

**Women: To Get What is Due
You Must Take It
(January 14, 1905)**

Dear Comrade¹:—

Your favor of the 1st [Jan. 1, 1905] has been read with special interest. There is but one thing for the women to do, and that is for them to come to the front and take hold without waiting for an invitation. If they get what is due them they will have to take it. If they wait to be coaxed they still have a dreary, weary siege before them.

Many benighted women, like chattel slaves, resist all attempts to achieve their freedom. Socialist women ought to realize that their place is in the ranks, and that where socialist men are and have duties and responsibilities, there socialist women should be also, and any attempt at discrimination, whatever its motive or character, should be resented by the united voice of women.

If socialism does not mean equal rights, equal opportunities, and equal freedom of the sexes, it is a meaningless thing, and if I had any such conception of it I would reject it as a scorned and hateful thing.

It is unfortunately true that some socialists are still tainted with the barbaric doctrine that the brand of inferiority has been placed by the creative power upon the brow of womanhood. It is false and abhorrent to every sane and sensible being — entirely consonant with capitalist despotism, but totally at war with socialist philosophy.

You are right, and you have only to stand your ground and win.
Believe me, with best wishes,

Yours fraternally,

E. V. Debs.

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¹ This was apparently a letter to J.A. Wayland, publisher of the *Appeal to Reason*.