



**A THOUSAND RIOTERS  
SELECTED WRITINGS OF  
LUCY PARSONS**



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# The Principles of Anarchism

Comrades and Friends:

I think I cannot open my address more appropriately than by stating my experience in my long connection with the reform movement.

It was during the great railroad strike of 1877 that I first became interested in what is known as the "Labor Question." I then thought as many thousands of earnest, sincere people think, that the aggregate power, operating in human society, known as government, could be made an instrument in the hands of the oppressed to alleviate their sufferings. But a closer study of the origin, history and tendency of governments, convinced me that this was a mistake; I came to understand how organized governments used their concentrated power to retard progress by their ever-ready means of silencing the voice of discontent if raised in vigorous protest against the machinations of the scheming few, who always did, always will and always must rule in the councils of nations where majority rule is recognized as the only means of adjusting the affairs of the people. I came to understand that such concentrated power can be always wielded in the interest of the few and at the expense of the many. Government in its last analysis is this power reduced to a science. Governments never lead; they follow progress. When the prison, stake or scaffold can no longer silence the voice of the protesting minority, progress moves on a step, but not until then.

I will state this contention in another way: I learned by close study that it made no difference what fair promises a political party, out of power might make to the people in order to secure their confidence, when once securely established in control of the affairs of society that they were after all but human

with all the human attributes of the politician. Among these are: First, to remain in power at all hazards; if not individually, then those holding essentially the same views as the administration must be kept in control. Second, in order to keep in power, it is necessary to build up a powerful machine; one strong enough to crush all opposition and silence all vigorous murmurs of discontent, or the party machine might be smashed and the party thereby lose control.

When I came to realize the faults, failings, shortcomings, aspirations and ambitions of fallible man, I concluded that it would not be the safest nor best policy for society, as a whole, to entrust the management of all its affairs, with all their manifold deviations and ramifications in the hands of finite man, to be managed by the party which happened to come into power, and therefore was the majority party, nor did it ten, nor does it now make one particle of difference to me what a party, out of power may promise; it does not tend to allay my fears of a party, when entrenched and securely seated in power might do to crush opposition, and silence the voice of the minority, and thus retard the onward step of progress.

My mind is appalled at the thought of a political party having control of all the details that go to make up the sum total of our lives. Think of it for an instant, that the party in power shall have all authority to dictate the kind of books that shall be used in our schools and universities, government officials editing, printing, and circulating our literature, histories, magazines and press, to say nothing of the thousand and one activities of life that a people engage in, in a civilized society.

To my mind, the struggle for liberty is too great and the few steps we have gained have been won at too great a sacrifice, for the great mass of the people of this 20th century to consent to turn over to any political party the management of our social and industrial affairs. For all who are at all familiar

with history know that men will abuse power when they possess it, for these and other reasons, I, after careful study, and not through sentiment, turned from a sincere, earnest, political Socialist to the non-political phase of Socialism, Anarchism, because in its philosophy I believe I can find the proper conditions for the fullest development of the individual units in society, which can never be the case under government restrictions.

The philosophy of anarchism is included in the word "Liberty"; yet it is comprehensive enough to include all things else that are conducive to progress. No barriers whatever to human progression, to thought, or investigation are placed by anarchism; nothing is considered so true or so certain, that future discoveries may not prove it false; therefore, it has but one infallible, unchangeable motto, "Freedom." Freedom to discover any truth, freedom to develop, to live naturally and fully. Other schools of thought are composed of crystallized ideas-principles that are caught and impaled between the planks of long platforms, and considered too sacred to be disturbed by a close investigation. In all other "issues" there is always a limit; some imaginary boundary line beyond which the searching mind dare not penetrate, lest some pet idea melt into a myth. But anarchism is the usher of science-the master of ceremonies to all forms of truth. It would remove all barriers between the human being and natural development. From the natural resources of the earth, all artificial restrictions, that the body might be nurtured, and from universal truth, all bars of prejudice and superstition, that the mind may develop symmetrically.

Anarchists know that a long period of education must precede any great fundamental change in society, hence they do not believe in vote begging, nor political campaigns, but rather in the development of self-thinking individuals.

We look away from government for relief, because we

know that force (legalized) invades the personal liberty of man, seizes upon the natural elements and intervenes between man and natural laws; from this exercise of force through governments flows nearly all the misery, poverty, crime and confusion existing in society.

So, we perceive, there are actual, material barriers blockading the way. These must be removed. If we could hope they would melt away, or be voted or prayed into nothingness, we would be content to wait and vote and pray. But they are like great frowning rocks towering between us and a land of freedom, while the dark chasms of a hard-fought past yawn behind us. Crumbling they may be with their own weight and the decay of time, but to quietly stand under until they fall is to be buried in the crash. There is something to be done in a case like this—the rocks must be removed. Passivity while slavery is stealing over us is a crime. For the moment we must forget that we are anarchists—when the work is accomplished we may forget that we were revolutionists—hence most anarchists believe the coming change can only come through a revolution, because the possessing class will not allow a peaceful change to take place; still we are willing to work for peace at any price, except at the price of liberty.

And what of the glowing beyond that is so bright that those who grind the faces of the poor say it is a dream? It is no dream, it is the real, stripped of brain-distortions materialized into thrones and scaffolds, mitres and guns. It is nature acting on her own interior laws as in all her other associations. It is a return to first principles; for were not the land, the water, the light, all free before governments took shape and form? In this free state we will again forget to think of these things as “property.” It is real, for we, as a race, are growing up to it. The idea of less restriction and more liberty, and a confiding trust that nature is equal to her work, is permeating all modern thought.

From the dark year—not so long gone by—when it was generally believed that man's soul was totally depraved and every human impulse bad; when every action, every thought and every emotion was controlled and restricted; when the human frame, diseased, was bled, dosed, suffocated and kept as far from nature's remedies as possible; when the mind was seized upon and distorted before it had time to evolve a natural thought—from those days to these years the progress of this idea has been swift and steady. It is becoming more and more apparent that in every way we are “governed best where we are governed least.”

Still unsatisfied perhaps, the inquirer seeks for details, for ways and means, and whys and werefores. How ill we go on like human beings eating and sleeping, working and loving, exchanging and dealing, without government? So used have we become to “organized authority” in every department of life that ordinarily we cannot conceive of the most common-place avocations being carried on without their interference and “protection.” But anarchism is not compelled to outline a complete organization of a free society. To do so with any assumption of authority would be to place another barrier in the way of coming generations. The best thought of today may become the useless vagary of tomorrow, and to crystallize it into a creed is to make it unwieldy.

We judge from experience that man is a gregarious animal, and instinctively affiliates with his kind co-operates, unites in groups, works to better advantage, combined with his fellow men than when alone. This would point to the formation of co-operative communities, of which our present trades-unions are embryonic patterns. Each branch of industry will no doubt have its own organization, regulations, leaders, etc.; it will institute methods of direct communications with every member of that industrial branch in the world, and establish equitable relations

with all other branches. There would probably be conventions of industry which delegates would attend, and where they would transact such business as was necessary, adjourn and from that moment be delegates no longer, but simply members of a group. To remain permanent members of a continuous congress would be to establish a power that is certain soon or later to be abused.

No great, central power, like a congress consisting of men who know nothing of their constituents' trades, interests, rights or duties, would be over the various organizations or groups; nor would they employ sheriffs, policemen, courts or jailers to enforce the conclusions arrived at while in session. The members of groups might profit by the knowledge gained through mutual interchange of thought afforded by conventions if they choose, but they will not be compelled to do so by any outside force.

Vested rights, privileges, charters, title deeds, upheld by all the paraphernalia of government-the visible symbol of power-such as prison, scaffold and armies will have no existence. There can be no privileges bought or sold, and the transaction kept sacred at the point of the bayonet. Every man will stand on an equal footing with his brother in the race of life, and neither chains of economic thralldom nor metal drags of superstition shall handicap the one to the advantage of the other.

Property will lose a certain attribute which sanctifies it now. The absolute ownership of it—"the right to use or abuse"—will be abolished, and possession, use, will be the only title. It will be seen how impossible it would be for one person to "own" a million acres of land, without a title deed, backed by a government ready to protect the title at all hazards, even to the loss of thousands of lives. He could not use the million acres himself, nor could he wrest from its depths the possible resources it contains.

People have become so used to seeing the evidences of

authority on every hand that most of them honestly believe that they would go utterly to the bad if it were not for the policeman's club or the soldier's bayonet. But the anarchist says, "Remove these evidence of brute force, and let man feel the revivifying influences of self responsibility and self control, and see how we will respond to these better influences."

The belief in a literal place of torment has nearly melted away; and instead of the direful results predicted, we have a higher and truer standard of manhood and womanhood. People do not care to go to the bad when they find they can as well as not. Individuals are unconscious of their own motives in doing good. While acting out their natures according to their surroundings and conditions, they still believe they are being kept in the right path by some outside power, some restraint thrown around them by church or state. So the objector believes that with the right to rebel and secede, sacred to him, he would forever be rebelling and seceding, thereby creating constant confusion and turmoil. Is it probable that he would, merely for the reason that he could do so? Men are to a great extent creatures of habit, and grow to love associations; under reasonably good conditions, he would remain where he commences, if he wished to, and, if he did not, who has any natural right to force him into relations distasteful to him? Under the present order of affairs, persons do unite with societies and remain good, disinterested members for life, where the right to retire is always conceded.

What we anarchists contend for is a larger opportunity to develop the units in society, that mankind may possess the right as a sound being to develop that which is broadest, noblest, highest and best, unhandicapped by any centralized authority, where he shall have to wait for his permits to be signed, sealed, approved and handed down to him before he can engage in the active pursuits of life with his fellow being. We know that after all, as we grow more enlightened under this larger liberty, we

will grow to care less and less for that exact distribution of material wealth, which, in our greed-nurtured senses, seems now so impossible to think upon carelessly. The man and woman of loftier intellects, in the present, think not so much of the riches to be gained by their efforts as of the good they can do for their fellow creatures. There is an innate spring of healthy action in every human being who has not been crushed and pinched by poverty and drudgery from before his birth, that impels him onward and upward. He cannot be idle, if he would; it is as natural for him to develop, expand, and use the powers within him when no repressed, as it is for the rose to bloom in the sunlight and fling its fragrance on the passing breeze.

The grandest works of the past were never performed for the sake of money. Who can measure the worth of a Shakespeare, an Angelo or Beethoven in dollars and cents? Agassiz said, "he had no time to make money," there were higher and better objects in life than that. And so will it be when humanity is once relieved from the pressing fear of starvation, want, and slavery, it will be concerned, less and less, about the ownership of vast accumulations of wealth. Such possessions would be but an annoyance and trouble. When two or three or four hours a day of easy, of healthful labor will produce all the comforts and luxuries one can use, and the opportunity to labor is never denied, people will become indifferent as to who owns the wealth they do not need. Wealth will be below par, and it will be found that men and women will not accept it for pay, or be bribed by it to do what they would not willingly and naturally do without it. Some higher incentive must, and will, supersede the greed for gold. The involuntary aspiration born in man to make the most of one's self, to be loved and appreciated by one's fellow-beings, to "make the world better for having lived in it," will urge him on the nobler deeds than ever the sordid and selfish incentive of material gain has done.

If, in the present chaotic and shameful struggle for exis

tence, when organized society offers a premium on greed, cruelty, and deceit, men can be found who stand aloof and almost alone in their determination to work for good rather than gold, who suffer want and persecution rather than desert principle, who can bravely walk to the scaffold for the good they can do humanity, what may we expect from men when freed from the grinding necessity of selling the better part of themselves for bread? The terrible conditions under which labor is performed, the awful alternative if one does not prostitute talent and morals in the service of mammon; and the power acquired with the wealth obtained by ever so unjust means, combined to make the conception of free and voluntary labor almost an impossible one. And yet, there are examples of this principle even now. In a well bred family each person has certain duties, which are performed cheerfully, and are not measured out and paid for according to some pre-determined standard; when the united members sit down to the well-filled table, the stronger do not scramble to get the most, while the weakest do without, or gather greedily around them more food than they can possibly consume. Each patiently and politely awaits his turn to be served, and leaves what he does not want; he is certain that when again hungry plenty of good food will be provided. This principle can be extended to include all society, when people are civilized enough to wish it.

Again, the utter impossibility of awarding to each and exact return for the amount of labor performed will render absolute communism a necessity sooner or later. The land and all it contains, without which labor cannot be exerted, belong to no one man, but to all alike. The inventions and discoveries of the past are the common inheritance of the coming generations; and when a man takes the tree that nature furnished free, and fashions it into a useful article, or a machine perfected and bequeathed to him by many past generations, who is to determine what proportion is his and his alone? Primitive man would

have been a week fashioning a rude resemblance to the article with his clumsy tools, where the modern worker has occupied an hour. The finished article is of far more real value than the rude one made long ago, and yet the primitive man toiled the longest and hardest. Who can determine with exact justice what is each one's due? There must come a time when we will cease trying. The earth is so bountiful, so generous; man's brain is so active, his hands so restless, that wealth will spring like magic, ready for the use of the world's inhabitants. We will become as much ashamed to quarrel over its possession as we are now to squabble over the food spread before us on a loaded table. "But all this," the objector urges, "is very beautiful in the far off future, when we become angels. It would not do now to abolish governments and legal restraints; people are not prepared for it."

This is a question. We have seen, in reading history, that wherever an old-time restriction has been removed the people have not abused their newer liberty. Once it was considered necessary to compel men to save their souls, with the aid of governmental scaffolds, church racks and stakes. Until the foundation of the American republic it was considered absolutely essential that governments should second the efforts of the church in forcing people to attend the means of grace; and yet it is found that the standard of morals among the masses is raised since they are left free to pray as they see fit, or not at all, if they prefer it. It was believed the chattel slaves would not work if the overseer and whip were removed; they are so much more a source of profit now that ex-slave owners would not return to the old system if they could.

So many able writers have shown that the unjust institutions which work so much misery and suffering to the masses have their root in governments, and owe their whole existence to the power derived from government we cannot help but believe that were every law, every title deed, every court, and every

police officer or soldier abolished tomorrow with one sweep, we would be better off than now. The actual, material things that man needs would still exist; his strength and skill would remain and his instinctive social inclinations retain their force and the resources of life made free to all the people that they would need no force but that of society and the opinion of fellow beings to keep them moral and upright.

Freed from the systems that made him wretched before, he is not likely to make himself more wretched for lack of them. Much more is contained in the thought that conditions make man what he is, and not the laws and penalties made for his guidance, than is supposed by careless observation. We have laws, jails, courts, armies, guns and armories enough to make saints of us all, if they were the true preventives of crime; but we know they do not prevent crime; that wickedness and depravity exist in spite of them, nay, increase as the struggle between classes grows fiercer, wealth greater and more powerful and poverty more gaunt and desperate.

To the governing class the anarchists say: "Gentlemen, we ask no privilege, we propose no restriction; nor, on the other hand, will we permit it. We have no new shackles to propose, we seek emancipation from shackles. We ask no legislative sanction, for co-operation asks only for a free field and no favors; neither will we permit their interference. (?) It asserts that in freedom of the social unit lies the freedom of the social state. It asserts that in freedom to possess and utilize soil lie social happiness and progress and the death of rent. It asserts that order can only exist where liberty prevails, and that progress leads and never follows order. It asserts, finally, that this emancipation will inaugurate liberty, equality, fraternity. That the existing industrial system has outgrown its usefulness, if it ever had any is I believe admitted by all who have given serious thought to this phase of social conditions.

The manifestations of discontent now looming upon every side show that society is conducted on wrong principles and that something has got to be done soon or the wage class will sink into a slavery worse than was the feudal serf. I say to the wage class: Think clearly and act quickly, or you are lost. Strike not for a few cents more an hour, because the price of living will be raised faster still, but strike for all you earn, be content with nothing less.

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Following are definitions which will appear in all of the new standard Dictionaries:

Anarchism-The philosophy of a new social order based on liberty unrestricted by man made law, the theory that all forms of government are based on violence-hence wrong and harmful, as well as unnecessary.

Anarchy-Absence of government; disbelief in and disregard of invasion and authority based on coercion and force; a condition of society regulated by voluntary agreement instead of government.

Anarchist-No. 1. A believer in Anarchism; one opposed to all forms of coercive government and invasive authority. 2. One who advocates Anarchy, or absence of government, as the ideal of political liberty and social harmony.

Published as a pamphlet,  
*circa* 1905-1910

# **Are Class Interests Identical?**

## **A Synopsis of the Aims and Objects of the Industrial Workers of the World**

If there is a country of the face of the Earth where the working classes need to be educated to understand their class interests, that country is America. The wage-earners are taught that in this country where every man's son many aspire to become president of these United States, there can be no classes. Large masses accept this kind of "jollying" without question. Thousands of them do really believe we have no classes here. Because one man in thirteen or fourteen million men is elected, instead of being born to rule, they accept this as indisputable evidence of universal liberty.

Another hard fact that is difficult to drive home to the American mind, is that the belongs to an entirely different class from that to which the employing class belongs. Because he sees some of the wage class occasionally escape from the wage to the middle class, he thinks maybe he can do so too; thus he bribes himself to keep quiet, while wrong and oppression are seen on every hand. If he joins his union, it is as a sort of temporary makeshift, or convenience, as he expects to become a businessman, or learn a profession or his son will be a professional or businessman, or his daughter will marry a rich man or something of the kind will happen; so he goes on from year to year, bribing himself; meanwhile his condition and that of his class become more and more hopeless.

Then too, the teachings of the trades unions are based upon wrong premises, in so far as they teach the "identity of interests between capital and labor." If the interests of capital and labor are identical, why do they not both belong to the same or-

ganization? We need to view from the right standpoint the class struggle; hence when an organization is founded fro the express purpose of teaching the working class correct and fundamental principles underlying the wage-system and their own relation to the employing class, and when we understand these lessons are to be taught in the meetings of the unions, then indeed may we hail such an organization as a real blessing!

The Industrial Workers of he World was launched in Chicago, July 8th, 1905 with the avowed purpose of demonstrating that, "the working class and the employing class have nothing in common." That the readers of *The Liberator* may understand what the Industrial Workers of the World really stand for, we give the Preamble of the Constitution:

### IWW Preamble

The working class and he employing class have noting in common. There can be no peace so long as hunger and want are found among the millions of working people, and the few, who make up the employing class, have all the good things of life. Between these two classes a struggle must go on until all the toilers come together on the political, as well as on the industrial field, and the take and hold that which they produce by their labor through an economic organization of the working class without affiliation with any political party. The rapid gathering of wealth and cantering of the management of the industries into fewer and fewer hands make the trades unions unable to cope with the ever-growing power of the employing class, because the trades unions foster a state of things which allows one set of workers to be pitted against another set of workers in the same industry, thereby helping to defeat one another in wage wars. The trades unions aid the employing class to mislead the workers into the belief that the working class have interests in common with their employers. These sad conditions can be changed and the interests of the working class upheld only by an organization formed in such a way that all its members in any one industry, or in all industries, if necessary, cease work whenever a strike or a lockout is on in any department thereof, thus making an injury to one, an injury to all.

Chicago, *The Liberator*, September 3, 1906

## A Stroll Through the Streets of Chicago

Since the sudden stoppage of the big wheel in Wall Street, which is the center of the capitalistic universe, havoc has been played in the industrial ranks generally. The wheels in the factories have ceased to revolve, the fires have been drawn, and hundreds of thousands of the wage-earning class have been, and are being, thrown upon the highways in the country and the city streets.

Reader, can you realize its effects? Maybe not, so let us take a stroll though the streets of this wonderful city Chicago.

It is two p.m. The afternoon papers are just out; a thousand or more people are buying them, perhaps paying out their last penny. They read the "ads" eagerly; off they dash pell mell in a mad race, trying to outstrip each other in their mad rush to reach the job. So many appear at the place that the boss had to close the door to prevent its being carried away by storm.

This is no overdrawn picture; it actually occurs every day in hundreds of places in this city, and of course in hundreds of other cities.

The free coffee wagons and soup kitchens are in full operation, and all the police stations and cheap lodging-houses are filled to suffocation. Charity is the dope being handed out by the robber class at present to the poor people to keep them quiet, and it is successful at least for the time being.

Coffee wagons, soup kitchens and cheap lodging-houses are being patronized by men only. What has become of the

women? About as many women as men were discharged. To the “under-world” they soon will sink, some of them never to rise again!

And this panic is only two months old! What, in the name of justice is in store for us in the near future?

In the face of these hellish conditions there are radicals who preach to us about peace, intellectual education, and the like. Why should all the lamblike peace be on the side of the working class? Why should they be quiet while starving or receiving just sufficient for their laborious toil to keep body and soul together and to produce more slaves for the bosses? The spirit of resistance seems to have forsaken the working class.

I believe in peach at any price- except at the price of liberty. But this precious gift the wealth-producers already seem to have lost. Life -mere existence- they have; but what is life worth when it lacks those elements which make for enjoyment?

Advocating peach is a good thing in its way; but, like many other things, it can be overworked.

In this city where are fully 100,000 persons out of employment, and the number is on the increase.

*The Demonstrator*, January 16, 1908 (excerpts); original title: “The Wheel of Fortune”

## Crime and Criminals

Our saintly Christians and other goody-goody people throw up their hands in horror, in contemplating the prevalence of crime among the “lower classes.” Crimes, or unsociable acts among the “lower Classes,” are only a reflex of crimes or robberies of the upper or “better classes.” We rob our children before they are born. How many thousands, yea millions, of mothers among the working class are there who see a thousand and one articles while in a state of pregnancy which their appetite craves or their heart desires, and yet are unable to gratify it? They walk the streets, gazing at the gorgeous displays, everything to attract the eye and cause the heart to wish for, yet unable, owing to poverty, to gratify such natural longings. What is the consequence?

The unborn child is impressed, it feels the same disappointment that the mother feels; it is impressed upon it. We have robbed it before its birth, it enters the world with an unsatisfied, grasping nature. This proclivity grows steadily upon it with its growing years; the desire grows stronger because of poverty, and, finally, the child reaches forth and takes some one else’s property. This is theft, it is illegally done; the society for the first time takes an interest in this human being. It comes forward to punish the child it is now ready to inflict torture upon the victim of its own false, unnatural, inhuman system. How much better, wiser and cheaper it would have been to make conditions natural and social so that the child could have seen the light of Earth under the best conditions possible, instead of -as is often the case- under the worst conditions.

How much better this would be than to have to build great, gloomy prisons, superintended by guardsmen, who harden and debase their natures still more. And the case holds good

with murders, legal and illegal, or lynchings. The sensational press gives all the gory details of such occurrences in great glaring headlines. They catch the eye of thousands of prospective mothers; they are impressed by the horror and its details, and they in turn impress the unborn child. The child is born, it reaches man's and woman's estate, some adversity crosses its path, and the old prenatal impression rushes upon it and an awful deed is committed! The community is shocked and wonders where such a monster could have come from. Another candidate starts for the prison or the gallows. Thus the long procession is ever wending its way through the ages. The hoary-headed old hag, society, throws up her hands in "holy" horror when one of her children commits an awful deed. She never recognizes the fact that this is only the reflex of her own misdeeds. Crime is a social disease.

When society has grown wise enough to supplant the prison with the schoolhouse, the teacher for the hangman and kind treatment for punishment and substituting justice and kindness for brutality, we will hear very little more about "crime and criminals."

*The Liberator*, March 25, 1906

# The Ballot Humbug

Whatever we hear from all quarters we are very apt to believe, whether it requires some effort to believe, whether it is true or not, especially if it requires some effort to examine it. Of all the modern delusions, the ballot has certainly been the greatest. Yet most of the people believe in it.

In the first place, it is founded on the principle that the majority shall lead and the minority must follow (no matter whether it will be any advantage to the majority to have the minority follow them or not). Let us take a body of legislators, absolutely honest, and see what they can do. A, B and C have each a distinct principle to carry out, and there is no good reason why each one should not carry out his principle to a certain extent without interfering with the other two. Politics steps in and says: let us decide the matter by the ballot, for that is fair. What is the result? A, and C finally reach a compromise and unite by giving up a portion of their ideas. A and C are then the majority and B's principles get no further consideration, but are simply ruled out of existence. This is the majority rule.

Notice the result. Instead of three well-defined principles that might have been continued, developed and enjoyed, we have lost one altogether, and corrupted the other two. This is the inevitable result of majority rule in a legislative body which attempts to manufacture laws to enforce upon people of large communities who have all kinds of conflicting interests.

Of course it is better to have majority rule if it represents the real wishes of a large number of people than to have minority rule which is only in the interest of the few, as is the case today, where all laws are practically in the interests of the capitalistic class. But the principle of rulership is in itself wrong;

no man has any right to rule another man.

Of course, if one is invading the rights of another, he must be restrained. This is not rulership, but self-preservation. Let us see for example, how our law factories are operated. A corruptionist works a majority as follows; He hires a tool called an attorney or a lobbyist to hang around the capitol and buttonhole the members of the legislature and present to them his scheme in the brightest colors and in a way that will make it appear to be a great blessing to the country. In this way, together with some graft, he usually gets the votes of the majority of the members.

If the scheme to be put through is so barefaced that the majority cannot be mislead into voting for it, then the job is done by a compromise. The lobbyist has persuaded A that the bill is all right, and B, being opposed to it-but favoring some other scheme that A opposes-it is only necessary to get B to agree to vote for the bill on the condition that A will vote for B's bill when it comes up. This scheme is called honest, or at least "all things are fair in politics." The lobbyist who is running A might have put the two jobs up with the lobbyist who is running A might have put the two jobs up with the lobbyist who was running B.

Thus do our lobbyists use one member of the legislative bodies against another to pry a fat job out of the people for the benefit of the moneybags. It makes no difference who the member of congress may be, or what his principals may be- the job can be worked on him just the same. Therefore, what does the people's voting amount to in the choice of members?

Let us take this example: Suppose a legislature is composed of ninety-nine members; on the above scheme, twenty-five will make a majority, even if all are present; the twenty-five

swap jobs with twenty-five more and thus make fifty votes- a majority of one. The lobbyist makes it his business to know how many are sick or absent, or he strives to get the worst opponents on commissions or investigating committees out of town. But there is much in trading votes, for each member generally feels like keeping his trades to himself, or can be persuaded to do so, therefore it is easy to trade A's vote with B, C, D and E and make each one think that he alone traded with A. In this way ten such men as A can easily get four a majority of ninety-nine, and ten such men are not hard to find when capital has use for them.

But this is not the end. A cannot trade with F, so A introduces a bill or an amendment repulsive to F and then agrees to drop it on condition that F will either vote for the bill or be absent when it comes up. These are some of the tricks played in law-making.

Can you blame an Anarchist who declares that man-made laws are not sacred? Society would not disband or revert to barbarism if laws were done away with. With thousands of laws being enacted and hundreds of corruptionists playing their tricks, what becomes of the voter's victory at the polls? What becomes of his reforming all things by the use of the ballot? So long as he is willing to submit to a bad law until it is repealed, what better leverage do rogues want on humanity?

The fact is money and not votes is what rules the people. And the capitalists no longer care to buy the voters, they simply buy the "servants" after they have been elected to "serve." The idea that the poor man's vote amounts to anything is the veriest delusion. The ballot is only the paper veil that hides the tricks.

Can you blame an Anarchist when he sees a political bummers conniving for a job in a law factory that he fails to see anything sacred about him, or his laws? We know there never

was a law passed that ever prevented one single crime from being committed. We know crime will cease only when men are taught to do good, because it makes them happier to do right than wrong. We know that if passing laws would have prevented crime or made men better that we would all be angels by now.

We say: Turn the law factories into schools and place scientists in them to teach the truths of human solidarity, love and fraternity, and make these possible by abolishing monopoly in the means of life, and mankind will quickly develop that which is best, noblest and purest in his nature.

Chicago, *The Liberator*, September 10, 1905

## TO TRAMPS, The Unemployed, the Disinherited, and Miserable.

A word to the 35,000 now tramping the streets of this great city, with hands in pockets, gazing listlessly about you at the evidence of wealth and pleasure of which you own no part, not sufficient even to purchase yourself a bit of food with which to appease the pangs of hunger now knowing at your vitals. It is with you and the hundreds of thousands of others similarly situated in this great land of plenty, that I wish to have a word.

Have you not worked hard all your life, since you were old enough for your labor to be of use in the production of wealth? Have you not toiled long, hard and laboriously in producing wealth? And in all those years of drudgery do you not know you have produced thousand upon thousands of dollars' worth of wealth, which you did not then, do not now, and unless you ACT, never will, own any part in? Do you not know that when you were harnessed to a machine and that machine harnessed to steam, and thus you toiled your 10, 12 and 16 hours in the 24, that during this time in all these years you received only enough of your labor product to furnish yourself the bare, coarse necessities of life, and that when you wished to purchase anything for yourself and family it always had to be of the cheapest quality? If you wanted to go anywhere you had to wait until Sunday, so little did you receive for your unremitting toil that you dare not stop for a moment, as it were? And do you not know that with all your squeezing, pinching and economizing you never were enabled to keep but a few days ahead of the

wolves of want? And that at last when the caprice of your employer saw fit to create an artificial famine by limiting production, that the fires in the furnace were extinguished, the iron horse to which you had been harnessed was stilled; the factory door locked up, you turned upon the highway a tramp, with hunger in your stomach and rags upon your back?

Yet your employer told you that it was overproduction which made him close up. Who cared for the bitter tears and heart-pangs of your loving wife and helpless children, when you bid them a loving "God bless you" and turned upon the tramp-er's road to seek employment elsewhere? I say, who cared for those heartaches and pains? You were only a tramp now, to be execrated and denounced as a "worthless tramp and a vagrant" by that very class who had been engaged all those years in robbing you and yours. Then can you not see that the "good boss" or the "bad boss" cuts no figure whatever? that you are the common prey of both, and that their mission is simply robbery? Can you not see that it is the INDUSTRIAL SYSTEM and not the "boss" which must be changed?

Now, when all these bright summer and autumn days are going by and you have no employment, and consequently can save up nothing, and when the winter's blast sweeps down from the north and all the earth is wrapped in a shroud of ice, hearken not to the voice of the hypocrite who will tell you that it was ordained of God that "the poor ye have always"; or to the arrogant robber who will say to you that you "drank up all your wages last summer when you had work, and that is the reason why you have nothing now, and the workhouse or the workyard is too good for you; that you ought to be shot." And shoot you they will if you present your petitions in too emphatic a maner. So

hearken not to them, but list! Next winter when the cold blasts are creeping through the rents in your seedy garments, when the frost is biting your feet through the holes in your worn-out shoes, and when all wretchedness seems to have centered in and upon you, when misery has marked you for her own and life has become a burden and existence a mockery, when you have walked the streets by day and slept upon hard boards by night, and at last determine by your own hand to take your life, - for you would rather go out into utter nothingness than to longer endure an existence which has become such a burden - so, perchance, you determine to dash yourself into the cold embrace of the lake rather than longer suffer thus. But halt, before you commit this last tragic act in the drama of your simple existence. Stop! Is there nothing you can do to insure those whom you are about to orphan, against a like fate? The waves will only dash over you in mockery of your rash act; but stroll you down the avenues of the rich and look through the magnificent plate windows into their voluptuous homes, and here you will discover the very identical robbers who have despoiled you and yours. Then let your tragedy be enacted here! Awaken them from their wanton sport at your expense! Send forth your petition and let them read it by the red glare of destruction. Thus when you cast "one long lingering look behind" you can be assured that you have spoken to these robbers in the only language which they have ever been able to understand, for they have never yet deigned to notice any petition from their slaves that they were not compelled to read by the red glare bursting from the cannon's mouths, or that was not handed to them upon the point of the sword. You need no organization when you make up your mind to present this kind of petition. In fact, an organization would be a detriment to you; but each of you hungry tramps who read these lines, avail yourselves of those little methods of warfare which Science has placed in the hands of the poor man, and you will become a power in this or any other land.

Learn the use of explosives!

Dedicated to the tramps by Lucy E. Parsons.  
*Alarm*, October 4, 1884.

Lucy Parsons is believed to have been born around 1853 in Texas. Lucy is speculated to be of mixed heritage- Black, Mexican and Native American. Her parents were most likely slaves, although not much can be confirmed about her early life. Lucy married Albert Parsons around 1870 and moved to Chicago. She had two sons, and supported her family through various seamstress jobs.

In 1879 Lucy joined the Working Women's Union. Also in the early 1880s she joined the Knights of Labor and helped to organize seamstresses. In 1883 she helped found the International Working People's Association (IWPA) in which she wrote for their newspaper, *The Alarm*. Along with her husband Albert, and hundreds of other Anarchists and workers she joined the struggle for the 8 hour workday. On May 4th 1886 during a labor demonstration in the Haymarket Square area of Chicago, a bomb was thrown by an unknown person. Lucy's husband Albert was not present during the demonstration, although he was tried and hung along with four other Anarchists despite there being no evidence against any of them. Lucy believed that it was the police that threw the bomb.

Lucy spent a short time mourning her husband's death, then departed on a Haymarket defense campaign. She went on a speaking tour covering seventeen states in which she told the story of her husband's death and the Haymarket affair.

In 1892 she wrote pieces against lynchings in a newspaper called *Freedom*. In 1905 she helped co-found the radical labor union the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) in which she wrote for their newspaper *The Liberator*. In 1927 she joined the National Committee of the International Labor Defense, which was a communist led labor organization. She died in 1941, about the age of 89, in a fire.

More about Lucy:

[www.lucyparsonsproject.org](http://www.lucyparsonsproject.org)

*Lucy Parsons: Freedom, Equality and Solidarity*



**Lucy Parsons 1915**

Taken after getting arrested during an  
unemployment protest at the Hull House in Chicago



***“Of all the modern delusions, the ballot has certainly been the greatest. The fact is money and not votes is what rules the people.”***

Lucy Parsons political life spans over 60 years within the Anarchist and Labor movements. Her writing and oratorical skills had so much influence, that a Chicago police officer called her “More dangerous than a thousand rioters.” Despite this influence, she has often been overlooked, even by Emma Goldman, often within the shadow of her white husband Albert Parsons.

This booklet contains six of her texts.

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