

BOOK REVIEWS

The Haymarket Riot. By Ernest Bloomfield Zeisler. Chicago: Alexander J. Isaacs, 1956. Pp. 139. \$2.00.

It was seventy years ago last May 4th that a bomb was exploded in the Haymarket in Chicago, causing the death of seven police officers. This was the once famous Haymarket Riot. But so much time has elapsed that oldsters should not assume that it is more than—at most—a hazy name to the majority of people today.

On that evening in 1886 a group of anarchists—Communists we should now call them—sponsored a meeting to protest police brutality in some recent labor disputes. While, strictly speaking, it is irrelevant, it might be mentioned that this brutality now reads like the Nazi Gestapo at its very worst.

Though this reviewer has never seen any account of what was said in the speeches, it can safely be assumed that they lacked nothing in incitement to violence. But even the wildest language can become boring after an hour or two and by ten o'clock the crowd, which had never exceeded three or four hundred, where four thousand had been expected, was rapidly breaking up. Mayor Harrison, Sr., who had been present in case of trouble, decided that he might as well go home. On the way he stopped at the near-by Desplaines Street police station and told the captain in charge (who had been the commanding officer in the police-labor fights referred to above) to dismiss his reserve men. The captain agreed, but did nothing until the mayor was well out of the neighborhood. He then assembled his force—one hundred and eighty men—and marched on the meeting to break it up. As the police arrived at the speakers' stand, a bomb was thrown from their rear, and seven police officers were fatally wounded. All those on the speakers' platform in front of the police were arrested, although it was agreed that they had not, of course, thrown the bomb in person.

Confronted with this terrible outrage, Chicago responded with hysterical fury, and a witch hunt resulted such as has probably never been equalled in this country before or since. Any who dared to make even a faint protest were hounded out of public or professional life. One man who remarked that one of the suspects had the background of a gentleman was arrested on a charge of disorderly conduct. Leadership in this unlovely contest of hysteria at first glance seems in doubt, between a morning newspaper perilously close to urging lynching, a prosecuting attorney who conceived of his duty only in terms of securing convictions and a supreme court determined to uphold them, delivering the longest opinion in Illinois history (two hundred and sixty-six pages)

to do so unconvincingly. But there can be no real doubt as to who deserves first place. It is the trial judge, whose gross and repeated unfairness equally amazes and shocks one. The aftermath is still slightly remembered. Of the eight not-too-appealing defendants four were hanged, one committed suicide just before he was to be hanged and three were pardoned after seven years' imprisonment. (Of these three, two had originally been sentenced to be hanged but had their sentences reduced to life imprisonment.) Incidentally, the governor who granted the pardons was, as a consequence, permanently driven out of public life.

All this is recounted in the little book under review. If this were all, one could merely say that it was an excellent retelling of an old and unpleasant story. There is, however, one additional and wholly new feature. From a source not previously available the author is able convincingly to point out who did in fact throw the bomb. It reads almost like a mystery story, a thriller, and the reviewer does not propose to give away the secret. He will merely say that, had the probable facts been known, it would have made it far less necessary to resort to unfairness in order to secure convictions.

In a carefully written little book like this it is unfortunate that the proof-reading has been slipshod. Nor is the appearance aided by the fact that the pages are merely lithoprinted from typewritten sheets. But for those still interested in the old riot it will supply a worthwhile hour or two of reading.

E. W. PUTTKAMMER*

* Professor of Law Emeritus, The University of Chicago Law School.

The Federal Loyalty-Security Program. Report of the Special Committee on the Federal Loyalty-Security Program of the Association of the Bar of the City of New York. New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1956. Pp. xxvi, 301. \$5.00.

Although this Report does not add anything particularly novel or startling to prior discussions of the personnel loyalty-security programs, it is nevertheless an extremely valuable contribution. It presents a carefully articulated and comprehensive plan for revision, unanimously adopted by a group of experienced and disinterested private citizens with no prior commitments to the present programs and no apparent strong emotional antagonisms against them.¹ The most radical recommendation contained in the Report is that the security program be limited to sensitive positions, meaning such positions as are designated by the head of the agency concerned as giving access to secret or top-secret information, or having a policy-making function which bears a sub-

¹ The members of the committee, all practicing lawyers, were Dudley B. Bonsal (chairman), Richard Bentley, Henry J. Friendly, Monte M. Lemann, George Roberts, Frederick M. Bradley, Harold M. Kennedy, John O'Melveny, and Whitney North Seymour.