

**VOLUME 1**

**NUMBER 148**

**The Haymarket Affair - Part II**

**Lead: In early May 1886 in the Haymarket area of Chicago a bloody confrontation occurred between police and workers. There followed the first "Red Scare" in American social history.**

**Intro.: "A Moment in Time" with Dan Roberts.**

**Content: The violence occurred at the end of a theretofore peaceful rally called by the anarchist movement to protest the attack by police on strikers at the McCormick Reaper factory the previous day. Several of their number**

**had been killed or wounded and union members were quite angry. As the meeting was breaking up the police arrived in strength. Someone tossed a bomb into the police ranks and they started firing, killing civilians and their own men as well.**

**Chicago and the rest of the country erupted in a frenzy of panic. Whipped up by a fear of anarchist insurrection, newspapers and public officials called for immediate suppression of radical sedition. Soon the angry voices crowded out civilized discussion. Often those who called for moderation or defend the right of peaceful protest were denounced. Rumors circulated that anarchists were plotting to blow up public buildings and bridges. For**

**months the country was in the grip of hysteria.**

**In Chicago the police, excited by the calls for revenge and perhaps not a little anxious to distract attention away from their own lack of discipline on that fatal evening were busy, not pursuing the one who threw the bomb, but arresting anarchists, radicals and even ordinary labor leaders who had nothing to do with the rally.**

**They never caught the bomber but eventually eight Chicago anarchists were brought to trial. In proceedings that have since been almost universally condemned as a travesty of justice they were all convicted of murder. After appeal four were hanged, one**

**committed suicide, and three were sentenced to long jail terms. Six years later Governor John Peter Altgeld reviewed the case and pardoned the survivors. He vigorously criticized the judge and found that the evidence did not show that any of the eight anarchists had been involved in the bombing.**

**The Haymarket Affair became the focus for much turmoil in American society at the time. It provoked bitter reaction against radicalism, the huge influx of so-called "foreign immigrants," and the interference of labor unions. It divided the nation and helped define loyalties at a critical juncture in the social history of the United States.**

**"A Moment in Time" is produced at the University of Richmond. This is Dan Roberts.**

**Resources**

**Avrich, Paul. *The Haymarket Tragedy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984.**

**David, Henry. *The History of the Haymarket Affair: A Study in the American Social-Revolutionary and Labor Movements*. New York, NY: Russell and Russell Publishing Company, 1958.**

**Roediger, Dave and Franklin Rosemont, Editors. *Haymarket Scrapbook*. Chicago, IL: C.H. Kerr Publishing Company, 1986.**

**Schindler, Burton. "The Haymarket Bomb," *American History Illustrated* 1986 21(4): 20-27.**

**Copyright by Dan Roberts Enterprises, Inc.**