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Death in the Haymarket: A Story of Chicago, the First Labor Movement, and the Bombing That Divided Gilded Age America

James Green*

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administrators, and nurse scholars, this well-written book should also be of interest to labor and health economists, human resource managers in healthcare, and even consumers of healthcare. Nurse migration is now, and will continue to be, a significant challenge for the global health care system. As a practicing nurse educator, I thoroughly enjoyed both the writing style and content of this book, including Kingma's personal thoughts about this most challenging worldwide phenomenon.

Darlene Clark

RN, MS,
Senior Lecturer in Nursing
School of Nursing
The Pennsylvania State University

History

Death in the Haymarket: A Story of Chicago, the First Labor Movement, and the Bombing That Divided Gilded Age America. By James Green. New York: Pantheon, 2006. 383 pp. ISBN 0-375-42237-4, \$26.95 (cloth).

The subtitle of James Green's new history of the most famous pre-9/11 instance of a "terrorist" act in the United States, the Haymarket bombing of 1886 in Chicago, fully conveys the scope and content of his book. Green sets the bomb that exploded at the end of a protest meeting at Haymarket Square on May 4, 1886, firmly within the context of the growth of the city of Chicago. As he tells the story, Chicago not only was one of the fastest-growing cities in the post-Civil War United States and an exemplar of a second industrial revolution, but it also became the nation's most class-divided urban center. Small wonder, then, that in a rapidly growing city split between a mass of immigrant workers (German, Scandinavian, Irish, British, and Eastern European in origin) who were overworked, underpaid, and exploited, and an emergent entrepreneurial class that waxed ever more wealthy and lived in palatial mansions, there emerged the nation's largest, most militant, and most radical labor movement. It was a labor movement that encompassed craft unionists, utopian all-grades unionists of the Knights of Labor variety, socialists who preached orthodox Marxism, anarchists, and even exponents of liberation through violence. Such a mass labor movement exacerbated class divisions in the city. When the Haymarket protest meeting, itself a result of labor-conflict-induced violence, terminated in a bombing that precipitated an equally

violent police reaction, the action and reaction caused the deaths of seven police officers and at least four civilians, as well as wounds to perhaps forty-nine meeting attendees and passers-by. The city of Chicago and the entire nation, according to Green, split along the axis of class.

Green has written his history of death in the Haymarket to reach an audience of literate readers rather than scholars. Hence he organized his story into a series of sixteen short chapters plus an epilogue. And he has created a narrative rather than an analytical history, one that prefers vernacular English to scholarly language and avoids academic jargon like the plague, and in which annotation is buried in endnotes. If the reviews his book have already received in general audience publications are any indication of its appeal to the trade book market, Green may, indeed, win a relatively large reading public. And if the reviewers in such venues as the *Sunday New York Times Book Review*, the *New Yorker*, and the *Nation* are to be believed, Green's book will teach its readers what they most need to know about a dramatic and transformational event in the nation's past that has been lost to the memory of most common citizens. Such reviews, however, are more indicative of the gulf between common conceptions of the American past and scholarly recreations of that past than they are of what Green actually adds to our knowledge of Haymarket's impact on its time and ours. In fact, Green could not have written his book without the benefit of the scholarship of numerous mid- and late twentieth-century historians of Chicago, Haymarket, the labor movement, and anarchism, among whom the most prominent are Paul Avrich, Bruce Nelson, Bessie Pierce, Richard Schneirov, William Cronin, and Carl Smith (as the endnotes attest).

Perhaps the best way to comprehend what Green has accomplished or failed to achieve is to compare his history of Haymarket to that of Avrich, published 23 years ago (*The Haymarket Tragedy*, Princeton University Press, 1984). Avrich, to be sure, remains our preeminent scholar of anarchism, and Green has added little, if anything, to Avrich's analysis of the relationship among anarchism, labor in Chicago, class conflict, and Haymarket. Green's treatment of the Haymarket bombing proper—its immediate antecedents, the protest meeting, the bomb, the violent police response, the ensuing police dragnet, the "red scare," the biased trial of the eight anarchists, and the hanging of four of the convicted defendants—scarcely differs from Avrich's. The same might be said of Green's biographical portraits of the eight defendants, most notably Albert Parsons (his wife Lucy as well), August Spies, and their six

lesser known co-defendants. Green's version of the evolving relationship among trade unionists, socialists, and anarchists resembles Avrigh's, and it is less substantial in its treatment of anarchism as a system of belief and action. Much the same may be said about Green's portrait of how bravely the four condemned anarchists faced the hangman, and also of the protest movement that spread nationally and internationally to spare the condemned from the noose, culminating in Governor John Peter Altgeld's pardon of the three surviving anarchists. Where Green surpasses Avrigh and offers his readers fresh knowledge is in his description of Chicago's history before 1886 and in his setting of Haymarket within a broader sweep of Chicago and national labor history that incorporates the 1877 railroad strikes and the ensuing mass urban violence, the 1885–86 railroad strikes, the "great labor upheaval" of 1885–86, the Homestead Lockout of 1892, and the Pullman Strike and Boycott of 1894.

Not all readers, however, may be pleased with Green's analysis of the larger setting within which Haymarket occurred and its place within the broader flow of national and world history. Green's sympathies lie with the eight condemned anarchists, whom he values as true martyrs to labor's cause, and whose ideas he believes resonated among the great mass of Chicago's workers, especially its immigrant component. His city and his nation are split between a great mass of exploited working people and their dependents and a wealthy elite of capitalists who used the police, the militia, the army, and the courts to keep the masses in their proper places. His Chicago resembles the city described in Jack London's *The Iron Heel*, his Albert Parsons parallels London's Ernest Everhardt, and Green's Marshall Field, Gustavus Swift, and George Pullman match London's "masters of capital." The Chicago described by Richard Schneirov and other recent students of the city's politics and workers was a more complex social and economic context in which a large stratum of the respectable middle class and a small stratum of the rich sympathized with mistreated workers and cooperated with "respectable" trade unionists to promote reform. Likely, over a broader span of time than during a few, brief explosive moments, far more workers in Chicago and the nation responded to the appeal of those trade unionists associated with the A. F. of L. than to the message of such anarchists as Parsons and Spies.

A final and perhaps fatal flaw lies at the heart of Green's version of the past. We may all agree that the eight Chicago anarchists were convicted of a crime that they never committed and that four of them went to their deaths unjustly, a

verdict that Avrigh reached more than 20 years ago. Yet the innocence of the Haymarket Eight does not acquit Sacco and Vanzetti, as Green suggests in his epilogue, of the crime for which they were tried, convicted, and executed some forty years later. As Avrigh proved in his own history of Sacco and Vanzetti, they belonged to a sect of Italian anarchists who believed in violent deeds, assassinations as well as bank robberies, all in the interest of liberation, and they were quite capable of committing the robbery and murders for which they were condemned to death (*Sacco and Vanzetti: The Anarchist Background*, Princeton University Press, 1991). They may have been condemned for "their beliefs as much as their actions," as Green writes (p. 307), but their beliefs encompassed robbery and murder. Parsons, Spies, et al. did not throw the bomb at Haymarket, nor did they participate in a conspiracy to do so, but they did play with dynamite, and those who do so, as the old saying goes, suffer the consequences. Green would have been wiser to stress the interpretation of Haymarket offered by one of the martyrs' close acquaintances and himself a labor radical, George Schilling. "I do not believe that the time will ever come when the judgment of an enlightened world will say that their [the anarchists] methods were wise or correct," Schilling wrote to Lucy Parsons. "They worshipped at the shrine of force; wrote it and preached it; until finally they were overpowered by their own Gods and slain in their own temple" (p. 288).

Despite my reservations about aspects of *Death in the Haymarket*, it is now the book to acquire and to read for those who seek to discover what happened in Chicago on the evening of May 4, 1886, as well as its larger meaning for U.S. history. It is also the book to assign to undergraduates, because Green has produced a narrative more dramatic, more accessible, and more crisply written than Avrigh's splendid scholarly study.

Melvyn Dubofsky

Distinguished Professor of
History and Sociology Emeritus
Binghamton University, SUNY

Mobsters, Unions, and Feds: The Mafia and the American Labor Movement. By James B. Jacobs. New York: New York University Press, 2006. 320 pp. ISBN 0-8147-4273-4, \$32.95 (cloth).

In this book James B. Jacobs offers a history of the federal government's efforts to curb labor racketeering. The heart of his text focuses on the results achieved by employing civil RICO suits