

Haymarket Affair Assignment

The Haymarket Square Riot/Affair/Bombing → Each is discussing the exact same event

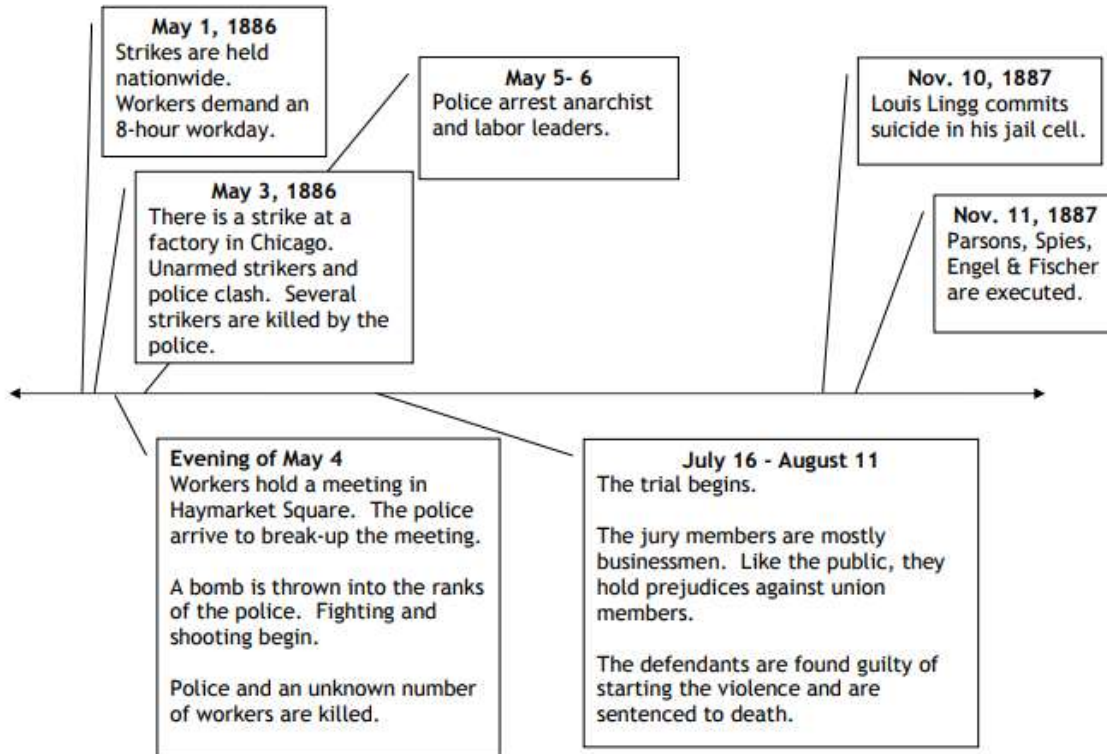
On May 4, 1886, a labor protest rally near Chicago's Haymarket Square turned into a riot after someone threw a bomb at police. At least eight people died as a result of the violence that day. Despite a lack of evidence against them, eight radical labor activists were convicted in connection with the bombing. The Haymarket Riot was viewed a setback for the organized labor movement in America, which was fighting for such rights as the eight-hour workday. At the same time, the men convicted in connection with the riot were viewed by many in the labor movement as martyrs.

In the aftermath of the Haymarket Square bombing, eight men were put on trial:

- Albert Parsons (led English-speaking anarchists)
- August Spies (led German-speaking anarchists)
- Samuel Fielden (Methodist pastor, draft animal teamster, labor activist, anarchist)
- Michael Schwab (co-editor of anarchist newspaper for German immigrant workers)
- George Engel (labor union activist and anarchist)
- Adolph Fischer (labor union activist and anarchist)
- Louis Lingg (carpenter, 23-year-old, known to make small bombs)
- Oscar Neebe (yeast-maker, labor activist, anarchist)

Haymarket Affair Timeline

The "Haymarket Affair" is a series of events that occurred in Chicago during the years 1886 and 1887. Some of the events are disputed or not fully understood. The events that are generally agreed to be part of the Haymarket story are as follows:



Document A: Albert Parsons's Testimony (Modified)

Congress has the power, under the Constitution, to pass an 8-hour work-day. We ask it; we demand it, and we intend to have it. If the present Congress will not give it to us we will send men to Congress who will give it to us. . . .

We do not propose to bring an industrial confusion or a state of anarchy, or to precipitate revolution or a state of anarchy, or to start revolution in this country. We are peaceable citizens, husbands, fathers. We are citizens of the State and law-abiding men. . . . The working classes simply seek to improve their condition. This is a natural feeling, and I cannot say that there is anything unnecessarily criminal in such a desire. We simply want less work and more pay, knowing that only through short hours and high wages can our condition be improved. We know this, and so we struggle for it. We wish to get at it by degrees.

Source: Excerpt from Albert Parsons's testimony to the House of Representatives Select Committee on Causes of the General Depression in Labor and Business, 1879.

1. What words does Parsons use to describe the workers and their needs? How do these words make the workers sound? Why do you think he chose these words?
2. Parsons says, "We wish to get at it by degrees." Does this statement make him seem more radical or more moderate?
3. When was this document written? How many years before the Haymarket incident? Do you think it's a reliable account of Parsons' beliefs?

Document B: Albert Parsons's Article (Modified)

In this article, written in 1887, Albert Parsons explains what anarchism means to him. The article appears in a book called *Anarchism: Its Philosophy and Scientific Basis, as Defined by Some of its Apostles*.

What, then, is our offense, being anarchists? The word anarchy is derived from the two Greek words an, meaning no, or without, and arche, government; hence anarchy means no government. Anarchy means a society which has no king, emperor, president or ruler of any kind.

The purpose, the only purpose of capital is to take away the product of the wage-workers. The origin of government was in violence and murder. Government enslaves the governed. Government is for slaves; free men govern themselves. . . .

The right to live, to equality of opportunity, to liberty and the pursuit of happiness, is yet to be acquired by the workers. . . . Capital and government stand or fall together. They are twins. The liberty of labor makes the government not only unnecessary, but impossible. When the people—the whole people—become the government, that is, participate equally in governing themselves, the government ceases to exist. . . .

Anarchy, therefore, is liberty; is the negation of force, or compulsion, or violence. Anarchy would strike from humanity every chain that binds it, and say to mankind: "Go forth! you are free! Have all, enjoy all!"

Source: "What Is Anarchism?" by Albert Parsons, 1887.

1. How does Parsons define anarchism? Does it sound like a positive or negative thing? Who might disagree with this characterization of anarchism?
2. When was this written? Was it before or after the Haymarket incident?
3. What was Parsons' purpose in writing this document?

Document C: Labor Historian (Modified)

The anarchists were indeed fond of dynamite, then a recent invention. Its main ingredient, nitroglycerin, had been around since the 1840s, but not until Alfred Nobel found a way to stabilize it, by mixing it with an inert filler, did it become safe enough for widespread use. . . . “Dynamite is the diffusion of power,” Parsons explained at the trial. “It is democratic; it makes everybody equal.” . . .

“If we would achieve our liberation,” Parsons had told a crowd of protesters in April of 1885, “every man must lay by a part of his wages, buy a Colt’s navy revolver, a Winchester rifle, and learn how to make and use dynamite.”

Source: The excerpt above is from a review of labor historian James Green’s 2006 book, *Death in the Haymarket*.

1. According to Parsons, is dynamite a positive or negative thing? Why?
2. How might Parsons’ opinion of dynamite affect what people thought about him?

Document D: New York Times Article (Modified)

The Anarchists’ Trial: New Witnesses Strengthen the Prosecution, Testify to the Incendiary Speeches

At the Anarchist trial this morning a newspaper reporter testified that he was at the Haymarket meeting. Parsons in his speech said: “What good are those strikes going to do? What do you think you are going to gain by them? Do you think you are going to gain your point? No, you will have to go back to work for less wages than you formerly received.”

When he mentioned the name of Jay Gould someone cried, “Hang him; throw him in the lake.” Parsons said: “No, no; that won’t do. If Jay Gould was put out of

the way today another Jay Gould or 100 Jay Goulds would rise up. It is not the man, but the system, that ought to be destroyed.” . . .

Detective Cosgrove also testified about Parsons’ speech. He estimated the crowd at 2,000 and said it was very unruly and excited. Parsons near the close of his speech frequently cried, “To arms,” which served to greatly increase the excitement.

Source: The article above was published in the *New York Times* on July 28, 1886.

1. According to Detective Cosgrove, what was the effect of Parsons’ speech?
2. Do you think this is a reliable account of Parsons’ speech? Why or why not?

Document E: Letter to Lucy Parsons (Modified)

While in jail, Parsons wrote the letter below to his wife Lucy Parsons, who was also a radical labor activist and anarchist. He was awaiting sentencing after being found guilty of conspiracy.

Cook County Bastille, Cell No. 29,
Chicago, August 20, 1886.

My Darling Wife:

Our verdict this morning cheers the hearts of tyrants throughout the world. There was no evidence that any one of the eight doomed men knew of, or advised, or abetted the Haymarket tragedy. But what does that matter? The privileged class demands a victim, and we are offered a sacrifice to appease the hungry

yells of an infuriated mob of millionaires who will be contented with nothing less than our lives. Monopoly triumphs!

Well, my poor, dear wife, I, personally, feel sorry for you and the helpless little babes.

My children—well, their father had better die in the effort to secure their liberty and happiness than live contented in a society which condemns nine-tenths of its children to a life of wage-slavery and poverty. Bless them; I love them unspeakably, my poor helpless little ones.

Ah, wife, living or dead, we are as one. For you my affection is everlasting. For the people, humanity. I cry out again and again in the doomed victim's cell: Liberty! Justice! Equality!

Source: Personal letter, Albert Parsons, August 20, 1886.

1. According to Parsons, why are he and the other defendants being tried?
2. What does Parsons mean when he claims “monopoly triumphs”?
3. Based on this letter, how would you describe Parsons?

Document F: Chicago Mayor (Modified)

When I judged that Mr. Parsons was about to end his speech I went over to the station, spoke to Captain Bonfield and decided to go home, but instead of going immediately I went back to hear a little more; stayed there about five minutes longer and then left. Within about twenty minutes from the time that I left the meeting I heard the sound of the explosion of the bomb at my house. . . .

I did in fact take no action at the meeting about dispersing it. There were occasional replies from the audience as “shoot him,” “hang him,” or the like, but I do not think from the directions in which they came, here and there and around, that there were more than two or three hundred actual sympathizers with the speakers. Several times cries of “hang him,” would come from a boy in the outskirts, and the crowd would laugh. I felt that a majority of the crowd were idle spectators, and the replies nearly as much what might be called “guying” as absolute applause. Some of the replies were evidently bitter; they came from immediately around the stand. The audience numbered from 800 to 1,000. . . . There was no suggestion made by either of the speakers for the immediate use of force or violence toward any person that night; if there had been I should have dispersed them at once. When I went to the station during Parsons's speech, I stated to Captain Bonfield that I thought the speeches were about over; that nothing had occurred yet or looked likely to occur to require interference, and that he had better issue orders to the police at the other stations to go home. I don't remember hearing Parsons call “To arms! To arms! To arms!”

Source: Mayor Harrison of Chicago attended the Haymarket Rally but left right before the violence erupted. He gave his testimony at the trial on August 2, 1886.

1. Was Mayor Harrison afraid of Parsons when he heard him speak? How do you know?
 2. How does the Mayor's account differ from Detective Cosgrove's account in Document D? Which do you find more reliable, Document D or F?
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1. Was Albert Parsons a dangerous man? Cite evidence from any of the documents to support your position. (4-6 sentences)

The Ludlow Massacre: Colorado Encyclopedia

The Ludlow Massacre began on the morning of April 20, 1914, when a battle broke out between the Colorado National Guard and striking coal miners at their tent colony outside of Ludlow in Las Animas County. Nobody knows who fired the first shot, but the incident is remembered as a massacre because the miners and their families bore the brunt of the casualties. At least nineteen people died, including one guardsman, five miners, and thirteen women and children who suffocated as they hid from the gunfire in a pit. More died in violence throughout southern Colorado over the next few days. No matter how the casualties are counted, the Ludlow Massacre is one of the bloodiest events in American labor history.

The massacre was the culminating event of the 1913–14 Colorado coal miners' strike. The strike had two main goals: getting coal operators to follow state of Colorado mining law and gaining representation by the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) for Colorado's coal miners. The dispute was bloody from the outset, with deaths on both sides. The state's largest private employer, the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company (CF&I), employed most of the striking miners. Since it had more resources than the miners, its efforts to intimidate union members into ending the dispute resonated most in the public mind. For example, on October 17, 1913, an armor-plated car (quickly dubbed the "Death Special") shot up the miners' tent colony at Forbes, killing one and scaring many. As a result of such tactics, every miners' tent colony was heavily armed. In response to that, Colorado Governor Elias M. Ammons deployed the National Guard to keep the miners under control.

The Guard was supposed to maintain the peace, but since mine owners had already worked out a deal with the state to pay for the cost of the deployment, the troops actually caused more trouble. The battalion also included many veterans of the Spanish-American War and the Philippine Insurrection who were conditioned to think of the multi-ethnic miners as their inferiors.

No matter which side fired first on April 20, the battle began as a result of mutual distrust and fear. With a history of violence on both sides, any minor incident could have blown up to be a major conflict. Once that conflict started, most of the residents of the Ludlow colony evacuated. Thinking the colony had been abandoned, Guardsmen burned the tents to the ground. Nobody knew about those thirteen women and children and the pit until their bodies were found the next morning, suffocated by the fumes rather than shot down in cold blood, as the miners alleged. However, an accurate indicator of the Guard's unbridled hostility toward the miners was the cold-blooded execution of three leaders under a flag of truce. Louis Tikas, a Greek-American leader of the striking miners, was shot three times in the back.

Ramifications from the Massacre began instantly. When other miners heard of the events at Ludlow, they went on a killing spree across the region. Mine supervisors and guards were shot. Mine property was destroyed. Innocent people were killed on both sides. It is impossible to determine how many people died in the days after the Massacre, although it was certainly more than the number of the people who died in the initial tragedy. Rumors of a slaughter by the National Guard ran rampant, fueled by the outside world's inability to confirm what happened. On April 28, President Woodrow Wilson dispatched the US Army to Colorado, thereby ending the violence and restoring order to the region.

The 1913–14 Colorado coal strike ended in December 1914 with the union achieving none of its stated objectives. Nevertheless, the deaths of the women and children in the "death pit" captured the public imagination. In an era that can still be described as "Victorian" in outlook, killing unarmed women and children (even if done by accident) was completely unacceptable to the American public. Therefore, despite the hostile press that striking miners had received before the Massacre, media outlets attacked the mine owners with gusto afterwards. It was Denver's Rocky Mountain News, rather than the miners, that coined the term "Ludlow Massacre" shortly after the event. A clever media campaign by the UMWA that included a nationwide speaking tour by female survivors of the massacre won further support for the union cause. An investigation of the strike and subsequent massacre by the US Commission on Industrial

Relations under Chairman Frank Walsh kept the tragedy in the news for years after it happened. The primary object of union and public hostility after the Ludlow Massacre was John D. Rockefeller, Jr., the oil baron's son and primary stockholder of CF&I. Shortly after the tragedy, the writer Upton Sinclair and others protested outside Rockefeller's New York City office.

Sinclair was also part of a mock trial of Rockefeller for murder near the industrialist's hometown in upstate New York. As a result, Rockefeller hired the future Prime Minister of Canada (then a former Labor Minister), W. L. Mackenzie King, to design the so-called Rockefeller Plan, an employer representation plan (or "company union" to critics) that was designed to give miners just enough rights and privileges in order to avoid future tragedies. In 1918 the UMWA erected a statue commemorating the Ludlow Massacre on the site of the tent colony. The union continues to commemorate the event each year to this day.

1. Write a 7-10 sentence paragraph about the contextualization of the Ludlow Massacre.
 - a. Use the following questions:
 - i. Where did the murder take place?
 - ii. When?
 - iii. What kind of a strike was this?
 - iv. Who eye witnessed the massacre?
 - v. Why is it called a massacre?
 - vi. What was different then? What was the same?
 - vii. What else was happening at this time in the US?