Alice Stokes Paul (1885-1977)

Jan Marie Fritz

Alice Stokes Paul was born in the United States (USA) on January 11, 1885 at Paulsdale in Mount Laurel, New Jersey. She received a Ph.D. in sociology and devoted her life to achieving rights for women. While her academic work was completed before the term "clinical sociology" was used in the United States, her work certainly should be seen as part of the history of clinical sociology.

Paul was a Quaker, a member of the Society of Friends. She attended a Friends high school and went on to Swathmore College, an institution founded in 1864 by Quakers.[1] The College has been nonsectarian since 1908 but still values basic Quaker principles: individual responsibility, humility, working hard, simplicity, personal integrity, social justice, service to the community and the peaceful settlement of disputes.

After graduation from Swathmore in 1905, Paul worked with a settlement house in New York City and studied at the New York School of Social Work. She decided social work was not for her because she didn't think social workers would be able to change the situations that needed to be changed.

She received her M.A. in sociology (in 1907) from the University of Pennsylvania and, in her final year, had the opportunity to travel, work and study in England. She again worked with a settlement house but also studied at the Quakers' Woodbrooke Study Centre[2] and took classes at the London School of Economics (LSE). As J.D. Zahniser and Amelia R. Fry (2014: 56), her biographers, noted:

1 One of the co-founders was Judge William Parry, Alice Paul's grandfather.

2 According to Zahniser and Fry (2014: 43), Woodbrooke's "program drummed in the call to useful service." Alice Paul said the following about the study center when interviewed by Amelia Fry (1972, 1973.): "I don't know that I ever knew there *was* a place called Woodbrook in England. Woodbrook was a central training school for young Quakers in the field of public service and theology, and young Quakers, a very few of them, were selected in different countries to go there, and they gave you this quite liberal fellowship there. They paid all your expenses while you were living over there…".

> Alice attended LSE at a propitious time: the school had become the center of gravity for British sociology. Her courses exposed her to some of the leading lights in the social sciences, including L.T. Hobhouse and LSE founder Sidney Webb. Both were molding the discipline of sociology and shaping the infant Labour Party; Alice received a strong dose of the party's democratic socialist thinking.

In London, Paul increasingly was involved in women's suffrage activities. In 1909, she had to decide whether to return to the United States (as her mother wished her to do) or "risk arrest and imprisonment by joining (an assertive) British woman suffrage protest" (Zahniser and Fry 2014: 3). She stayed... and was "imprisoned and forcibly fed for her suffrage activities" (Alice Stokes Paul Papers, Accession 1:1). The decision changed her life and, according to Zahniser and Fry (2014:3), "ultimately changed the course of the American votes-for-women campaign and subsequent efforts to secure women's rights."

Paul returned to the U.S. in 1910, resumed her studies at the University of Pennsylvania, continued her health recovery from the ordeal of imprisonment in London (e.g., held a month in prison, endured forced feeding) and became active in suffrage activities. Paul (1910) gave an address during Woodbrooke Day at Friends Haverford Summer School and said the following:

> The Friend, we know, is reputed as one whose individual conscience is keenly alive, but whose social conscience is atrophied. We are told that we are so introspective, so absorbed in developing our own characters into perfect flowers that we have no time for the great social movements that are bent on making such development possible for all. As we look at the placid, comfortable attitude with which Friends regard the social ills about them, it seems a far cry to the aggressive vigor with which the early Friends challenged the evils of their time.

In that presentation Paul went on to ask why Friends now are "impotent compared to early Friends." She said Quakers needed to:

> draw into the service of humanity vast areas of untapped energy at present going to waste; ...we need to be worthy of the great traditions which we have

> inherited, making us more valiant soldiers in humanity's cause than ever before – a central fire rekindling anew the life in our Society.

Paul earned her Ph.D. in sociology in 1912;[3] her doctoral dissertation was about the legal position of women in Pennsylvania. While a student, she continued to be active in suffrage activities. Her assertive suffrage work in England had been publicized in the United States and so the American news media followed her activities in the U.S. when she returned. Paul participated in National American Women Suffrage Association (NAWSA) rallies and spoke at the NAWSA's 1910 annual convention. Paul wanted the NAWSA to back a federal amendment (rather than continue with a state-by-state effort) guaranteeing the vote for women. The leadership objected to this proposal; the exception was Jane Addams, the NAWSA vice president, who suggested that the plan just needed to be toned down.

Paul organized her first women's suffrage parade/protest march/procession in the U.S. (involving an estimated 5000-8000 participants) in Washington, D.C. in 1913, the day before President-elect Woodrow Wilson's inauguration.[4] A huge crowd (one estimate was over half

3 Alice Paul (Fry 1972, 1973) said the following about the number of women students at the University of Pennsylvania: "Now at that time there were almost no women students at the University of Pennsylvania except in graduate school, and there were very few graduate students... I was in the graduate school, and you weren't conscious of it there because the few girls that were there were in those classes and we got to know each other very well. It was a splendid, splendid group of young women whom I have kept in touch with nearly all my life."

4 As the parade was being organized, there was discussion about whether African American women should be encouraged to join the parade (See Delta Sigma Theta n.d.). Some thought that Southern women would not support the effort if African Americans were encouraged to join the procession. Alice Paul wrote that she had "no race prejudice in this matter," but thought "the prejudice against (African Americans) is so strong in this section of the country that I believe a large part if not a majority of our white marchers will refuse to participate if negroes in any number formed a part of the parade" (Paul 1913). The leaders of the National American Woman Suffrage Association and Paul later agreed to the participation of African Americans, but Paul did not actively recruit participants (Zahniser n.d.). African American women did, in fact, participate in the parade but some people at that time and now have felt that Paul should have been strong in encouraging African American participation. This controversy was a contributing factor in a 2021 decision to remove Paul's name from the Alice Paul Center at her alma mater, the University of Pennsylvania (Brown n.d., Garcia 2021).

a million people) came to view the parade and the situation became almost a riot; even though police were there, protection often was not provided for the marchers. Eventually calm was restored and the event fostered public discussion of what happened and greater awareness of women's suffrage.

Paul's assertive methods were not acceptable to many of the leaders of the NAWSA and so Paul and colleagues formed the Congressional Union for Woman Suffrage and then, in 1916. the National Woman's Party (NWP). The NWP began using some of the methods used by the suffrage movement in Britain and focused on obtaining a constitutional amendment for woman suffrage.

Beginning in 1917, the NWP began picketing and protesting at the White House. This legal, non-violent civil disobedience campaign became known as the "Silent Sentinels." The protesters held banners supporting women's right to vote for six days each week for a two-year period. When the U.S. entered World War I, many viewed the picketing as disloyal... but Paul made sure the picketing continued. During that time, many protesters were beaten by those who did not like what they were advocating and then protesters began to be arrested, convicted and incarcerated in local facilities. The women prisoners received brutal treatment while incarcerated and the NWP went to court. President Wilson finally announced there would be a bill about women's right to vote and suffrage; the 19th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution was finally achieved in 1920 (See Associated Press 1920). After the Amendment was ratified, Paul earned three law degrees (LL.B, LL.M., and D.C.L.) and continued her work for women's rights.

Once suffrage was obtained, Paul focused on an Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), a constitutional guarantee of equality for women in the United States (See Hunt 1922). Paul and Crystal Eastman drafted the original text and delivered it to Congress in 1923.[5] In 1943 a new version, known as the Alice Paul Amendment, was drafted: "Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States

5 There were even some suffragists who initially did not back the ERA because they thought that labor protection for women could be lost.

or by any state on account of sex"[6] When the bill was finally accepted by the US Congress, Paul did not like that a seven-year deadline for ratification by the states had been added because she thought the process would not be concluded in that time frame. She was right. It has been 100 years since the amendment was first introduced, but there is still movement in the U.S. Congress to ratify the ERA.

Zahniser and Fry (2014: 3) indicated that Alice Paul was "the soul and guiding spirit of the final years of the American suffrage movement." [7] She also had a role in getting the word "sex" included in the Civil Rights Act of 1964 that prohibits discrimination on a number of grounds - race, color, religion, sex or national origin. Alice Paul also worked tirelessly on international issues. She founded the World Woman's Party in 1938, which, until 1954, served as the NWP's international organization. And, in 1945, Paul's campaign for international women's rights led to the reference to gender equality in the preamble of the United Nations Charter and helped establish the UN Commission on the Status of Women.

Alice Paul died when she was 92 years old on July 9, 1997. She had been living at the Greenleaf Extension Home, a Quaker "boarding

6 The ERA amendment: "**Section 1:** Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex; **Section 2:** The Congress shall have the power to enforce, by appropriate legislation, the provisions of this article; **Section 3:** This amendment shall take effect two years after the date of ratification" (ERA Coalition n.d.)

7 In 1975 and then in the 1990s, two school teachers (from Staten Island, New York and Brockton, Massachusetts) assigned reading about Dr. Paul's accomplishments for their fifth and sixth grade students and the students then wrote letters to Dr. Paul (Alice Stokes Paul Archives). Among the frank comments: From George: "You were very pretty in the 20's;" From an unsigned admirer: "We saw you in the people magazine in the 1920s and we saw you when you are 92 years old and we think that you are pretty when you were young but you still are pretty now... I think what you did for the women's rights was wonderful. I like you a lot...;" From Marion: "You are ninety years old. You have waited a long time for equal rights for women. I hope you get them."; From David: "I think women shouldn't have the same rights as men because they don't have enough strength to last through a full day of work. Besides if God wanted them to do hard work he would of made them stronger;" From Billy: "I am not for women's rights but if you Dr. Paul want to keep on doing it go ahead;" From Terrie (with love): "We all hope that the equal rights will come true... Good luck.;" And, finally, from Robert: "I'd like to know you better so please write back."

home for elderly and retired Friends" that was less than a mile from Paulsdale, her childhood home (Moorestown Friends School n.d.).

Paul was buried in a Quaker graveyard but, at first, there was no marker for the plot. According to a founder of the Alice Paul Centennial Foundation (Hefler 2016), Paul's only close relative, a nephew, did not want any "crazy women's rights women traipsing around the family plot." Ten years later, after the nephew died, the Foundation and a few of Paul's cousins paid for a gravestone.

In order for you to understand Alice Paul's life a little more fully, three documents are included here for your review: "Being Fed through Nostrils is Described by Alice Paul (Anonymous 1909); Alice Paul's "The Church and Social Problems" (1910); and "Miss Alice Paul on Hunger Strike" (Anonymous 1917).

References

Alice Stokes Paul Archives, Accession 1:1, Series 1 – Personal Papers, Box 1. The Barabara Haney Irvine Library at Paulsdale, New Jersey.

Anonymous (1909). Being fed through nostrils is described by Alice Paul. London, England. December 9. [Manuscript/Mixed Material] Retrieved from the Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/rbcmiller003904/.

Anonymous (1917). Miss Alice Paul on hunger strike. The New York Times. November 7. Available at https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1917/11/07/102646016.html?pageNumber=13

Associated Press (1920). Women win complete victory and can now register for presidential election" *The Caledonian-Record* (St. Johnsbury, VT), August 26, 1920, Latest Edition, Page 1, col. 6. https://chrolingamerica.loc.gov/data/batches/vtu_fairbanks_ver02/data/sn90005351/00202197814/1920082601/0288.pdf

Brown, Kathleen (n.d.) Questioning Alice Paul's legacy https://gsws.sas.upenn.edu/center/about/questioning-alice-pauls-legacy

Delta Sigma Theta (n.d.) The march for women's equality. Delaware Archives. https://archivesfiles.delaware.gov/online-exhibits/delta-sigma-theta/suffrage-march.html

ERA Coalition (n.d.) https://www.eracoalition.org/

Fry, Amelia R. (1972 and 1973). Conversation with Alice Paul. November and May. https://oac.cdlib.org/view?docId=kt6f59n89c&brand=oac4&doc.view=entire_text

Garcia, Kristina (2021). A new home and a new director for the Alice Paul Center. Penn Today. September 15. https://penntoday.upenn.edu/news/center-Feminist-Queer-Transgender-Studies- Melissa-Sanchez

Hefler, J. (2016). Alice Paul's burial site now has women's rights advocates 'traipsing around.' *New Jersey News*. November 28.

Hunt, Harry B. (1922). Alice fights to take sex out of laws. *The Daily Ardmoreite* (Ardmore, Oklahoma). May 24. Page 7, col. 2. https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85042303/1922-05-24/ed-1/seq-7/#words=Alice+Paul+Fights

Moorestown Friends School (n.d.) History. https://www.mfriends.org/about/mfs-history

Paul, A. (1910). The church and social problems. Address (in substance) of presentation given at Haverford Summer School. *Friends' Intelligencer.* LXVII(34). Available in the Alice Stokes Paul Papers, Paulsdale Archives and online at https://archive.org/details/sim_friends-intelligencer_1910-08-20_67_34/page/n3/mode/1up

Paul, A. (1913). Communication to Alice Stone-Blackwell. January 15. NWP Records. Manuscript Division, Library of Congress. Retrieved from https://archivesfiles.delaware.gov/online-exhibits/delta-sigma-theta/suffrage-march.html

Zahniser, J.D. (n.d.) Q and A: Alice Paul, Racism, and the 1913 First National Suffrage March https://www.alicepaul.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Paul-and-1913-Parade-Q-A-by-JDZ.pdf

Zahniser, J.D. & Fry, A.R. (2014). *Alice Paul: Claiming Power.* New York: Oxford University Press.

About the author: Jan Marie Fritz, a Certified Clinical Sociologist (CCS), is a Professor at the University of Cincinnati (United States), Distinguished Visiting Professor at the University of Johannesburg (South Africa) and Visiting Professor at Taylor's University (Malaysia). She also is the editor of Springer's Clinical Sociology Book Series. Her email address is jan.fritz@uc.edu