

June 21: Eventually eight men stood trial for being "accessories to murder". and with responsibility for the bombing. They were Spies, Fielden, Parsons, and five other anarchists who were influential in the labour movement, Adolph Fischer, George Engel, Michael Schwab, Louis Lingg and Oscar Neebe.



prosecutor appealed to the jury: "convict these men, make an example of them, hang them, and you save our institutions."

No proof was offered by the state that any of the eight men before the court had thrown the bomb, had been connected with its throwing, or had even approved of such acts.

Even though only two were present at the time of the bombing seven were sentenced to die. The dignity of the condemned men in the face of a frenzied hate campaign struck a chord throughout the labour movement.

On **November 11, 1886**, four of the anarchists were hanged; Louis Lingg had committed suicide hours before. Over two hundred thousand people took part in the funeral procession.

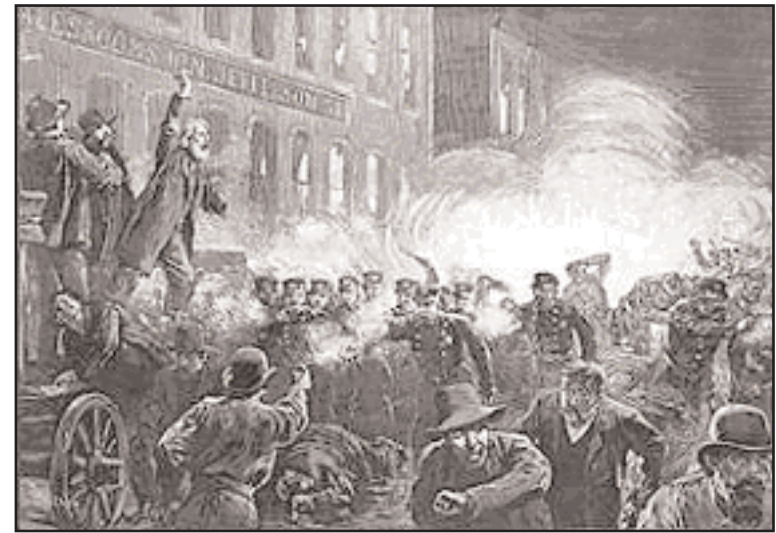
Several years later all eight men were pardoned by Governor John P. Altgeld who released the three survivors.

The candidates for the jury were chosen by a special bailiff, nominated by state's attorney. The eventual composition of the jury was farcical; being made up of businessmen, their clerks and a relative of one of the dead policemen. The trial was rife with lies and contradictions. The state



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A short history of Mayday



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 INTERNAZIONALE ARBEITER ASSOZIATION
 ASSOCIAZIONE INTERNAZIONALE DEI LAVORATORI
 ASSOCIAÇÃO INTERNACIONAL DOS TRABALHADORES
 ASOCIACIÓN INTERNACIONAL DE LOS TRABAJADORES

The ancient origins of Mayday

Mayday originated as a pagan festival celebrating the first spring planting. The ancient Celts and Saxons celebrated May 1st as Beltane, which means the day of fire. The Saxons began their Mayday celebrations on the eve of May, April 30. It was an evening of games and feasting celebrating the end of winter and the return of the sun and fertility of the soil.

The May eve revels were eventually forbidden by the Church but peasants still celebrated until the late 1700's. While good churchgoers would shy away from joining in those less afraid of authority would don animal masks and various costumes. The revellers would travel around shouting, chanting, singing, and blowing hunting horns.

Mayday was a raucous and fun time, electing a queen of the May from the eligible young women of the village, to rule the crops until harvest. Besides the selection of the May Queen was the raising of the phallic Maypole, around which the young single men and women of the village would dance holding on to the ribbons until they became entwined, with their (hoped for) new love. There was also Robin Goodfellow - the Green Man - who was the Lord of Misrule for this day. Mayday was a celebration of the common people, and Robin would be the King, Priest or Fool for a day. Priests and Lords were the butt of jokes; mummies would make perform satirical plays and poke fun at the local authorities.

The church and state did not take kindly to these celebrations, especially during times of popular rebellion. Mayday and the Maypole were outlawed in the 1600's. Yet the tradition still carried on in many rural

areas and the trade societies still celebrated Mayday until the 18th Century. As trade societies evolved from guilds, to friendly societies and eventually into unions, the craft traditions of Mayday remained strong into the early 19th century.



In London the May Fayre was transferred from Haymarket in 1686 to Mayfair. The May Fayre lasted for up to 16 days and it soon became notorious for riotous and disorderly behaviour. In 1708 the May Fayre was abolished, only to be revived again with similar results. Building on the site was probably the most effective way of permanently suppressing the fair and by the mid-18th century almost the whole of modern Mayfair was covered with houses.

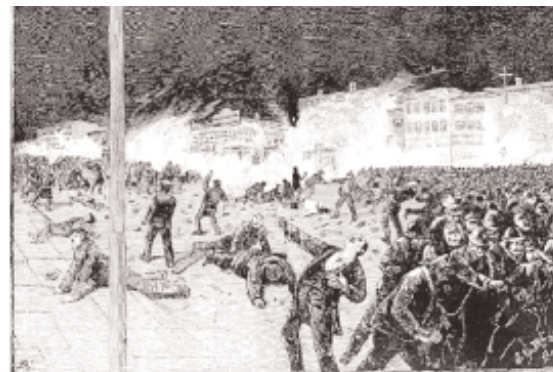
The anarchist origins of modern Mayday

Not many people know the reason why Mayday became International Workers Day and why we should still celebrate it. It all began well over a century ago when the American Federation of Labour adopted an historic resolution which asserted that "eight hours shall constitute a legal day's labour from and after May 1st, 1886".

In the months prior to this date workers in there thousands were drawn into the struggle for the shorter day. Skilled and unskilled, black and white, men and women, native and immigrant were all becoming involved. In Chicago alone 400,000 were out on strike.

of the eight-hour day. In the next few days they were joined nationwide by 350,000 workers who went on strike at 1,200 factories.

May 3: The workers listened to a speech by the anarchist August Spies, editor of the Arbeiter-Zeitung (Workers Newspaper), who had been asked to address the meeting by the Central Labour Union. While Spies was speaking, urging the workers to stand together and not give in to the bosses, the strike-breakers were beginning to leave the nearby McCormick plant. Many of the crowd moved down the street to harass the scabs. Suddenly a force of 200 police arrived and, without any warning, attacked the crowd with clubs and revolvers. They opened fire killing four people and seriously wounded many others.



It became the main centre of the agitation, and here the anarchists were in the forefront of the labour movement. It was to no small extent due to their activities that Chicago became an outstanding trade union centre and made the biggest contribution to the eight-hour movement.

On May 1, 1886: Albert Parsons, head of the Chicago Knights of Labor, led 80,000 people through the city's streets in support

May 4: Spies, Parsons, and Samuel Fielden, who was born in Todmorden, were speaking at a rally of 2,500 people held to protest the police massacre when 180 police officers arrived, led by the Chicago police chief. While he was calling for the meeting to disperse a bomb exploded, killing one policeman. The police retaliated, killing seven of their own in the crossfire, plus four others; almost two hundred were wounded.

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