



Alice Paul: Claiming Power

By J.D. Zahniser, Amelia R. Fry

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Alice Paul has long been an elusive figure in the political history of American women. Raised by Quaker parents in Moorestown, New Jersey, she would become a passionate and outspoken leader of the woman suffrage movement. In 1913, she reinvigorated the American campaign for a constitutional suffrage amendment and, in the next seven years, dominated that campaign and drove it to victory with bold, controversial action -wedding courage with resourcefulness and self-mastery.

This biography of Paul's early years and suffrage leadership offers fresh insight into her private persona and public image, examining for the first time the sources of Paul's ambition and the growth of her political consciousness. Using extensive oral history interviews with Paul and her colleagues, Authors J. D. Zahniser and Amelia R. Fry substantially revise our understanding about Paul's engagement with suffrage activism in England and later emergence onto the American scene. Though her Quaker upbringing has long been seen as the spark for her commitment to women's rights Zahniser and Fry show how her childhood among the Friends forged crucial aspects of Paul's character, but her political zeal developed out of years of education and exploration. The authors explore the ways in which her involvement with the British suffragists Emmeline and Christabel Pankhurst honed her instincts and skills, especially her dealings with her most important political adversaries, Woodrow Wilson and rival suffrage leader Carrie Chapman Catt. Applying new research to the persistent questions about Alice Paul and her legacy this compelling biography analyzes Paul's charisma and leadership qualities, sheds new light on her life and work and is essential reading for anyone interested the woman suffrage movement.

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Alice Paul: Claiming Power By J.D. Zahniser, Amelia R. Fry Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #535170 in Books
- Published on: 2014-07-02
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 6.50" h x 1.30" w x 9.40" l, .0 pounds
- Binding: Hardcover
- 408 pages

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Editorial Review

Review

"Much has been written on Alice Paul, but this long-awaited and fascinating new biography based on years of research by Amelia Fry and years more by J. D. Zahniser, takes us from Paul's childhood through her years in England to the victory for woman suffrage in 1920 and accomplishes what the intensely private suffrage leader deliberately made difficult, introducing us to the fascinating individual behind the public image." --Marjorie J. Spruill, Professor of History, University of South Carolina

"*Alice Paul: Claiming Power* is an exhaustively researched and meticulously crafted work. Using previously untapped original sources, it is undoubtedly the definitive biography of Paul during the suffrage era. This book elevates Paul to the position she should command as one of the consummate political masters of the twentieth century. Paul's leadership genius made the suffrage movement one of the two most successful 'rights' movements in the nation's history—one that claimed political power for more than half the population in a bloodless political revolution." --Edith P. Mayo, Curator Emeritus of Political History, Smithsonian Institution

"The elegantly constructed narrative combines the filaments of Paul's precocious life into an incisive tale.... This is not only the story of one person, but of her epoch and culture. Zahniser and Fry have done readers a profound service." --*Publishers Weekly*, starred review

"[A] carefully researched biography." --Louis Menand, *The New Yorker*

"[A] history of women's 72-year struggle to attain the vote... Highly recommended." --*CHOICE*

About the Author

J.D. Zahniser is an independent scholar. She holds a doctorate in American and Women's Studies

Amelia R. Fry was an oral historian at Regional Oral History Office, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley

Users Review

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