

"How Long Must Women Wait For Liberty?"

UNTIL 1920, AMERICAN WOMEN did not have the constitutional right to vote. *Iron Jawed Angels*, a new movie by HBO Films, chronicles a key chapter in the struggle for women's suffrage in the U.S. The film focuses on two visionary activists, Alice Paul and Lucy Burns, who broke from the mainstream suffrage movement and created a radical new organization of their own. They staged the first-ever pickets at the White House, defied a wartime President, and played a crucial role in securing support for the 19th Amendment.

The film draws its title from the nickname a Congressman gave to the "iron-jawed" women who launched a hunger strike after they were imprisoned for picketing the White House. Slated to premiere on February 15—the birthday of suffrage pioneer Susan B. Anthony—*Iron Jawed Angels* will introduce students to a riveting chapter in U.S. history. Not only does this film celebrate the contributions of two heroic women, but it also highlights the process by which a constitutional amendment is ratified.

NOTE: *Iron Jawed Angels* is rated TV-14. Teachers are encouraged to preview the film before assigning it for viewing. A limited quantity of school-version tapes will be available after February 15. If you'd like a school version of the film, please send your name, school name and address information via e-mail to ijaschooltapes@hbo.com.

Before Viewing

1. Ask students: Imagine that women were banned from voting today. What would the impact be on life in the U.S.?
2. Why do you think millions of women and men opposed allowing women to vote? (See page 3 of this guide for a reproducible worksheet on this topic.)

After Viewing

The running time of *Iron Jawed Angels* is 120 minutes. This film can spark lively and thought-provoking discussion on a wide array of topics. Suggested discussion starters include:

GOALS AND TACTICS

What is suffrage? What was the goal of Alice Paul, Lucy Burns, Carrie Chapman Catt and other suffragists? Where did the struggle for women's suffrage stand as of 1912, when the film opens? (See the "Votes for Women" map on page 8 of the *inTIME* magazine.) Ben Weissman asks Alice Paul, "What will women do with their vote? Reform politics?" What does she answer? What can one do with one's vote?

SOURCES OF INSPIRATION

Where did Alice Paul and Lucy Burns get their inspiration? What tactics did British suffragists such as Emmeline Pankhurst employ? How does Carrie Catt refer to the British activists?

STRATEGIC DIFFERENCES

Explain the strategic differences over how to win the vote for women. When and why did Paul and Burns break from NAWSA and form the Congressional Union? What was their goal? When did the Congressional Union become the National Woman's Party? How was the death of Inez Milholland a turning point in the crusade for universal suffrage?

WHOSE STRUGGLE?

What role did African-American women play in the struggle for universal suffrage? What statement does Ida Wells-Barnett make to Alice Paul? How does Paul respond? What was your reaction to this exchange? What stand did Wells-Barnett take at the 1913 suffrage parade?

IN THIS GUIDE

- Why Is Suffrage History Relevant To Young People?
- Opposition to Women's Suffrage: Documents for Analysis
- Starting Points for Research and Writing
- Resources for Further Exploration



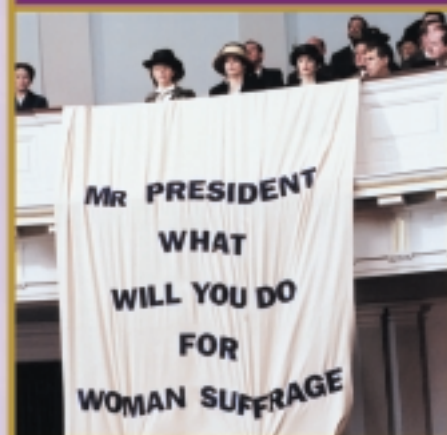
MILITANT TACTICS

What was the reaction of the press, the White House, Carrie Chapman Catt and NAWSA to the NWP's decision to picket the White House? How did the declaration of war in 1917 affect suffragists on the picket line? Describe the arrests and imprisonment in Occoquan. How did the women come to be called "Iron Jawed Angels"?

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ON
HBO



DEMMIE TODD/HBO

Premieres Sunday,
February 15, 2004, at 9:30PM/8:30c

HBO FILMS

HBO consents on a quitclaim basis to your making one videotape of *Iron Jawed Angels* for five years from airdate for educational purposes within the curriculum only. HBO reserves all rights of every kind. Both the Teacher's Guide and any videotape made of the film are intended for the sole use of educators, administrators and their students and may not be rebroadcast, recast or repackaged, nor may they be sublicensed, distributed, given or sold in whole or in part to any other person or institution. Your use of the Teacher's Guide and this film constitutes your agreement to comply with these terms.

NONVIOLENT PROTEST

How did the jailed suffragists protest? With what results? Describe Alice Paul's interview with the prison psychiatrist and his report to the White House. Can you imagine going on a hunger strike? What might motivate such a decision? Do you think the suffragists were actually willing to die for their cause?

POLITICAL PRISONERS

What does it mean to be a political prisoner as opposed to a prisoner jailed for a criminal offense? In your view, do the suffragists qualify as political prisoners?

THE PRESIDENT'S ROLE

Review Woodrow Wilson's stance on suffrage. How and why did his position on votes for women evolve? What hap-

pened in the 1916 elections? Describe the interactions between Wilson and the suffragists. What finally changed Wilson's mind? What did he do? According to Wilson, in what ways was suffrage for women a war measure?

AMENDING THE CONSTITUTION

What is the significance of the fictionalized story of Emily Leighton and her Senator husband? Who cast the crucial vote for the 19th Amendment? What was the Amendment called? Review the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. How is a constitutional amendment ratified?

ELEMENTS OF STYLE

What contemporary elements did director Katja von Garnier incorporate in the film? In your view, how do these stylistic decisions affect the film's impact?

QUOTES FOR ANALYSIS

Discuss the following quotations. Explain each statement and place it in context.

Ruza Wencławska: "A vote is a fire escape."

Woodrow Wilson: "We shall fight for the things which we have always carried nearest to our hearts, for democracy, for the right of those who submit to authority to have a voice in their own governments."

Alice Paul: "Look into your own heart, I swear to you, mine's no different... You want a voice in the government under which you live? So do I."

THE BIG PICTURE

Would you characterize Alice Paul and Lucy Burns as heroes? As patriots? What contributions did each make to the suffrage movement? To American democracy?

"It's *not* old, tired, dead history"

PROFESSOR EDITH MAYO, CURATOR EMERITUS IN POLITICAL AND WOMEN'S HISTORY AT THE SMITHSONIAN'S NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AMERICAN HISTORY, SERVED AS AN ADVISOR TO *IRON JAWED ANGELS*. MAYO SHARED HER THOUGHTS ON THE IMPORTANCE OF SUFFRAGE HISTORY AND THE FILM'S APPEAL TO YOUNG PEOPLE.

What makes the work of Alice Paul and her colleagues historically significant?

These women pioneered tactics of nonviolence that were used later by the civil rights movement. It's profound: Martin Luther King and Gandhi both said they had adopted a number of nonviolent protest techniques from the suffrage movement. Gandhi had witnessed the British suffragists when he was in Britain; King picked up from the suffrage movement through Gandhi's writings. I doubt that King would ever have read about these women in any sort of history course that he took in the United States, because the suffragists were pretty much written out of American history. But the parallels between the movements are very dramatic.

What can young people take away from *Iron Jawed Angels*?

This film makes immediate and compelling a crucial segment of American history that is virtually unknown. It makes Alice Paul and Lucy Burns look like vital, dynamic, exuberant women who were politically committed and intellectually really sharp. It also makes them look modern, so that it's not old, tired, dead history. I think the film shows the women's organizational talents, their strategies and their commitment to the cause extremely well. And the film makes this history relevant for modern women and young people today, in a way that I don't think reading any book can possibly do. Having said that, I don't think Alice would ever have worn those gorgeous clothes. But never mind—that's dramatic license.

*This film focuses on
“a crucial segment of
American history that
is virtually unknown.”*

—PROFESSOR EDITH MAYO

Can you talk about the relationship between Alice Paul and Carrie Catt?

These two women just hated each other. Catt really felt that Paul's militancy would backfire and harm the entire movement. I think Martin Luther King and Malcolm X had a better channel of communication than Catt and Paul did. But in every successful political/social reform movement in the U.S., there has always been a radical, militant group that pushes the envelope and then sends the President and Congress running into the arms of the moderates, who begin to look extremely sane and reasonable. That's the nature of social reform movements in the U.S. And I think the film captures that quite effectively.

ANTI-SUFFRAGE

UNDERSTANDING *the* OPPOSITION

It's hard to imagine that until 1920, there was intense debate about whether women should be allowed to vote in the United States. But Alice Paul and her colleagues faced fierce opposition—from women as well as men. The handbill, cartoon and photograph on this page help explain some of the objections that opponents of suffrage, known as anti-suffragists, raised, as well as some of the strategies they employed. Study these primary-source documents. Then answer the questions below.



Ten Reasons Why The Great Majority of Women Do Not Want the Ballot.

BECAUSE they have not lost faith in their fathers, husbands, sons and brothers, who afford full protection to the community, there being no call for women to relieve them of the task.

BECAUSE women realize that when they become voters they will in consequence have to serve as jurors, and be compelled to hear all the repugnant details incident to murder trials and trials for other crimes disclosing unspeakable wickedness. Jury service is abhorrent to every normal woman.

BECAUSE in political activities there is constant strife, turmoil, contention and bitterness, producing conditions from which every normal woman naturally shrinks.

BECAUSE the primary object of government is to protect persons and property. This duty is imposed by nature upon man, the women being by nature absolved from assuming a task to them impossible.

BECAUSE when women noisily contest and scramble for public office—woman pitted against woman—they write an indictment of womankind against which all right-minded women strenuously protest.

BECAUSE women can accomplish more through counselling than they ever can attain through commanding.

BECAUSE woman suffrage will not enhance peace and harmony in the home, but, on the contrary, in the heat of a campaign, it is sure to bring about dissension and discord.

BECAUSE Nebraska women are already enjoying a greater measure of protection and privilege under the laws than do women of any state where women vote.

BECAUSE the woman worker wants rest and quietude—not political excitement.

BECAUSE every reason supporting the claim of women to vote supports also the right of women to be consulted as to whether they shall or shall not be given the ballot.

Issued by the Nebraska Association Opposed to Women Suffrage, Omaha, Nebraska.

For Discussion or Writing

1. What conceptions of women, men, family and government are presented in these documents? How is a “normal woman” defined?
2. What were some of the primary arguments against suffrage for women? Of these, which seem most reasonable to you? Which seem most far-fetched?
3. Describe the scene portrayed in the cartoon. Whose fears about women's changing roles are expressed?
4. How do you imagine Alice Paul would respond to the cartoonist, the author of the flyer and the men in the photograph?

PAST TO PRESENT

What barriers to full equality between women and men still exist in American society? What do you think accounts for these obstacles? For example, why do you think the United States has never had a female President?



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

For Further Exploration

BOOKS

► Clift, Eleanor. *Founding Sisters and the Nineteenth Amendment* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2003). Stirring profiles of the women who propelled the suffrage movement from 1848 to 1920.

► Ford, Linda G. *Iron-Jawed Angels: The Suffrage Militancy of the National Woman's Party, 1912–1920* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1991). A scholarly history of the “iron-jawed angels.”

► Lunardini, Christine. *From Equal Suffrage to Equal Rights: Alice Paul and the National Woman's Party, 1910–1928* (New York: New York University Press, 1986). A powerful account of Paul's suffrage work.

► Sherr, Lynn. *Failure Is Impossible: Susan B. Anthony In Her Own Words* (New York: Times Books, 1995). Excerpts from Anthony's speeches and letters, with illuminating commentary by Sherr.

► Stevens, Doris. *Jailed for Freedom: American Women Win the Vote* (Troutdale, OR: NewSage Press, 1995). Originally published in 1920, this is a first-hand account by a suffragist who worked closely with Alice Paul and Lucy Burns.

► Wheeler, Marjorie Spruill, editor. *One Woman, One Vote: Rediscovering the Woman Suffrage Movement* (Troutdale, OR: NewSage Press, 1995). A collection of essays on suffrage history.

WEBSITES

► www.hbo.com/films/ironjawedangels The official website of *Iron Jawed Angels*, featuring background on the production, crew and cast.

► www.timeclassroom.com/voting Resources on suffrage history and voting rights for students and teachers.

► www.nmwh.org A richly illustrated exhibit on the political culture and imagery of American suffrage, created by the National Women's History Museum.

► <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/naw/nawshome.html> “Votes for Women,” at the Library of Congress, features books, pamphlets and artifacts from the National American Woman Suffrage Association Collection, 1848–1921.

► www.boondocksnet.com/gallery/suf_intro.html More than 100 suffrage cartoons.

► www.archives.gov/digital-classroom/lessons/woman_suffrage/woman_suffrage.html Source documents and lesson plans on suffrage and the 19th Amendment.

► www.rockthevote.com Rock the Vote's website for voter registration, education and activism. Teachers may order free Rock the Vote Kits to encourage students to register and take part in the political process. Kits include voter registration applications, voter information, posters, stickers, buttons and other materials.

► www.youthvote.org The Youth Vote Coalition, a national nonpartisan alliance of diverse organizations, is dedicated to increasing political and civic participation among young people.

Starting Points for Writing and Research

1. The history of suffrage. Choose a foreign country or a U.S. state and investigate its suffrage history. When and how did women win the vote here?

2. Suffrage pioneers. Who were the Pankhursts? What training did they

provide to Alice Paul and Lucy Burns? What tactics did they employ?

3. Related movements. What parallels do you see between tactics used by the National Woman's Party and those employed by Gandhi in his campaign to achieve independence for India? When and how did civil rights leaders in the U.S. make use of similar tactics?

4. The Equal Rights Amendment. What was the concept behind the Equal Rights Amendment in relation to the U.S. Constitution? How far did this movement progress? What role did Alice Paul play in supporting the ERA? In your view, is such an amendment still needed today?

5. Analyzing voter trends. How many Americans voted in the presidential election of 2000? How many eligible young people failed to vote? How does voter turnout in the U.S. compare to rates in other countries? What do you think explains these trends—and what steps, if any, would you advocate to boost voter turnout? Take a stand on these questions in a persuasive essay, citing statistics to support your thesis.

SYMBOLS OF SUFFRAGE



The colors used by the suffragists on their banners and flags were significant. Gold or yellow connoted light and the role of women as enlighteners. Purple, white and green were adopted from the British suffrage movement. Purple symbolized loyalty and dignity; white represented purity (and was also used in the American temperance movement); and green represented hope.

