a holiday rather than as a battle, and have managed only occasional protests or separate demonstrations.

During the subsequent century there have been significant developments in the nature and function of May Day. In Russia it became an important symbol of the growing revolutionary movement. Maxim Gorky's political novel *The Mother* (1906) contains a central episode based on real events at the May Day demonstration in 1902 at Sormovo, near Nizhni Novgorod (later renamed Gorky). Following the successful February Revolution in 1917, May Day officially became a national rather than a class festival; and then, following the successful October Revolution the same year, it became a state ritual.

The same pattern was followed by subsequent Communist regimes, so that what began as a demonstration of working-class solidarity became a display of military strength. The first known celebration of May Day in Asia was among sailors at Canton in 1917, and two years later a great left-wing nationalist youth movement in China took its name from its beginning on 4 May 1919; thirty years later the successful Maoist regime turned May Day into a state ritual. If genuine working-class demonstrations are held on May Day in a Communist country nowadays — as in Poland during the early 1980s — it is in opposition to the official celebrations and in defiance of the Party dictatorship.

During the First World War the celebration of May Day became an anti-militarist gesture on both sides. The last Soviet Republic in Bavaria was deliberately suppressed on 1 May 1919. After the First World War May Day became an act of defiance against the new Fascist regimes. It was suppressed by Mussolini in Italy from 1923 and by Salazar in Portugal from 1924. But it was co-opted by later such regimes. In Nazi Germany, Hitler (who had campaigned to ban it in 1922) made May Day a national holiday in 1933 to prevent any demonstrations of working-class resistance to the regime, and in Vichy France Pétain took the same precaution in 1941 for the same reason. The practice of co-opting May Day was eventually sanctified by the Roman Catholic Church in 1955, when 1 May was made the Feast of Joseph the Worker in a glorious act of political hypocrisy. May Day was suppressed by Franco in Spain from 1939, but its celebration from 1947 marked the growing resistance to the regime. The same is now the case in South Africa.

May Day sometimes regains its revolutionary significance. It was chosen as the beginning of the British General Strike in 1926, but the humiliating defeat in less than two weeks rather spoilt the point. But it was no coincidence that the French

'events' in 1968 began two days after May Day, or that the Fascist regime in Portugal fell in 1974 a week before May Day. But in general May Day has almost completely lost its sting. In most Western countries with strong parliamentary socialist movements it has been absorbed into the state system in various ways. This was finally done in Britain in 1978, the first Monday in May becoming a Bank Holiday in a further typical compromise, so that May Day is still on the wrong day in most years, and the labour movement continues to prefer the Sunday.

**May Day lives!**

Few of the millions of people all over the world and in this country who vote for socialist parties or belong to trade unions ever consider that such organisations derive from revolutionary conspiracies whose members were once imprisoned and exiled or murdered for making seditious speeches and leading violent demonstrations or for administering secret oaths and smashing new machines. Even fewer of the millions of people who observe May Day ever realise what the day really means.

For anarchists May Day is not just an innocent festival of renewal or a comfortable celebration of the way the leaders of the labour movement have betrayed their origins and their followers for another year. For us it is a commemoration of the victims and martyrs who fell in the long and bitter struggle for a decent working life and a militant demand for a better working life in the future — starting now. To put the matter on the simplest level, there still isn't even a genuine eight-hour day, when so many people have to work extra hours and days of overtime and extra shifts and rosters to earn enough to live on, and there still isn't a proper understanding of work, when between a fifth and a quarter of the working population can't get jobs at all and when most of the jobs people do get aren't worth doing anyway.

So we still observe the real May Day for the real reasons, especially remembering our American comrades a century ago, and we shall do so every year



Lucy Parsons.

until we can celebrate a real victory of the future rather than the harsh defeats of the past or the empty triumphs of parliamentary socialism and reformist trade unionism of the present. That will be a day worth remembering and a holiday worth having, a May Day to enjoy like the May Day at the dawn of the world. And that is something worth working for during the other 364 days of the year, year after year until we at last win our freedom.

*Bibliographical note*

The documentation of and literature on the Haymarket affair and May Day are very extensive, but have been conveniently digested in a few useful books. Two

# LABOUR DAY

MAY 1st, 1890.

Workers of the World, Unite!

Travailleurs du Monde, Unissez-vous!

Arbeiter der Welt, Vereintigt euch!

On Thursday, May 1st,

**A DEMONSTRATION**

WILL TAKE PLACE IN

**HYDE PARK**

at 4 p.m.

TO BE FOLLOWED BY

a TORCHLIGHT MEETING on

**CLERKENWELL GREEN**

at 7.30 p.m.

WORKERS OF LONDON, MEN AND WOMEN, EMPLOYED AND UNEMPLOYED,

These meetings are to be held for the purpose of demonstrating the International Solidarity of Labour, and in sympathy with the gatherings of our Continental and American comrades to take place on the same day.

The following Resolution will be submitted to the meetings in London and Provinces:

"That this meeting hail with joy the awakening of Labour which is taking place throughout the civilised world; declares the necessity for the union of workers in all countries to obtain complete freedom from the monopoly of capitalists; asserts that the only possible remedy for the poverty and misery of the workers is the free access to the resources of nature, and the management by the workers of the organisation of Labour; and calls on all workers to accept the task of bringing about this freedom as a necessary duty paramount over all others."

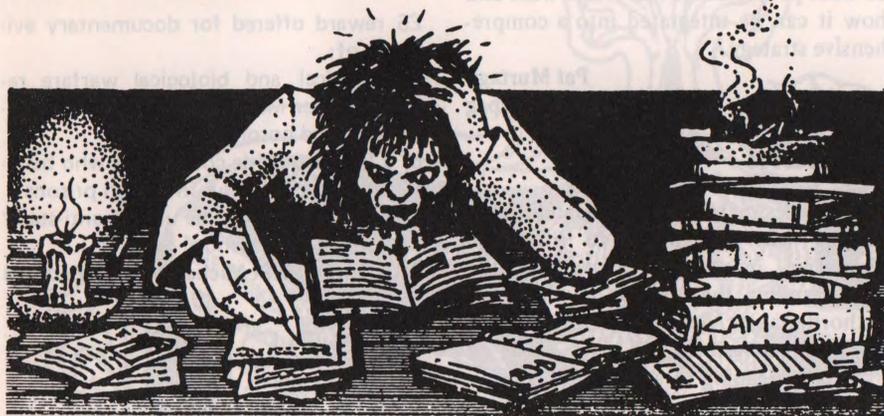
The Procession will assemble on the Thames Embankment at 2.30, and will proceed by way of Fleet Street, Wellington Street, Shaftesbury Avenue, to Oxford Street and Hyde Park.

Read the COMMONWEAL, organ of International Revolutionary Socialism, 24 GREAT QUEEN STREET, LINCOLN'S INN FIELDS.

collections of material on the Chicago Martyrs are *The Famous Speeches of the Eight Chicago Anarchists in Court* (1886) edited by Lucy Parsons, and *The Autobiographies of the Haymarket Martyrs* (1969) edited by Philip S. Foner. Two collections of material on the case are *The Chicago Haymarket Riot* (1959) edited by Bernard R. Kogan, and *Haymarket Revisited* (1976) edited by William J. Adelman. Two historical studies of the case are *The History of the Haymarket Affair* (1936, 1958) by Henry David, and *The Haymarket Tragedy* (1984) by Paul Avrich. Two historical studies of May Day are *Histoire du premier mai* (1953, 1972) by Maurice Dommanget, and *Ier mai* (1977) by André Rossel. (Thanks are due to Heiner Becker.)

NW





## Violent Legends

**Anarchism and Violence**  
*Osvaldo Bayer*  
 Elephant Editions, £3

**The Angry Brigade, 1967-1984**  
 Elephant Editions, £1.20

THESE two additions to the paperback Anarchist Pocketbooks series concern two dramatic episodes, one in Argentina 60 years ago, and the other in Britain 15 years ago.

Osvaldo Bayer's book, which was published in Buenos Aires in 1970 with the title *Severino Di Giovanni: The Idealist of Violence*, has now been translated by Paul Sharkey with the title *Anarchism and Violence: Severino Di Giovanni in Argentina, 1923-1931*. It is an account by an Argentinian liberal journalist of the career of the best-known Argentinian anarchist terrorist.

Di Giovanni was born in central Italy in 1901, worked as a teacher and then as a printer, became an anarchist in 1921, and emigrated to Argentina in 1923. He joined the extreme anarchists of the Italian community in Buenos Aires, produced a paper called *Culmine*, and became a leading militant in 1924. He was active in the agitation for Sacco and Vanzetti in 1926, and then led a campaign of violence which lasted for a few years and made him famous.

Di Giovanni's group was responsible for a series of bombings in various places in Buenos Aires — the American Embassy, the Washington monument, a Ford dealer's shop, the Courts of Justice, a railway station, a railway bridge, a police chief's home, a cigarette factory, American banks (killing two innocent people), the Italian Consulate (killing nine innocent people), an Italian Fascist leader's shop, an Italian army officer's home, a ship involved in a strike, the Cathedral (killing one innocent person), railway stations and main streets (killing four innocent people). They were also responsible for various wage and bank robberies and for

some individual assassinations — two members of the group (who were suspected of being police informers), an editor of the moderate anarchist paper *La Protesta* (which had repeatedly criticised the bombings), and a police chief (who was notorious for his brutality, and was deliberately maimed rather than killed) — but Di Giovanni specialised in the skilful making and placing of bombs and in daring escapes from the police.

At the end of 1930, partly because of the anarchist outrages, the 'liberal' regime of President Yrigoyen was replaced by the military dictatorship of General Uriburu, and a much severer semi-Fascist system was installed. At the beginning of 1931, Di Giovanni was finally captured (one more innocent person being killed in the fight), tried by a military court, and shot by a firing squad. The group was destroyed, and the survivors went to Spain, some taking part in the Civil War of 1936-1939.

Like most anarchist terrorists, Di Giovanni wasn't just a simple thug but was a complex personality. He was intelligent and educated (mostly by himself), interested in literature and philosophy, a great admirer of Nietzsche and Elisé Reclus, the devoted husband of his non-political wife and their young children and the passionate lover of the teenage sister of some of his comrades, always calm and dignified, brave and articulate. He was well known for his habit of wearing a dark suit and fedora hat (a theme used in Cliff Harper's cover design). But this book gives no insight into his character; even his love-letters are rhetorical rather than intimate, and he remains an enigma.

Bayer's account is objective and sympathetic, and it is packed with details drawn from primary sources (especially contemporary periodicals, police archives, and personal reminiscences). It can hardly be faulted on factual grounds except by someone with equal knowledge of the material, but it is sentimental and super-

ficial, and it conveys little about the historical background of Di Giovanni's brief career or the political nuances of Argentinian anarchism and Italian anti-Fascism in exile.

Unfortunately the introduction to this edition, by Alfredo Bonanno and Jean Weir, doesn't give much more help. It points out some of the obvious defects of Bayer's work — especially his journalistic ignorance of anarchist theory and his romantic interpretation of anarchist practice — but it concentrates on a defence of Di Giovanni's use of terrorism. This defence consists of the standard arguments that anarchist terrorism isn't really terrorism and that violence against the state is completely different from violence by the state, that violence by anarchists can't be blamed for violence against anarchists and that suppression of an anarchist movement is possible only if it is already dead, that 'accidents' (i.e. killing innocent people) in anarchist violence shouldn't be condemned and that even if particular acts of anarchist violence may be criticised the general policy of anarchist violence should not be rejected. Those who find such arguments convincing will find this book interesting and inspiring; those who find such arguments unconvincing will find it interesting but revolting.

*The Angry Brigade, 1967-1984: Documents and Chronology* is a new edition of a Bratach Dubh pamphlet first published in 1978. The main text consists of a transcript of the communiqués and a chronology of the activity of the Angry Brigade and associated groups from 1967 to 1972. A supplement consists of a transcript of similar communiqués relating to later activity from 1981 to 1984.

There is no proper account, let alone any serious analysis, of either episode. The introduction to this edition, by Jean Weir, doesn't give much more help. It gives a summary of British working-class history, with an emphasis on the dichotomy between the reformist activity of large organisations in the centre and the revolutionary direct action and armed struggle of autonomous groups on the left. It then gives an interpretation of the Angry Brigade in the same context, concentrating on a defence of autonomous action against the disapproval of the organised left in general and of 'the traditional anarchist movement' in particular. This completely ignores the fact that almost all anarchists support almost all autonomous action, and disapprove of terrorism not because it is autonomous or even because it is violent, but because it is almost always inappropriate to the circumstances.

At times Jean Weir seems to be aware of the limitations of her stance. There is a reference to the situationist critique of

'the spectacle' of consumerist capitalism, with the admission that 'the Angry Brigade also became part of that spectacle'; and there is a reference to the practical effects of the episode, with the admission that 'a critical evaluation of the Angry Brigade must therefore take place elsewhere than on the sterile pages of this pamphlet'. But neither in this pamphlet on the Angry Brigade nor in the book on Di Giovanni is there any real attempt to confront the real issues in the controversy over terrorism. Put at their simplest, the questions are what Di Giovanni or the Angry Brigade contributed to the struggle against repression and to the spread of liberty. Until they are faced, the discussion is futile. And it can't even begin until everyone recognises that terrorism by anarchists is still terrorism. **MH**

## Sacco and Vanzetti

**Postmortem**  
*William Young and David E. Kaiser*  
 University of Massachusetts Press (European) £21.75 and £9.25).

THE subtitle is 'New Evidence in the Case of Sacco and Vanzetti', and the main feature of this latest addition to the vast literature is that it takes account of the material which has been revealed between 1977, when Sacco and Vanzetti were pardoned fifty years after their execution for murder, and 1985, when the book was published. William Young was a book and art dealer who worked on the case and drafted the book before his death in 1980, and David Kaiser is an academic historian who worked with him and completed the book afterwards. It is not a full description of the whole case, but a brief discussion of certain aspects, and it is fairly short (202 pages) and very expensive.

The introduction describes the material used, which includes police and prosecution files released under the Freedom of Information Act and defence files as well. The authors agreed about this material that 'taken together it leads to the conclusion that Sacco and Vanzetti, two innocent men, most probably were framed for a murder they did not commit'. The rest of the book goes to show not only that they were probably innocent but that they were almost certainly deliberately framed by the prosecution.

A chapter describes the anarchist dimension of the case, with evidence from police files and press reports of the double tendency to link foreign anarchists with armed robberies and the pressure to arrest the former for the latter. A chapter describes Vanzetti's trial for the Bridgewater robbery, for which he was sentenced to imprisonment, where several of the disturbing features of the later trial for



Sacco and Vanzetti portrayed by Ben Shahn.

the South Braintree robbery and murder already appeared. A chapter describes the inconsistent and corrupt behaviour of the prosecution in this and other cases, and shows that prosecution privately thought its case was weak.

A chapter describes the identification evidence, in which various people contradicted one another and themselves, with the conclusion that 'the sum total of the eyewitness testimony in the case of Sacco and Vanzetti tends to exonerate the defendants' and 'casts the gravest doubts upon the prosecution's construction of its case'. A chapter describes the behaviour of the defendants, with the conclusion that their initial lies were concerned to hide their involvement not in the South Braintree robbery but in the militant anarchist activity of the Galleani group. A chapter describes the unsatisfactory alibi evidence for the defence.

Three chapters on the complex firearms evidence show (partly from recently released information) that Vanzetti's gun alleged to have come from one of the murdered guards did not do so and that the prosecution knew this but concealed it, and that the fatal bullet alleged to have come from Sacco's gun was almost certainly substituted by the prosecution. A chapter on the Federal Bureau of Investigation shows (from recently released information) that it was indeed involved in the case as a political matter from the beginning. A chapter discusses some of the alternative theories about the case, especially that either Sacco or Vanzetti may in fact have been guilty or that the Morelli gang was actually guilty.

The conclusion is that no particular theory about what really happened has been proved, but that Sacco and Vanzetti were probably not involved and were certainly not proved to be involved beyond reasonable doubt:

Both the principles of Anglo-American jurisprudence and the logic of historical inquiry compel us to declare them innocent in the absence of any convincing proof of their guilt . . .

Virtually every piece of evidence against the two men ultimately rested upon falsehoods and fabrications . . . If a frame consists of the conscious fabrication of evidence, there is no question that Sacco and Vanzetti were framed . . . The overwhelming probability is that a substitution of bullets did take place and that Sacco and Vanzetti were completely innocent of the South Braintree murders.

The book is carefully argued and clearly written, and also well illustrated. Its main value is to reinforce the argument that Sacco and Vanzetti were framed by showing how this was done. It is yet another piece of evidence in a growing pile which increasingly demands a full-scale reappraisal of the whole case from the point of view of the anarchist movement.

NW

## Literary Masterpiece

**Chaos, the broadsheets of ontological anarchism**  
*Hakim Bey*  
 46 pages A4. \$5 by post from Autonomedia, Box 568 Brooklyn, NY 11211, USA.

THIS is one of those books which squint at their subjects obliquely, through a fog of artificial language. Sample: 'Here we are crawling the cracks between walls of church state school & factory, all the paranoid monoliths. Cut off from the tribe by feral nostalgia we tunnel after lost worlds, imaginary bombs.'

Such 'prose poems' are often boring pseudish works, disguising lack of thought with pretentiousness. But this is erudite (with quotations from Persian, Chinese, and Indian literature), and despite its obscurities and ambiguities entertaining, like a play by Samuel Beckett. Worth reviewing in *Freedom*, because although it is probably useless as anarchist propaganda, it might just happen to be a literary masterpiece.

DR