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Emancipation

ANARCHIST ASSOCIATION OF THE AMERICAS

HAYMARKET May Day's AMERICAN ROOTS



On November 11, 1887, the Haymarket Martyrs, Parsons, Spies, Engle, and Fischer, were legally murdered by the state of Illinois. Louis Lingg, their compatriot who was also to be hanged, had blown himself up with a dynamite cigar in his cell on the previous morning. These deaths were part and parcel of a frenzied attempt by American capitalists to crush the rapidly growing organized labor movement.

A decade earlier, in the industrial expansion following the "Civil War", the great strike of 1877 had taken place. When the deepening depression starting in 1873 caused workers on the B&O Railroad to go out on strike on July 6, 1877 in protest against a ten per cent wage cut, the strike quickly paralyzed transportation coast to coast. In ten days' time it had grown into a virtual general strike. When local "forces of order" proved unable to deal with the situation, President Hayes called up federal troops to prevent a "national insurrection". Indian-fighting cavalry from the Dakotas joined other U.S. Forces already on hand in Chicago. Arriving ten days after the strike had begun, these Federal troops aided the local police and private armies in suppressing the

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