

Are Class Interests Identical?

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

Lucy E. Parsons

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If there is a country on 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 may aspire to become president of these United States, there can be no classes. Large masses accept this kind of "jollyng" 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 he 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 organization? We need to view from the right standpoint the class struggle; hence when an organization is founded for 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 the 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 the employing class have nothing 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 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 centering 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.

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