



Class Struggles and Geography: Revisiting the 1886 Haymarket Square Police Riot

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The 10th of March of 2006 exuded with ferment across the US. A prelude to the subsequent spring protests and the Gran Marcha of the first of May, hundreds of thousands took to the streets in a pre-emptive show of force against the prospect of an anti-immigrant law (HR 4437)². The streets of downtown Chicago grew resplendent with tens of thousands of white-shirted marchers, peppered with mostly Mexican and US flags, union pennants, and cardboard signs expressing a variety of political persuasions (Democracy Now!, 2006; Kumar, 2006; Loyd and Burridge, 2007).

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² The proposed legislation would have further criminalised non-citizen migrant workers and those seeking to help them. Having passed the House of Representatives in December of 2005, the implicitly racist initiative ultimately failed to reach Senate. Arguably, the effort was thwarted by a combined pressure from the Latino communities, especially Mexican, and the large corporations relying on migrant workers.

The coincidence with the meeting of the Association of American Geographers (AAG) could not have been more propitious. As the protest was winding through the city's veins, a small room in the meeting hotel was overflowing with people attending a panel session on the meaning of the Haymarket Square massacre of 1886 (henceforth Haymarket). The 120th anniversary of that historical event represented an opportunity to infuse academic geography with more interest in the histories of class struggle. The panel session was therefore greatly energised by the nearby street protests, which some of us joined during that afternoon.

It is in this spirit that Dennis Grammenos and I organised the session that led to these collected writings in *ACME*. There is thankfully plentiful academic work available on labour movements and class struggles (Aguar and Herod, 2006; Hanson and Pratt, 1995; Harvey, 2003, 1989; Herod 2001, 1999; Massey 1994, 1984; Mattingly, 2001; McDowell, 2006; McDowell and Massey, 1984; Mitchell, 2002, 1996; Peck, 2001; Peet, 1996, 1979; Pratt, 2004; Reynolds, 1998; Savage, 2006; Smith, 1996, 1990; Walker, 2004, 2001; Wills, 2001; Wright, 2006, 1997). And for those interested in documentation and pedagogical materials on Chicago labour history, a list of sources is included, with brief descriptions, on the last page of this document. But, to my knowledge, this is the first concerted effort to relate geographical research to the 1886 events and their legacies and to class struggles generally. We solicited contributors to reflect upon geography's historical and current linkage to class struggles (including class war) and their effects in the making of geography. The anniversary served as an apt conduit through which to generate such a discussion and our interventions in this issue present further ways of reinserting into geography the aspirations of egalitarian anti-systemic movements.

Commemorative occasions and felicitous coincidences, though, do not alone justify the showering of attention to something that happened more than a hundred years ago. And tracing connections between La Gran Marcha and Haymarket is an undertaking of dubious validity without accounting for the historical specificities and differences between the events. Ostensibly, the first is largely a mobilisation across class lines in favour of immigrant's civil rights, while the latter was an outcome of much more class-delineated tensions and periodic outbursts of violence centred on reducing work-time to eight hours a day. The claim here is not that La Gran Marcha reflects any substantive Haymarket legacy; however, Haymarket provides a historical turning point for class struggles in both American and European contexts that has inspired subsequent labour movements (and geographers) in many parts of the world. This is so even if only symbolically through the celebration of the first of May, as in the case of La Gran Marcha. In other words, Haymarket serves as an entry point for examining the geographies of class struggles in their manifold manifestations elsewhere and afterwards. Moreover, the pivotal role played by immigrants in the making of the struggle for

the eight-hour day suggests systemic continuities with current efforts to integrate issues of immigrant's rights with the conditions of wage-work, including its daily duration (e.g., the campaigns against sweatshops located within the US).

As the collected works in this special issue testify, struggles over the duration of the workday, which Haymarket epitomises, are hardly confined to the politics of wage employment from a bygone era. They are intertwined with and ramify into all aspects of life in a capitalist society, involving inter-related processes such as gender relations, quotidian survival strategies, spaces of political action and empowerment, and our very role as educators. It is through such place-sensitive analysis that geographers enable a holistic understanding of capitalism as a social process, including its spatially differentiated and differentiating aspects. This sort of research brings out elucidations that, if communicated effectively and widely outside of academic settings, are useful towards building more effective anti-capitalist political strategies across places and, eventually, egalitarian social orders (the overcoming of intersecting negative power relations of essentialisation, domination, and violence – such as agism, elitism, homophobia, racism, sexism, and statism – without which capitalism would disappear).

To contextualise the diverse interventions in this special issue, I will first discuss Haymarket's relevance and distinctiveness. This will be followed by some historical background to a government's murder of four anarchists (and suicide-inducement of a fifth), all framed in connection with a police riot. Haymarket's historical consequences will then be assessed and its modern significance revisited.

The Contributions to This Special Issue: Evaluating Haymarket's Relevance and Distinctiveness

Some might find it peculiar that so much attention is still showered on an incident and topic that largely concerns a bunch of white men. However, as Altha and Georgia Cravey demonstrate in this thematic issue of *ACME*, what transpired at Haymarket was far from a tussle among the differentially privileged. Women, and not just white women, played crucial roles in labour organising and union strategy development throughout the period (Ashbaugh, 1986). Investigating the lives of several women involved in the strikes and the Haymarket protest, Altha and Georgia Cravey show how masculinist notions of work and activism prevents a fuller understanding of workers' movements.

Still, this might not be enough reason to devote so much effort to one historical episode in one locality, even if influential to many subsequent social movements. After all, social contexts and political projects have changed, especially since 1968. But it is premature to dismiss Haymarket as less relevant on account of the withering of the social base of the anti-systemic movements that spawned nineteenth and twentieth century labour struggles (Arrighi et al., 1989; Wallerstein, 2002). The hierarchical and centralised forms of organising and the

political strategies confined to national state levels have certainly declined (and this is most welcome), but not the substantive content of that struggle. The fight for the shortening of the working-day remains pertinent, perhaps even more so, as a result of worldwide capitalist encroachment. Furthermore, the social base of union-centred organising was tenuous even at the height of trade union influence in core capitalist countries like the US. The majority of workers – especially women, non-citizens, and minorities – were excluded from such institutions, even if sometimes they may have indirectly benefited from union contracts. So, those that claim that the content of the Haymarket struggle does not reflect the aspirations of current anti-systemic movements need to clarify the class subject on which such struggles were based prior to 1968 and justify their claims. Additionally, they must deal with their implicit exclusion of other class subjects (e.g., most African-Americans) and social forces external to capitalist societies (e.g., Native Americans) that impinged on the development of class struggles within capitalism.

Nik Heynen's discussion of Food Not Bombs anti-hunger interventions elaborates on Haymarket's substantive influence in the US. For him, the political projects associated with Haymarket transcend its protagonists and temporal context because of their projects' intimate connection to bodily survival. This can be traced through successive struggles in the twentieth century, particularly with the food redistribution programmes established by the Black Panther Party. These linked historical and modern anti-systemic examples provide necessary starting points for the development of a "really radical geography" (Heynen, 2006). A radical geography grounded in material survival that integrates within it the ideology-deconstructive aspects of social struggles.

This argument begins to tackle another problem that tends to be buried in the fascination with Haymarket. And that is its treatment as distinctive episode deserving of special attention. There are other momentous events in the 1880s and earlier that proved decisive, arguably for the entire arrangement of the capitalist world-system. One example is the repression and colonisation of Native Americans in the Great Plains, freeing the US military for other imperialist ventures and the suppression of internal dissent. It was also a period of political organising in many African-American communities, giving rise to the formation of the Coloured Farmers' Alliance and the National Afro-American League (Robinson, 1997, 102-111). Another example is the movement for women's voting rights, which, to some extent, questioned the patriarchal foundations of western European democracies, and on its own terms.

In 1886, white racists murdered as many as 100 African-Americans in the Carrollton massacre and through lynchings across the country. The legal lynching of four white anarchists should hardly be raised to the level of a watershed event. And most African-Americans that heard of the case must have been alienated by the great, international attention devoted by socialist and trade union movements to

the cause of the four framed anarchists, combined with the patent silence on the murder of so many African-Americans. The opportunity for a wide political alliance was thereby squandered, despite Lucy Parsons' notoriety. The same can be said of possible alliances with Native American peoples (Roediger, 1986; Rosemont, 1986). Other equally important social struggles risk effacement in treating Haymarket as a unique and globally influential historical event.

Richard Walker, moreover, shows how similar labour struggles elsewhere during a succeeding era have had almost the opposite result, generally in favour of working class interests. In 1916 San Francisco, there were radicalised workers and unions, anarchist activists, a bombing during a pro-war parade (on Preparedness Day, killing at least ten people), and the persecution and show trial of anarchists. In contrast to Chicago, the anarchists became local heroes and in spite of subsequent drawbacks, the partial successes allowed the labour movement to gain major political influence and more rights for workers by the 1930s. Similar conditions can yield rather different outcomes in one place compared to another. In fact, in this case one can speak of differing results from similar conditions brought about in one place partly as a consequence of what transpired elsewhere before.

Haymarket therefore represents one of many historical instances that shaped class struggles in the US and elsewhere in the global capitalist system. Walker's discussion of the San Francisco example points the way forward to a comparative analysis of such episodes that can illuminate on the time- and place-specific conditions necessary for viable and successful working class organising and action. At the same time, such an approach could help explain why some events, like the 1834 and 1836 Lowell strikes by women employees, were less influential than others in the histories of struggle over labour rights or for social revolution.

There is also more that can be learned from Haymarket as a salient example of political action. As Don Mitchell argues, implicit in the protests organised by the International Working People's Association (IWPA)³, including Haymarket, was a struggle over the control of public space, streets and squares, the material conditions of free speech and of communal dialogue with other workers. These became priorities in a context of bourgeois domination of the press, which has

³ This is not to be confused with IWPA that formed in Chicago as a branch of the International Working Men's Association (IWMA), which had relocated to New York City after the destruction of the 1871 Paris Commune. The reason for the variant in name was due to the fact that women were more prominent in that organisation, in sharp contrast to the headquarters under Marx's leadership, where two well-known feminists had been expelled (Green, 2006, p. 50). The newly formed IWPA was a sort of global information clearinghouse founded by anarchists at the London International Social Revolutionary Congress in 1881. It gradually emerged from the split within and eventual dissolution of the IWMA (founded in 1864), whose membership included Mikhail Bakunin, Friedrich Engels, and Karl Marx.

presently reached paroxysmal levels. Discussing the example of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), Mitchell sees such spatial struggles as fundamental to relative successes in organising workers and in mounting effective offensives against capitalist power. In a sense, this fight over the control and making of place, part of the social production of space, is about liberating spaces from at least some forms of capitalism, both concretely and symbolically, where workers' lives can trump profits and maybe even capitalism itself (Harvey, 1989; Lefebvre, 1974; Smith, 1990). This is another reason for the continuing significance of Haymarket and its bloodstained aftermath.

Haymarket retains meaning through the constant attempts at distorting or erasing the histories of social justice struggles. As in the case of other historical episodes that have been culturally marginalised or consigned to obscurity, the people fighting for justice have been maligned as violent criminals through all sorts of discursive strategies, mechanisms, and constructs. This is part of the relatively successful strategies US governments have had in attenuating legacies of dissent among the wider public (Boykoff, 2006; McAdam et al., 2001). The remembrance and reconstruction of the events of May 1886 therefore acquire crucial importance in destabilising current power relations and undermining the bourgeois myths of social progress that permeate public spaces and education institutions.

Sarah Kanouse posits that ephemeral performances or discussions that bring to life such past events and connect them with possibilities here and now (e.g., the general strike) can be effective strategies in unsettling dominant constructs about the past. Instead of focusing on certain places as centres where remembrance or reflections can occur, Kanouse suggests using symbolic places like Haymarket Square as origins from which to depart and diffuse alternative narratives into other spaces, disrupting and drawing them into places that resonate with anti-systemic histories. Drawing from de Certeau and Agamben, Kanouse offers a way of countering the selective, pro-capitalist historical amnesia at large and the devices of social control in cities like Chicago (e.g., surveillance cameras, car-centred street access, buildings designed to entrance and entrap). This is by way of street performances, analogous to general strikes, which leave no lasting monument, but change the ways in which people live generally and in a place in particular.

Another strategy that can be employed to resist ongoing ideological obfuscation of class war histories is to raise Haymarket to prominence in the classroom, along with geographies of working class movements (very broadly defined). On this matter, Euan Hague's assessment of his students' knowledge at DePaul University offers both frustration and optimism. Most of the students, many from Chicago, did not know of the events, whereas some that remembered that history regarded it as a curiosity of importance only to communists. More encouraging was the expression of interest in the topic by a lot of the students, but

it is clear that public monuments are insufficient to instil a sense of historical present.

Hague's point, in my view, touches upon one weakness in the inter-generational transfer of the historical experiences of anti-systemic movements in core countries like the US, which is an overwhelming reliance on mainstream institutions (e.g., schools, public monuments, museums) and media (e.g., the internet, academic publications like this one). These modes of knowledge transmission are certainly necessary, but they should be supplemented and coordinated with others, like Sarah Kanouse's street performances (see also Routledge, 2005), actions for control of public spaces (Don Mitchell, this issue), alternative city tours, and literature reading circles (Harvey, 2006). Hague additionally identifies where we can be most effective in reaching the rest of society with our work: the classroom. Critical pedagogy, combined with multiple forms of communication, can help surmount more than a century of ideological obfuscation and collective memory cleansing of the tragic events of the 1880s, to which I now turn.

Historical Processes and Events

By the 1870s, the US had expanded its resource base all the way to the Pacific Ocean, thanks to multiple genocides and land expropriations at the expense of Native American and African peoples and to military and economic success relative to rival imperialist powers (Britain, France, and Spain). Theft and mass murder facilitated and was abetted by capital accumulation and industrialisation. The latter were largely and ultimately made possible through the exploitation of mostly African workers in slave plantations. By the end of the Civil War in 1865, about half the US workforce was employed for wages in the manufacturing sector, concentrated in the north and north-east. Expanding upon and undermining household production and taking advantage of large influxes of immigrant workers escaping poverty and warfare in Europe, capitalists enlarged their enterprises and diffused the factory regime, which complemented and rivalled slave plantations as a source of profitability (Baxandall and Gordon, 1995, 39-41; Dublin, 1993, 5; Robinson, 1997; Zinn, 1995).

Factory regimes amalgamated workers from many more different backgrounds than occurred in workplaces prior to industrialisation. Along with a major shift in productivity levels and cheapening of consumer items, factories featured an increasing deterioration of working conditions, characterised by stifling paternalistic regulations, ten- to twelve-hour days (if not longer), and meagre wages. Reacting to such treatment as the stiffening of workplace regulations, lengthening of working time, wage reductions, and layoffs, many workers began organising spontaneously and striking to gain concessions from employers. Capitalist factory policies exacerbated workers' experience of economic downturns, providing some of the spark for workplace discontent and agitation.

Women mostly organised and carried out the first factory strikes in the cotton mills, such as the 1828 walk-out in Dover, New Hampshire. There were many precedents for such actions, mostly in the form of absenteeism, escapes, mutinies, plots, and rebellions, involving workers in all sorts of circumstances, slaves, indentured servants, artisans, and craft specialists. There were even organised work stoppages in the 1760s, some of them with the support of early workers' associations organised as craft guilds. The first strikes associated with the factory regime usually failed for reasons that resembled those of earlier periods. There was a lack of organisational permanence (such as unions), strikers' funds, mainstream political support, and coordination across different sites of production and communities. These may be the main reasons for the exiguous impact of these efforts, even though the combination of all these actions provided an important historical backdrop for subsequent generations of factory employees.

By the middle of the nineteenth century, craft-based unionisation began to form, limited to single localities. In response to employers' successful organising to thwart craft unions' effectiveness, craft unions began to merge and new unions emerged that organised at the national level, such as the International Metal Molders' Union. Nevertheless, during the Civil War of 1861-1865, capitalists generally succeeded, with the collusion of government officials, in cutting wages, laying off employees, and defeating strike actions. This situation was hardly unique to the US. Over the same time period, in Britain and France, for example, bitter class struggles erupted multiple times over similar issues – involving gendered processes and immigrants' unrest – and were often violently suppressed through direct military interventions (Moissonnier, 1999; Thompson, 1963).

These experiences encouraged greater worker organisation and national coordination across both sides of the Atlantic Ocean, including the formation of leagues demanding an eight-hour day. Connections were increasingly forged internationally through established workers and political associations, often facilitated by people immigrating into the US. Many communities formed mutual aid societies, usually along ethnic lines in the US, to mitigate progressively harsher living conditions for both national and recent immigrant workers. These societies were significant in supporting strike actions (Beaud, 1993; Bernstein, 1962; Cole, 1961).

A unique state of affairs emerged in Illinois, however. Unlike in most industrialised regions of the world, union pressure brought into office a sufficiently sympathetic governor and legislature to pass an eight-hour workday law, which was rendered effective on the first of May 1867. The law was immediately defied by most of the largest employers. A general strike ensued that was repressed through military intervention on behalf of employers. Turning to federal government for the introduction of such legislation and getting socialist-leaning parties into office at the municipal level turned out to be even less successful. This

marked a clear signal that electoral politics through mainstream parties were severely limited, as was the reliability of government to enforce laws favourable to the employed majority. Nevertheless, disaffection with existing parties facilitated the founding of socialist parties, such as the Workingmen's Party of Illinois in 1874 (Green, 2006, 47-49).

The Paris Commune, in this context of worker pauperisation and political defeat, became a symbol of both hope and fear in the US. The bourgeois press depicted Communards as disorderly and murderous, turning victims into oppressors in the aftermath of military mass executions (Harvey, 2003). These constructs gained currency as devices to persuade the public that worker agitation leads to chaos. In Chicago, the symbolic effect of the Paris Commune had limited duration. The same year a devastating fire, which killed hundreds, crushed most workers' livelihoods, while the bourgeois press concocted the myth of an Irish woman (Mrs. O'Leary) being responsible for the blaze. Meanwhile, enlisted by companies for their private armies, General Sheridan, fresh from his atrocities against Great Plains Native Peoples, organised militias to protect company property. A certain Allan Pinkerton, whose stated policy was to kill looters upon sight, was also employed by large companies for the same purpose. As response, workers' self-defence militias began forming, notably the Lehr und Wehr Verein (Green, 2006, 41-45).

By the early 1870s, local monopoly capitalists controlled electoral politics, most of the press, and the police. They could beat back unions through law-breaking, intimidation, disinformation, and brazen violence. This curiously named "Gilded Age", founded on the intensification of exploitative conditions for the majority, turned out to be politically unsustainable for US elites. The crisis of 1873, lasting with occasional interruptions well into 1896, precipitated a general insurgency across the country. Small-scale strikes increased in frequency and unemployed workers staged street demonstrations. In the summer of 1877, a wage cut led to a strike and the suspension of railway transport at Martinsburg, West Virginia. Confrontations with state militias resulted in shootings and deaths and the strike broadened to include major cities, including Chicago (battle of Halsted), and national railway lines. The US government and employers' militias suppressed civil protests by shooting hundreds of people to death, putting an end to the uprising (Green, 2006, 47-52).

Combined government and capitalist brutality fostered polarisation and militancy among many workers, expressing itself through such developments as the official founding of the (Noble Order of the) Knights of Labor and the formation of the Socialistic Labor Party (both in 1877). This outcome was additionally related to the large numbers of socialists and sympathetic and radicalised workers who migrated from Europe. There were temporary political successes through major vote-gathering in some large cities by the Socialistic Labor Party, for instance.

There were even occasional workplace victories, such as the concessions obtained by McCormicks' metal works employees through the 1885 strike. But progress was hampered by white craftsmen's sexist and racist exclusionary practices within unions, concentration on individual factories or corporations, electoral frauds, and opportunism and divisions within the ranks of socialist organisations. Powerful strategic alliances were inconceivable with unions' refusal to mobilise against the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act or the white terror against African Americans or the ravages meted out to Native American peoples. Most of the hundreds of strikes that occurred in the US were defeated and the reinforcement of workforce fragmentation along craft and ethnicity further weakened trade unions. Out of this disarray, more workers were being drawn to anarchist organisations like the IWPA, which flourished in Chicago and eventually included the main organisers of the Haymarket Square protest (Ashbaugh, 1976, 42-46; Green, 2006, 102-132).

Aside from electoral downturns and antagonisms among workers, political leverage was further undermined by the increasing mechanisation of factories between 1779 and 1884, during a brief economic upturn. Ensuing chronic unemployment was aggravated by the resumption of economic stagnation in 1883, worsening most workers' living conditions. All this was met by the utmost apathy of US elites, who grew wealthier in the middle of general economic privation. Workers' burgeoning resentment was inflamed by government and private forces' impunity in the murder of union activists and militants and by various forms of police repression, which included beatings of demonstrators and passers-by, the harassment of union members, and the violent disruption of union meetings. As José Martí (1886, 58-59) observed, reporting for *La Nación*, "... the workers defend their own rights against the arrogance and indifference with which they are regarded by those who derive all their wealth from the products of the labor they abuse". Chicago ruling class arrogance was expressed in the violent and homicidal strategies and actions of Captain John Bonfield, the private militias of large corporations (The Citizens' Association), and the agents of Pinkerton's private firm. Coupled with a bigoted and police-encomiastic mainstream press, they cemented brewing social antagonism to the point of thwarting any efforts at compromise and cooptation by local and state government.

Political repression and mass pauperisation enabled the IWPA to raise workers' consciousness and gain thousands of adherents, overwhelmingly in Chicago. But this degree of localised influence would not have been possible without the development of a formidable array of mutually reinforcing institutions and strategies, namely involvement, collaboration, and/or tactical alliances with existing unions, helping found and federate socialist unions into the Central Labor Union, creating schools and libraries, establishing an alternative press, and the constant leafleting, festive gatherings, and street theatre to further promote the ideas of the IWPA (Avrich, 1984, 79-98; Green, 2006, 126-132). There is much to learn for current social movements from these late nineteenth century experiences

of effective organising at the local level and, as it turns out, in conjunction with coordinated actions across the country.

Consequences of a Police Riot

It was in 1886, in the midst of a spiral of discontent and violent clashes, that the struggle for the eight-hour day was not only revived, but was intensified through the multiplication of strikes to an unprecedented level. Though much of Europe was simultaneously beset with economic downturns and worker militancy, there was barely any substantive collaboration among trade unions and political parties with North America, in spite of the large immigrant contingent in places like Chicago. There was also little institutional infrastructure for much international coordination among the largest political and syndicalist groupings. The First International had ceased to exist officially in 1876 and was not followed by any influential institution of similar reach, whereas the large political movements crystallising under Labour and Social Democratic labels did not establish international cooperation until 1889, with the formation of the Second International (which peremptorily excluded anarchists and syndicalists).

The first of May 1886 in the US was the apex of what came to be known as the Great Upheaval, featuring mass walk-outs and protest marches in major cities spurred by a successful railroad strike by the Knights of Labor. Union organising was greatly aided by the ability to persuade scabs to join the strike and by a socially more comprehensive effort than before. In the Knights of Labor, for example, women became union organisers and local branch leaders, such as Leonora Barry; but the inclusion of women and African-Americans was at most in the lower ranks (Ashbaugh, 1986; Baxanadall and Gordon, 1995, 98-103). There was a simultaneous resurgence of the eight-hour day demand, a positive result of the rivalry between the more established Knights of Labor and the younger Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions of the United States and Canada, formed in 1881. The latter had passed a resolution in 1884 calling for a general strike on 1 May 1886 to pressure Congress into introducing appropriate legislation; this was ironically opposed by the Knights of Labor, which precipitated what turned out to be an equivalent of a general strike (Lens, 1986). Most of the national level mobilisation eventually centred in Chicago, thanks largely to anarchists' organising efforts, especially among the lowest paid employees (Green, 2006, 146).

Major concessions were being forced out of reluctant company owners, including reduction of the work day to eight hours with the same pay. In spite of such results, there were disagreements among unions over the extent of the demands to make. Further weakening the struggle, the Knights of Labor capitulated to railroad managers on the 3rd of May. On the same day, a violent and deadly confrontation occurred at the McCormick Reaper Works factory in Chicago, involving police firing upon and killing six unarmed strikers. Meanwhile national

guards and police forces were being readied for an onslaught at the first favourable sign (Green, 2006, 151-152, 156).

The following day, the IWPA organised a protest in Haymarket Square against the murders. As the demonstration was nearing the end, police intervened to disperse the sparse crowd. Someone threw a bomb at police that managed to incite a hail of bullets from the throng of officers surrounding the protest. Eventually, after the detonation and gunfire ended, at least three protesters died along with seven police officers (Ashbaugh, 1976, 76-77; Avrich, 1984, 197-214; Green, 2006, 184-191).

To this day, the bomb thrower's identity remains unknown, but the police riot became a ruse to persecute the left-wing of the labour movement at the national level. The repression was facilitated by the fierce anti-socialist propaganda of the press and the clergy across the country (Ashbaugh, 1976, 78-82; Avrich, 1984, 216-221; Green, 2006, 192-208). It can be countered that the anarchists set themselves up for ill treatment through propaganda by the deed (at times with actual bombs and assassinations, but in the 1890s and 1900s), verbal attacks, and abusive remarks in the alternative press. Though it is true that the IWPA implemented violent rhetoric to arouse worker mobilisation and scare the Chicago elites, venom and vitriol abounded in the bourgeois press and government statements against all radicals (not to mention the pervasive racism and sexism acceptable at the time, but which was rare among anarchists). In terms of physical violence and verbal abuse, the imputation of terrorism to anarchists is absurd when compared to the likes of fully armed government and private company agents like Bonfield, Pinkerton, and Sheridan, who massacred unarmed protesting strikers and led violent, sometimes deadly beatings of labour activists. Anarchists had killed no one in Chicago by the time the trial was under way, whereas police and private militias had killed hundreds.

The popularity of such patently false accusations, double standards, and deranged constructs of terrorism cannot be explained by the actions of anarchists themselves. There is a systemic process at work to prevent the delegitimisation of state and capital, especially when involved in mass murder, by demobilising anti-systemic movements capable of harnessing mass discontent for an insurrection or revolution (Boykoff, 2006). Arguably, what Haymarket can demonstrate is that the disinformation campaigns and issue framing capacities of government and bourgeois press are crucially supplemented by indoctrination through large religious institutions. There was an everyday use of mechanisms of suppression by capitalists and allied religious groups with a concurrent use of threats of violence by both state and capital that paved the way for the successful repression of socialist activism in the US.

In an atmosphere of officially orchestrated popular hysteria, the US government was able to arrest hundreds of suspected radicals without charge and

search their homes. The Knights of Labor fell apart, losing most of its membership by the next year. The IWPA was targeted most brutally for allegedly preparing and carrying out the attack on the police. Eight of the most active anarchist organisers were charged with conspiracy to murder: George Engel, Samuel Fielden, Adolph Fischer, Louis Lingg, Oscar Neebe, Albert Parsons, Michel Schwab, and August Spies. The organisation was essentially dismembered and the distancing of other socialist organisations from anarchism only helped legitimise government repression. However, socialist organisations and trade unions did hold mass demonstrations, joined by hundreds of thousands in major US and European cities, in support of the accused anarchists. Many well-known personalities, including Eleanor Marx, Friedrich Engels, and Oscar Wilde, were involved in the rallies and a plethora of signatures were collected to petition the US government for amnesty. There was plenty of outrage, but it was to no avail (Green, 2006, 258-259; Roediger and Rosemont, 1986). The first Red Scare in the US was unfolding and overwhelming almost all resistance.

A fine display of extreme prejudice and abuse, the trial resembled the many that exponents of anti-systemic and anti-colonial movements had to face in earlier periods and would face later. The jury was rigged, the evidence was false, witnesses were bribed, alternative accounts were summarily dismissed, and the rulings were biased even according to contemporary legal frameworks. All the accused anarchists were convicted and sentenced to death. Verdicts were later commuted to life imprisonment for Fielden and Schwab, whereas Neebe eventually received a 15 year sentence. Lingg committed suicide in his cell, though doubts persist on the circumstances of his death. Engel, Fischer, Parsons, and Spies were hanged 11 November 1887. Two days later, the funeral march and burial of the four men drew more people than that of President Lincoln in 1865. In 1893, Governor John Peter Altgeld pardoned the remaining anarchists languishing in prison and acknowledged the miscarriage of justice (Ashbaugh, 1976, 84-103; Avrich, 1984, 260-293; Green, 2006, 275).

The trial was a clear warning to anti-systemic movements and enduring damage was achieved beyond the wildest dreams of the ruling class. With trade unions roundly defeated and mostly in shambles, the fight for the eight-hour day was lost and profitability could continue to be sustained at workers' expense, even during downturns. Politically, radical organisations were forced to retreat, as most of the public developed a distorted and caricatured perspective of socialism and particularly of anarchism, now "inseparably linked with terrorism and destruction" (Avrich, 1984, 428) and ostracised from most socialist movements. The victory of high bourgeoisie and national state was enshrined in 1889 with the placement in Haymarket Square of a police statue commemorating the officers that lost their lives (Green, 2006, 281).

But the crushing of socialist and labour organisations also led to resurgence. The show trial and hanging of the anarchists and late nineteenth century repression so enraged and radicalised large numbers of workers and union sympathisers that it propelled new dissident movements with fresh ideas and encouraged the proliferation of socialist thought in the following century. This occurred in a context of increasing state repression, the progressive introduction of politically discriminatory laws, and the lack of enforcement of basic rights, like free speech, for socialist movements and organisations. Eventually, the eight-hour day was made into law when Congress approved the Fair Labor Standards Act in 1938, shortly following mass labour unrest and massacres by police (Green, 2006, 309).

Though persecuted or internally torn and short-lived, new parties, often backed by a revived trade unionism, arose to rival the political monopolies of the bourgeoisie, at least until the late 1940s in the US. For example, the Communist Party of the USA, founded in 1919, flourished between the 1920s and 1940s. Much like in other parts of the world, the communist movement eventually disintegrated through the combined effects of absorption into the USSR-centred Third International, its own internal contradictions and centrifugal forces (related to dogmatic and opportunistic elements), and the external pressures of state repression (the third Red Scare of the 1950s), including within the USSR (Beaud, 1993; Zinn, 1995).

The anarchist movement recovered in the following decades, often under different guises, even surviving a 1903 ban on specifically anarchist immigrants. It played a prominent role in labour agitation through, for example, the IWW. The organisation stood for unifying all employees into one union and, unlike coeval unions, endeavoured to integrate the most marginalised of workers into its fold. There were clear continuities with Haymarket. Lucy Parsons, IWPA co-founder, indefatigable agitator, and widow of Albert Parsons, helped found the IWW in Chicago in 1905. But by the 1920s, during the second Red Scare, with US government outlawing the IWW and murdering Wobblies, the movement for one big union faded. It would not be until the 1960s that a sizeable anarchist movement would be reconstituted (Guérin, 1970).

The alternation of influence between fractions of capital and labour, at least in Chicago, is reflected in the fate of the police statue. It was removed to Union Park a few years after 1889, with pressure from local unions. The police statue remained on Chicago's west side until it was reintroduced to Haymarket Square by a business association. In the midst of the social upheavals of the late 1960s, with government-mandated political assassinations and massacres and insurgencies, especially in African-American communities, the Weathermen, a faction of the Students for a Democratic Society, blew up the statue in 1969. They did so again in 1970, after it was restored and a commemorative plaque, commissioned by union veterans, had been removed. Eventually, the statue was relocated inside

Chicago's Central Police Station, owing to the expensive nature of constant police protection. Finally, with the persistence of the Illinois Labor History Society and the Chicago Federation of Labor and the mayor's agreement, a memorial sculpture was commissioned and raised at the spot where some of the 4th of May 1886 speeches had been made (Figure 1). But the statements engraved at the base of the sculpture (Figure 2) only allude vaguely to the substance of the events (Green, 2006, 314-317).



Figure 1 The Haymarket Square memorial sculpture.

The importance of struggles over meaning cannot be underemphasised. They affect the scope of memorialisation and the lessons to be learned from the past. The issue is not confined to reclaiming obliterated histories from the ruling institutions that instigated the object of reprehension. Taking Don Mitchell's analysis as departure, interpretations are also at stake that stimulate what sides are recognised and with what political content. The lessons from and meanings of Haymarket have been contested since 1886 among anti-systemic movements themselves. The first international commemoration of the first of May in 1890 already saw a split among and within political organisations and unions in France over action and content, between peaceful demands for reforms and mass revolutionary mobilisation in a general strike. A wave of arrests and imprisonment of agitators, with the tacit support of reformists, eventually pre-empted the general strike (Thomas 1971, 343-346). Interpretations (and uses) of symbols have major direct political consequences.



Figure 2 Plaques at the base of the sculpture, indicating aspects of the 1886 Haymarket events.

Regardless of how one interprets Haymarket, their memory would have vanished altogether by the next generation without recent efforts and those of Lucy Parsons, along with other anarchists and labour activists, to recount and publish Haymarket accounts. In this manner, Haymarket became an integral part of labour movements' lore, especially in Latin America and southern and eastern Europe. Between 1887 and today, with uneven speed and through differing circumstances and motivations, Haymarket was turned into the basis of a holiday with the establishment of the first of May as labour-day in most of the world. Even if that history was appropriated by state socialist dictatorships for their own propagandistic and geopolitical ends during the middle and late twentieth centuries, it remained a symbol of workers' struggle for rights and dignity in the workplace, if not a struggle for socialism. In the US, however, the holiday, along with its radical referent, was banned by 1955. The observance was not revived until the 1970s with the endeavours of veteran union activists and the renewed spread and popularisation of anarchist perspectives (Avrich, 1984, 428-436; Green, 2006, 301-320; Zinn, 1995, 267).

The Spectre of Haymarket in La Gran Marcha of 2006 and beyond

The strikes for the eight-hour day on the first of May 1886 still reverberate beyond the mainly white, largely immigrant Chicago community that was directly affected. The length of the working day, the means to fight for its reduction through the general strike, and the crucial role of immigrants are of continuing political centrality across different communities and times. This is exemplified by the May Day Gran Marcha and general strike over immigrant workers' rights⁴ and notable strategic shift in the support of mainstream US labour unions. Though unhelpfully associated with national symbolism and only superficially connected to the Haymarket legacy (May Day), La Gran Marcha at least promotes thinking of

⁴ This is no coincidence. There is continuity between the largely Mexican contingent behind the organising and the fact that May Day has been celebrated in Mexico since 1913 in commemoration of Haymarket.

workers' fates as intertwined regardless of citizenship status. This linkage, if used to overcome rather than reinforce nationalism (Bauder, 2006), creates the potential for both international worker solidarity and for rejuvenating memories of historical events from which present social struggles can learn. But for such labour movement strategies to be effective, the message must be made very plain to all strike and protest participants: divisions and privileges bestowed according to citizenship only serve to empower capitalists to force people globally to work longer hours for less pay.

The resonance of the eight-hour working-day and the strategy of the general strike beyond 1886 can be traced to what is at stake for anyone living in a capitalist system. This is the control over the means of survival, and a major part of this is the control of one's time to procure necessary resources and, more broadly, to determine what one gets to do in life. This is one important reason to continue to fight for the eight-hour work-day. Or, in my borrowing of Nik Heynen's reformulation, the struggle for an eight-hour day is about the fate of one's body. The conditions of the working-day (workplace environment, duration, wage rates, interpersonal relations, etc.) bear fundamental material consequences to our bodies, through exhaustion due to long working hours, through lack of access to basic resources (e.g., food, water, shelter) due to insufficient income (including wages) with under- or unemployment and/or with denial of access to commons. So the struggle over the working-day (Marx, 1867, 225)⁵ must be seen as one crucial dimension of the class struggle over control of the means to sustain our bodies in capitalist systems.

While capitalism spreads and intensifies everywhere, the struggle over the length of the working-day acquires political centrality because it is a major avenue for reclaiming control over our time and bodies and envisioning an alternative social system. In this light, focusing on Haymarket does not at all diminish the many coeval struggles that shaped workers' movements in the US or anywhere else. It does not shy away from the problems of racism, sexism, and national chauvinism that continue to haunt and undermine labour movements. Instead, revisiting and bringing new understandings to Haymarket and the meaning of the first of May sheds light on continuities and substantive differences, on strategies worth pursuing and those best suited as warnings of what to avoid.

But relevance and resonance comprise only one dimension of the Haymarket legacy. Connecting geographical research to class struggle eventually requires close engagement with actually existing anti-systemic movements. What

⁵ As Karl Marx put it, "the determination of what is the working-day presents itself as the result of a struggle between collective capital, i.e., the class of capitalists, and collective labour, i.e., the working-class."

motivates organising around the issue of Haymarket is a political project of fomenting, developing, and merging politically critical academic work with ongoing social struggles for an egalitarian global order. It begins with promoting a sense of outrage about events such as at Haymarket or the assault on the Black Panther Party and with vivifying the buried histories of working-class struggles, as David Harvey emphasises (Harvey, 2006). It can be carried out by generating discussions about combining academic endeavours with wider social justice struggles, which many academics are already doing, in the classrooms, through everyday interaction, in professional meetings (e.g., the 5th International Critical Geography Group meeting in Mumbai, India), and by way of research, as the contributions to this journal issue attest. Studying the great variety of experiences of anti-capitalist movements before and after 1886 is one way of increasing the social relevance of geography, using new understandings of the past to elaborate inclusive political strategies that can be shared with activists, agitators, organisers to promote egalitarianism.

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Internet archives and resources

Chicago Historical Society

<http://www.chicagohistory.org/dramas/>

Selected materials from the Chicago Historical Society's Haymarket Affair Digital Collection.

Illinois Labor History Society

<http://www.kentlaw.edu/ilhs/>

The Illinois Labor History Society web site (maintained through Kent College of Law), besides holding many articles on labour history, has an extensive selection of labour history links and a curriculum for teachers.

Labor Trail

<http://www.labortrail.org/>

The Labor Trail is an interactive series of maps and documents showing the history of working-class life and struggles that made the city of Chicago.

Library of Congress

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/award98/ichihtml/hayhome.html>

This Library of Congress collection showcases more than 3,800 images of original manuscripts, broadsides, photographs, prints and artefacts relating to the Haymarket Affair, also largely from the Chicago Historical Society archives.