MORE DANGEROUS

THAN A THOUSAND RIOTERS

LUCY PARSONS

I am an anarchist
Throughout this zine there are several underlined texts, click them to be taken to a source.
"Lucy E. Parsons was a leading figure in American socialism, anarchism and the radical labor movement. She organized against capitalism and government, and she also helped organize the IWW (Industrial Workers of the World).

Described by the Chicago Police Department as “more dangerous than a thousand rioters” in the 1920s, Parsons had become a highly effective anarchist organizer primarily involved in the labor movement in the late 19th century, but also participating in revolutionary activism on behalf of political prisoners, people of color [Black people], the homeless and women."
Condemned Anarchist

Everybody should avail themselves of this opportunity to hear the most talented and eloquent woman of the age. FREE, FREE. 

Tenth and Main St. At 8 o'clock. 

Mon. Evening, Dec. 20. 1886. 

KUMPS HALL. FREE LECTURE. 

Will deliver a lecture on Health and Anarchist. 

Condemned Anarchist.

Mrs. Parsons, Wife of the

Ref. to the.

Wife of the
Lucy Parsons was born as Lucia Eldine Carter in Virginia to an enslaved woman named Charlotte. Her biological father was likely her enslaver, Thomas J. Taliaferro.

Toward the end of the Civil War, Taliaferro moved the enslaved people on his plantation west to Texas in an arduous, monthslong trek. Once there, it’s likely that Charlotte and her family fled.

Charlotte relocated her family to Waco, Texas, a town that seemingly had promise for freed Black people.

She married an older freed Black man named Oliver Benton. She had a baby, likely with Benton, who died in infancy. She later met Albert Parsons, a white newspaper editor and former Confederate soldier who’d set his sights on getting a position in the Republican party.
Albert and Lucia were able to legally marry within the small window of time in 1872 when interracial marriage was legal and they both saw Chicago as a place of opportunity.

On the way there, Lucia shed her name, and her past life, and became Lucy Parsons, who no longer identified as Black, but as Mexican and Indigenous.

She clearly wanted to escape what it meant to be a Black woman at that time. The structures that were imposed on Black women, the limitations of what they could aspire to be. - Dr. Tera W. Hunter
Lucy was a founder of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union (ILGWU).

Parsons helped launch the Working Women’s Union, holding meetings in her dressmaking shop.

Lucy was a founder of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union (ILGWU).

Parsons played a significant role in the fight for the eight-hour workday as well as the organization of the first May Day.
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.

Lucy Parsons

The Principles of Anarchism
When we sought out to create this zine on Lucy Parsons it was to elevate a Black woman anarchist. We wanted to counter the mainstream narrative of anarchy that is often white washed and contributing to the erasure of Black Anarchy throughout history.

But Lucy actively denied her Blackness and overtly made claims of Mexican & Indigenous identity.
In a lot of ways this changes the story we thought we were going to tell. After a lot of research, combing through various versions of history, and deep personal reflection on the topics of race, survival, false claims to identity, assimilation, and the general historical erasure of Afro-Indigenous peoples...

We are brought to these questions:

- Did Lucy change her identity as a survival tactic?
- What do these conflicting claims to race/identity mean in the context of her labor movement work?
- How does Lucy's understanding of race inform her understanding of anarchism?
A letter from Lucy Parsons to Ewing Baskette regarding his opinions on her book.
“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!”

A Word to Tramps

1884
THE HAYMARKET

MAY 1 - 1886 - FIRST MAY DAY
Lucy, Albert, and their two children lead 80,000 working people down the streets of Chicago demanding an 8 hour work day with no reduction in pay.

MAY 3 - 1886 - POLICE KILL 4 PROTESTERS

MAY 4 - 1886 - HAYMARKET RIOT
In response to police murder, radicals call a mass rally in Haymarket Square. The meeting is raided by police and an unidentified person throws a bomb into the crowd killing 4 police, a riot ensues.

OCTOBER - 1887 - HAYMARKET EXECUTIONS
8 Anarchists convicted for the murder of police, one being Albert Parsons, who is executed by public hanging. Lucy led efforts to defend the Haymarket 8.
To resist and actively reject those who seek the social currency and capital that is affiliated with celebrity status, fame, and clout is fundamental to anarchist practices of decentralization, anonymity, and collectivity over individualism.