

Excerpt by Michael Schwab

From *Anarchism: Its Philosophy and Scientific Basis, as Defined by Some of Its Apostles*
by Albert R. Parsons (Chicago, 1887).

To term the proceedings during the trial justice, would be a sneer. Justice has not been done...could not be done. If one class is arrayed against the other, it is idle and hypocritical to think about justice. Anarchy was on trial, as the state's attorney put it in his closing speech. A doctrine, an opinion hostile to brute force, hostile to our present murderous system of production and distribution. I am condemned to die for writing newspaper articles and making speeches...

Anarchy was on trial. Little did it matter who the persons were to be honored by the prosecution. It was the movement the blow was aimed at: It was directed against the labor movement, against socialism-for today every labor movement must, of necessity, be socialistic.

Talk about a gigantic conspiracy! A movement is not a conspiracy. All we did was done in open daylight.

There were no secrets. We prophesied in word and writing the coming of a great revolution, a change in the system of production in all industrial countries of the globe. And the change will come, and must come. Is it not absurd, as the state's attorney and his associates have done, to suppose that this social revolution-a change of such immense proportions-was to be inaugurated on or about the first of May in the city of Chicago by making war on the police?...

We contend for communism and anarchy-why? If we had kept silent, stones would have cried out. Murder was committed day by day. Children were slain, women worked to death, men killed inch by inch, and these crimes are never punished by law. The great principle underlying the present system is unpaid labor. Those who amass fortunes, build palaces, and live in luxury, are doing that by virtue of unpaid labor. Being directly or indirectly the possessors of land and machinery, they dictate their terms to the workingman. He is compelled to sell his labor cheap, or to starve. The price paid him is always far below the real value. He acts under compulsion, and they call it a free contract. This infernal state of affairs keeps him poor and ignorant, an easy prey for exploitation.

Thousands of laborers in the city of Chicago live in rooms without sufficient protection from the weather, without proper ventilation, where never a stream of sunlight flows in. There are hovels where two, three and four families live in one room. How these conditions influence the health and the morals of these unfortunate sufferers, it is needless to say. And how do they live? From the ash-barrels they gather half-rotten vegetables, in the butcher shops they buy for some cents offal of meat, and these precious morsels they carry home to prepare from them their meals. The dilapidated houses in which this waits in most cases till he is compelled by the city to have them done. Is it a wonder that diseases of all kinds kill men, women and children in such places by wholesale, especially children? Is this not horrible in a so-called civilized land where there is plenty of food and riches?