

existence' that were undertaking 'the hardest and most unpleasant' work of the suffrage campaign.¹³⁵

Before travelling to North America, Sylvia had refrained from public criticism of WSPU's increasing elitism. However, the character of the independent projects she pursued, in particular her 1907 research into working women's specific grievances, nevertheless expressed an implicit rejection of the WSPU's commandment to its followers: 'if you have any class feeling you must leave that behind when you come into this movement'.¹³⁶ For Sylvia, the position of working women linked the socialist and women's movements, underscoring their shared interest in co-operation. Crucially this approach implied that for a women's movement to make reactionary political alliances, or for socialists to dismiss the need for women's representation, would be to forsake above all the needs of working-class women. Sylvia did, therefore, make efforts to relate the 1907 research, which was full of 'class feeling', to the WSPU; her contact with the boot- and shoe-making industry in Leicester was facilitated by the local working-class trade unionist WSPU member Alice Hawkins, and Sylvia later published some extracts from her research in the WSPU newspaper *Voices for Women*.¹³⁷

However, in her North American lecture tours, Sylvia found herself able to situate her independent research firmly within the framework of the WSPU's suffragism in a way that she was unable to do in England. She chose 'Women in Industry' as one of her three lecture titles in 1911 and 'English Industrial Conditions Affecting Women' in 1912, which allowed her to share the results of her research (the other two lectures dealt with the history of the women's movement and the prison experience). Reporting on her first meeting at the Carnegie Lyceum under the headline 'Miss Pankhurst Has Some Jolts in Store', the socialist *New York Call* noted 'the contrast' between Sylvia, who spoke for 'an hour and three-quarters ... on the economic, political and social conditions of Great Britain' and her audience, 'the "parlour suffragettes" of Fifth avenue and [its] vicinity who automobilized to [the] Carnegie Lyceum'.¹³⁸ Sylvia reportedly told this audience:

Without exception women in industry are the sweated workers. They are paid lower wages than men, although it has been proved time and again that they are doing the same amount of work. In the shoe trade in England women do the finest and most skilled work. Yet they get

about one-fourth of the price which men get for the same, and even for cheaper work, which is less nerve-straining.¹³⁹

According to the *New York Times*, '[s]he told of the difference in pay received by the English working women, those at the mines carrying tubs with the men, the identical work, the men getting four shillings ninepence and five shillings, and the women only one shilling sixpence to two shillings fourpence'.¹⁴⁰

After speaking in Los Angeles on 7 March 1911 on the subject of 'Woman in Politics', Sylvia arranged for a second meeting to take place 'especially for the benefit of working women' on 'Woman in Industry'.¹⁴¹ The local press, which described her speech as 'dramatic', reported that '[h]er accounts of the drudgery and labor performed by English women were startling; with women supporting themselves and their families by '[t]he hardest kind of manual labor in coal and tin mines and in stove factories'.¹⁴² Speaking the following year at the Grand Theatre in Fargo, she returned again to the shoe trade and 'told how she had seen in a shoe factory in one of the English cities two women and a man seated side by side working at exactly the same thing and the same number of hours. He received \$6 a week, while each of the women received \$1.75'.¹⁴³

All these examples were drawn from Sylvia's 1907 research. Above all, her work emphasised the double burden borne by working-class women, showing that their oppression *as women* enabled employers to intensify their exploitation *as workers*. Sylvia's approach challenged those in the socialist and labour movements who argued that focusing on women's suffrage distracted from working-class struggle, since the specific and intensified levels of exploitation experienced by women necessitated their independent representation to remedy this situation. When Sylvia met Emil Seidel, the socialist mayor of Milwaukee, she felt he 'showed no enthusiasm' for votes for women, arguing that male and female members of the capitalist class would be equally predisposed to exploit the working class. Writing to Keir Hardie about the exchange, Sylvia reported that she had agreed but then drawn his attention to the unevenness of exploitation within the working class, with examples from the forges in Cradley Heath and the Staffordshire potteries:

I look at the position of the woman who is employed by a workman. The woman for instance who blows the bellows for the chain maker or the woman who treads the lathe for the turner. What sort of position