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Lucy E. Parsons

Speech to the IWW in 1905

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1905

Delegate applause interrupted her speech several times and at the end.
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1905

We, the women of this country, have no ballot even if we wished to use it, and the only way that we can be represented is to take a man to represent us. You men have made such a mess of it in representing us that we have not much confidence in asking you . . .

We [women] are the slaves of slaves. We are exploited more ruthlessly than men. Whenever wages are to be reduced the capitalist class use women to reduce them, and if there is anything that you men should do in the future it is to organize the women . . .

Now, what do we mean when we say revolutionary Socialist?

We mean that the land shall belong to the landless, the tools to the toiler, and the products to the producers . . . I believe that if every man and every woman who works, or who toils in the mines, mills, the workshops, the fields, the factories and the farms of our broad America should decide in their minds that they shall have that which of right belongs to them, and that no idler shall live upon their toil . . . then there is no army that is large enough to overcome you, for you yourselves constitute the army . . .

My conception of the strike of the future is not to strike and go out and starve, but to strike and remain in and take possession of the necessary property of production . . .

. . . Let us sink such differences as nationality, religion, politics, and set our eyes eternally and forever toward the rising star of the industrial republic of labor; remembering that we have left the old behind and have set our faces toward the future. There is no power on earth that can stop men and women who are determined to be free at all hazards. There is no power on earth so great as the power of intellect. It moves the world and it moves the earth . . .

I hope even now to live to see the day when the first dawn of the new era of labor will have arisen, when capitalism will be a thing of the past, and the new industrial republic, the commonwealth of labor, shall be in operation.

I thank you.