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May 1st Speech to the Workers of DuPage

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May 1, 2024

"When you roll under your tongue the expression that you are revolutionists, remember what that word means. It means a revolution that shall turn all these things over to where they belong—to the wealth producers."- Lucy Parsons, June 29, 1905

These were the words of Lucy Parsons at the congress that founded and inaugurated the IWW almost a hundred and twenty years ago now. Lucy worked hard all her life to improve the life of the most destitute and suffered along with her husband, the anarchist Albert Parsons, who was sentenced to death in what today is known as May 1st or International Workers Day due to the fact that they were organizers who had been fighting for worker's rights for a time by then. It is thanks to their sacrifice and their struggle that they are celebrated today.

The IWW, the Industrial Workers of the World, was the most important union in the US of its time, the first revolutionary union in the country that was based upon anarchist principles with a

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revolutionary and international perspective. Originally founded in Chicago, the "wobblies" as they are known, allied themselves to every social movement, even those outside of the country, to such an extent that when the Mexican Revolution ignited in Baja California in Northern Mexico, many of them ventured to defend the Social Revolution embarked by the brothers Enrique and Ricardo Flores Magón together with the Mexican Liberal Party, the most revolutionary and radical sect in the conflict. They sent men, arms, and money to continue the fight; they raised money for their newspaper, ammunition, and political prisoners; they distributed papers and propaganda to gain foreign support. It is difficult to overestimate the importance of the role that the revolutionary syndicate played but it can be said that they recognized from the beginning the importance to go beyond their own noses in order to defend the Mexican workers that fought to rid themselves from Porfirio Díaz's tyranny.

To be based on anarchist principles is to say that they proposed abolishing the State and Capitalism, and propose Anarchy. They understood that the Capitalist order that kept them in chains in a type of salaried slavery, that they were not free and, moreover, that without organizing together, the bosses may abuse them. These workers were the ideological descendants of the Anarchism that was born in France in the middle of the 20th Century, a philosophy that came from the workers themselves in response to the workplace abuses in the most industrialized countries but which took on a local character wherever it reached such that when it came to the Americas it simply complemented the peasant ideals of *calpul* and *ayllu*, ancestral indigenous practices of a borne collectivism. It's worth mentioning that Anarchism gave them the tools to fight against the Capitalist and Industrial forces they faced then and which we face today.

Anarchism adheres to mutual aid, direct action, and the unity of means and ends. Because of this, it disdains wage labor, voting and politics; and it doesn't settle with reformism. As such, it pro-

poses that the workers join together in their places of work and together agree on what their necessities are and take control of the situation in order to resolve them; the boss's interests are always founded on the exploitation of the workers given that it is the basis of their money and their capital; the interest of the workers are then always in conflict with those of the boss even when they are paid well. If the boss should decide to no longer exploit their workers and join them, working side by side, they would cease to be a boss and cease having the interest of a boss and, as a worker, seek to help those next to him; but that is not what happens, as we know well. And in conceding some benefits, if they are conceded at all, thanks to the conflict of interests, these benefits will never be safeguarded forever and what is given today tomorrow will be lost. That is why Anarchists, even when they fight for work reforms such as the eight hour workday to the sunup to sundown one, they always do so with intention of going further, and to rid themselves of the political power of the proprietors and the State so that the benefits gained won't be taken away later, and so to ensure that everyone benefits from communal labor, live communally or, in other words, far from the danger that politics represent in its authoritarian character which denies the individual their autonomy and the worker their ability to choose their life for themselves. The life that Anarchists long for is one of complete and absolute liberty, a safety engendered on a basis of solidarity and mutual aid, and that is why it is so badly represented by business owners and politicians that recognize within Anarchy's principles the danger it represents in taking away their power that lets them subjugate their neighbor as if they were slaves. Anarchists ask everyone to be treated as equals, and that is not acceptable to the boss that exploits you nor to the State that rules over you.

Anarchists have always been at the vanguard of labor: they formed the first revolutionary syndicate, *la Confédération général du travail* (CGT), in France in 1895 after some politicians tried to subdue earlier syndicates in order to take control of the State; in

1905, as mentioned, the IWW was founded and it was the first labor organization to fight against racial segregation in the US that deprived black people of a just and dignified wage at a time where it was thought impossible to join white and black workers; the CNT-FAI in Spain embarked on a project of Social Revolution so powerful that led them to clash with Franco's fascism in the thirties. The trajectory and dedication of the Anarchist movement is self-evident, its vision and passion inexhaustible, and its effectiveness and power to bring to the worker a life of dignity among equals beyond doubt.

What Anarchism offers the worker are tools with which they can assess their social positioning, and a critique relevant to any person who sees the necessity of a dignified life. Mutual aid, solidarity these are the basis of human fraternity that crosses racial and geographical borders because it recognizes that we are equal in the only way that matters: as brothers and sisters; direct action teaches us to take control of our destiny and not take up the role of master nor slave but rather of a complete and realized person. Anarchy is born where mutual aid encounters direct action, and where the individual and the collective have the same interest in upholding human development and its eternal well-being without having to bow before any master.