

Eleanor Garst and Women Strike for Peace^{*}

The other individual to introduce Consensus Decision Making to social change activism in the U.S. was Eleanor Garst, who introduced it to Women Strike for Peace in Washington, in September 1961.

Eleanor Garst was born in Nebraska in 1915 into a conservative, small-town, Baptist family, destined for motherhood and homemaking. Her family moved to Spokane, Washington, where she grew up. Her father owned a pharmacy, and her mother was a housewife who did occasional work as a legal secretary but always considered herself a housewife, her main interest being the Baptist church – an old fashioned church that to this day advocates a literal reading of the book of Genesis. Eleanor was, however, a born rebel and at the age of ten she began to acquire radical notions from history books, began writing peace poems and after reading *The Origin of the Species* as a teenager she left the church.

Garst was a largely self-educated woman, although she did attend the University of Missouri for a short time. She dropped out to marry and spent several years as a housewife and mother. Although she loved her baby boy, she hated every minute of domestic life. She later worked in a bookstore in Spokane, run by a woman rumoured to be a Communist.

By 1940, Garst was divorced from her husband and had moved to Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, where she worked in a bookstore once again. When the war broke out in Europe, Garst was horrified, but incapable of taking any action because it seemed to her that the only alternative being offered to war was a reactionary brand of isolationism. She was very much opposed to the rise of fascism, but at the time she believed that Hitler could be stopped without U.S. military intervention. Shortly before the United States entered the War, Eleanor married Eugene Garst, a merchant seaman who shared her pacifist beliefs. Together they decided that he would refuse to be drafted. Without any contacts in the peace movement or support of any kind, Eleanor and Eugene spent their honeymoon writing an eighty-page brief opposing peacetime conscription, spending many days at the local public library, where they “learned the whole past history of conscription.” Garst was fired from her job after her husband refused to be drafted. As they waited for him to be jailed, Quakers from the War Resister’s League arrived to offer their support. This was her first encounter with Quakers and she “loved them on sight” and “they changed her life” by inviting her to come to Philadelphia to live and work with them. From then on, Quaker teachings on peace and social justice were part of Garst’s life.

During World War II Garst worked first as a publicist for WILPF (Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom founded in 1915 by Jane Addams and others), which she had encountered for the first time when she moved to Philadelphia. She then became assistant director and lobbyist for the Women’s Committee to Oppose Conscription, an ad hoc national committee of church and labour groups established to defeat a pending bill that would have conscripted women for wartime non-military service. She interviewed congressional representatives, sent news releases to supporting

^{*} The principal source for this chapter is Swerdlow, A. (1993). *Women Strike for Peace: Traditional Motherhood and Radical Politics in the 1960s*. Amy Swerdlow was herself a participant in WSP from the beginning, and she is the only person to have documented WSP.

groups, and made a nationwide speaking tour on behalf of the campaign against female conscription.

At the war's end Eleanor and Eugene returned to Spokane, where she gave birth to a daughter, Jeannie, who was later to be an active participant in the peace movement. The Garsts were divorced a few years later, but Eleanor stayed on in Spokane where she became a professional organizer for social change, as the executive secretary of the International Centre, an umbrella group for the World Affairs Council, the Race Relations Council, and the local chapter of the National Conference of Christians and Jews. According to Garst, all interfaith, interracial, and international efforts in the Spokane area went through her.

In addition to her professional work for peace, Garst served as a volunteer secretary and program chairperson of the first regional branch of the American Association for the United Nations, which she had helped to organize. She was also regional vice president of the United World Federalists, and active in the Democratic Party.

In the late 1950s, while living in Los Angeles where she was working as assistant to the director of the Los Angeles County Conference on Community Relations, Garst became a founder of the Los Angeles chapter of SANE (National Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy). She then moved back to Washington in 1958 to work as a community organizer for the Adams-Morgan Demonstration Project, a government initiative administered by the American University, aimed at keeping a Washington housing project racially integrated. During the late summer of 1961 Garst, along with millions of others, was experiencing 'nuclear anxiety' but felt alienated from the groups with which she had worked in the past. She began to correspond frantically with friends and contacts all over the country, communicating her fear of impending disaster and asking her contacts to report what they were doing in their own communities. Her friend, Carol Urner, who had started a women's peace group, sparked Garst's interest in the idea, as she had come to the view that women were more free than men to oppose entrenched national policies. In September 1961, her friend Margaret Russell, invited her to an exploratory meeting with 5 other women, all of them housewives, at Dagmar Wilson's home. As a professional writer who had been published in the *Saturday Evening Post*, the *Reporter*, and the *Ladies' Home Journal*, Garst was the logical choice to draft the "Dear Friend" letter that became the call for the Women's Strike for Peace.

Garst taught the WSPers how to run a Quaker-style meeting in which there was no voting and frequent pauses or long, sometimes very long, periods of silence and quiet reflection and introspection, and under her leadership real consensus was usually found. According to Amy Swerdlow, it was Garst's simple, direct, moralistic, but non-ideological prose that played a crucial role in mobilizing and unifying WSP in its first five years. Garst's opposition to any form of bureaucratic structure, her faith in the grass-roots, and her conviction that consensus could always be achieved, struck a responsive chord in the key women across the country, most of whom had not previously encountered Quaker decision making.

WSPers invariably associated their consensus style of decision making with their inveterate mode of "unorganization" – remarkable considering that they had become extremely effective national organization which achieved high levels of policy consistency for a period of over 20 years. Eleanor Garst attributed the movement's success precisely to its lack of formal structure. "No-one must wait for orders from headquarters – there aren't any headquarters," she declared in an article in the FOR

journal, *Fellowship*. “Any woman who has an idea can propose it through an informal memo system. If enough women think it’s good, it’s done. Sounds crazy? It is – but it utilizes the creativity of thousands of women who would never be heard from through ordinary channels.”

In the words of the monthly bulletin of the Ann Arbor branch: “We are a do-it-yourself movement, depending on individual women who move freely in and out of our activities as their interest, concerns, energies, time, permit. ... We are unique in our non-structured, chosen, fiercely-guarded lack of organization – and yet we accomplish a great deal, learn even more, inspire each other.” Notwithstanding the intervals of silence sometimes required for consensus, meetings were commonly noisy with more than one person talking at a time, babies crying while refreshments were being circulated.

Clearly, the successful implantation of Consensus in WSP entailed both Eleanor Garst, who had acquired it from the Quakers, and the readiness of the social stratum which made up Women Strike for Peace to embrace it and use it to good effect. To understand this readiness and how WSP transmitted the practice to the wider anti-war movement and the Women’s Liberation Movement which followed, we must follow WSP through its early years.

It must be noted that none of the other organizations in which Eleanor Garst had hitherto participated were open to Consensus. SANE (of which all 6 founders of WSP had been members) was the first mass organization to oppose nuclear testing, but it was an *hierarchical* organization, anti-communist in its politics and focused on lobbying government rather than influencing public opinion. The Adams-Morgan community organizing project had plenty of opportunities to foster Consensus amongst the residents but it never did and it was run by means of a top-down management tree like any other quasi-governmental organization. WILPF was a chapter-based organization close to the labour movement which operated on the basis of Majority.

Both James Lawson and Eleanor Garst had been members of Fellowship Of Reconciliation (FOR). Jane Addams and US and British Quakers together with German Lutherans had founded FOR in 1914, but Addams never advocated Consensus. Gandhi had had contact with FOR, but again Gandhi was not an advocate of Consensus, and no-one remembers Consensus ever having been a feature of FOR.

All the evidence points to the meeting in Dagmar Wilson’s livingroom on 21 September 1961, when Eleanor Garst attended the founding meeting of Women Strike for Peace, as being the moment at which the Quaker style of doing meetings took root in a social change movement beyond the Quakers themselves.

Women Strike for Peace

The six women who met in Dagmar Wilson’s home in Georgetown, Washington were Dagmar Wilson, Eleanor Garst, Jeanne Bagby, Folly Fodor, Margaret Russell and one other woman, as well as two men who took no further part in WSP: Margaret Russell’s husband and Quaker convert Lawrence Scott (all members of SANE). The meeting decided to call a one-day national peace strike of women for 1 November.

The call written by Eleanor Garst and issued on 22 September circulated rapidly through female networks, by word of mouth and chain letter from woman to woman, using personal phone books, Christmas card lists, contacts in PTAs, church and temple groups, women’s clubs, and old-line peace organizations. The founders and those who joined them managed in only 5 weeks to organize 68 local actions across 60 cities that

brought an estimated fifty-thousand white, middle-class women on to the streets or to protest rallies.

The call to strike contained no names, indeed none of the women were public figures. In response to demands, a second communication was entitled “Who are these women? – You ask.” The organizers no longer referred to themselves merely as housewives, but as “teachers, writers, social workers, artists, secretaries, executives, saleswomen. ... Most of us are also wives and mothers, ... we are Quakers, Unitarians, Methodists, and Presbyterians, Jews and Catholics and many ethnic origins. First of all we are human beings.” But the stereotype of housewives *stuck* to WSP forever after and was assiduously maintained. Celebrities such as Eleanor Roosevelt were invited to join the call, but no big names associated themselves with it. WILPF and SANE also kept their distance.

Dagmar Wilson was the spokesperson for the women and the press chose to identify her primarily as a mother, despite the fact that she had made it clear in the first press release that she was a “well-known children’s book illustrator” which the press rendered as “woman who has three daughters and whose usual spare time occupation is illustrating children’s books.”

Dagmar Wilson was the only one of the founding group with whom the majority of the WSP women were able to identify and completely accept, and Wilson acted as an icon for the movement, rather than a leader. Educated in England she was an eloquent speaker and her diffidence, humility, gentle force, appealing, non-doctrinaire common sense and her thoughtful charisma communicated precisely the image of what an American woman of that time aspired to be and was expected to be. She claimed that she had no female role models and that her only inspiration for WSP was the civil rights movement, particularly the SNCC sit-ins. WSP made no feminist demands and its leaders generally knew nothing of earlier women’s peace struggles and had barely heard of the suffragettes. WSP was decidedly feminine but not feminist.

It is noteworthy that demographically, politically and in terms of available means of communication, WSP was barely distinguishable from these earlier the women’s peace movements, but any thread of collaboration which might have linked them to their pre-War sisters had been severed, and in its form of collective decision making, they made a complete break.

Alongside the first strike call, WSP delivered identical letters to Jacqueline Kennedy and Nina Khrushchev, which served both to emphasize their nonpartisanship, but also extended the interest of the participants and the press beyond one day. This would typify the canny use of the media which would continue to characterize WSP over the two decades to come. For example, a typical action would be a march on Congress, followed by delegations from all over the country going in to lobby their local Congressman, with weeks of interviews, letters to the Editor, etc., in localities before and after the march in the course of which the women would exercise themselves in political activity. WSP women made a special effort to dress and behave in a stereotypical fashion at demonstrations, vigils, and lobbies.

The women of WSP would transform themselves from “ordinary housewives” and mothers into leaders, public speakers, writers, organizers, political tacticians, and analysts. Whatever their intentions, WSP created a female community in which reasoning ability, organizational skills, and rhetorical talents were valued above maternal competence. They also set an example of female courage, political

responsibility, and leadership for their own children, male and female, who would make up the ranks of the social movements of the 1960s and '70s.

Most of the women who joined the strike and the movement that grew out of it, were in their mid-thirties to late forties, generally well educated with a pre-existing interest in public affairs and a commitment to political participation. They came from liberal to left political backgrounds, having been pacifists, Quakers, New Deal Democrats, socialists, anarchists, Communist sympathizers or CPUSA members in the years before and during World War II. By 1961, those who had been Communists had become disillusioned with both Soviet policies and the CPUSA, but most still believed that the US posed the greatest threat to world peace. They were the kind of women whose devotion to children extended far beyond their own. Most of them had withdrawn from the larger political arena into the PTA, League of Women Voters, church or temple social action groups, volunteer social services, local arts centres, or music societies. Where there was conflict with their husbands, it was not about politics but over division of childcare responsibilities and domestic labour.

The generation of which the WSP women were a part had their adolescence in the depression and young adulthood during World War II and raised their children in McCarthyite, Cold War America marked by a crushing conformism which silenced political debate and told women that their place was in the home. They were told from every angle to give up their jobs, careers and dreams of personal achievement to become full-time mothers. Although far more women quietly kept their foot in the workforce than was ever acknowledged, they on the whole consented to the image of domesticity which provided the shared language through which the WSP women could communicate with their base.

Most WSPers did not have to make a special effort to talk and act like 'ordinary mothers' – they had been talking and acting like that for years. They avoided 'ideological' language and continuously identified themselves with mainstream opinion, and rejected any tactic which they thought too radical to be understood by the 'average woman'. They found that their message could reach all kinds of women, political or apolitical, because they spoke to middle America in its own language. Nevertheless, they were always regarded by the political class as outsiders, a status which they wore as a badge of honour.

The maternal mask proved an exceptionally effective defence against red-baiting. The founders had learnt from SANE how *not* to defend themselves against McCarthyite witch-hunting. SANE was the first mass organization to mobilize against the nuclear arms race. Founded in November 1957, by June 1958, SANE had 130 branches. Under attack for being manipulated by Communists, SANE banned anyone with present or past Communist associations. A.J. Muste resigned and many individuals and whole chapters were either expelled or withdrew. The Washington D.C. chapter opposed the decision but did not withdraw. From the outset, WSP decided that they would have no formal requirements for membership or even keep membership lists. Their maternal persona deflected red-baiting attacks like water off a duck's back. Testifying before the House Unamerican Activities Committee, Dagmar Wilson said no-one could take over WSP because "we are the movement. We decide everything by group decision, nothing is dictated." Kay Hardman told the Committee: "No rigid authoritarian type personality could tolerate, for a single moment, the intuitive, agreement by consensus that is the *modus operandi* of women's peace groups." The performance of the WSP witnesses,

who had actually *demand*ed their right to testify before the Committee, and were applauded by the gallery and presented posies of flowers at the conclusion of their evidence, was probably the last nail in the coffin of the HUAC, which faded from history after making themselves a laughing-stock in their cross-examination of the ladies from the PTA.

The “structure” of WSP

After the strike, those who had participated wrote urging the founders to keep the women’s peace strike idea going, but they also expressed a reluctance to establish a formal organization. The antipathy to building yet another top-down bureaucratic peace organization was a shared view. By rejecting hierarchy and “boring meetings,” the Washington organizers encouraged the strikers to speak out in their own voices and as they saw fit, and the loosely structured participatory approach which had successfully organized the strike set the tone for the national movement that followed. “Structurelessness” came to be the movement’s hallmark and a legacy it bequeathed to feminist groups that followed. The WSP women insisted that every participant was equally qualified to speak for the movement. In the minds of those who participated in WSP, the structurelessness of the movement and the consensus style of decision making were inextricably linked together.

Without paid staff, designated organizers or spokespersons, WSP relied on the stereotypical maternal rhetoric which they all understood, and spontaneous direct action at the local level, for which there were clear models and limits implicit in the maternal ethos. This bypassed the need for policy documents, rules and regulations and processes of approval and oversight of the activity of the chapters.

Whenever WSP participated in wider actions, such as the draft resistance, they always operated from their separatist women’s group, which decided on its own terms which issues, which groups, and which tactics it would or would not support.

Needless to say, WSP did not have a rulebook, but here is the structure they had.

Each local group was to observe a first-of-the-month strike day, but in any way it chose. The only requirement was that the groups call attention to the need to end the nuclear arms race. Each chapter exercised its autonomy and operated the same consensus-style of meetings with no appointed officers.

A *key woman* was someone who took part in local and national planning meetings and/or acted as a link in the telephone chain. The key women were appointed by their local groups, who were responsible for communicating information to and from the de facto national headquarters in Washington and regional, state and local contacts.

Like in the International Workingmen’s Association, the ‘leading section’ (i.e., the Washington chapter), acted simultaneously as head office. The national office published the *MEMO*, which was sent to the key women, who were responsible for transmitting the news to their groups and supplying news and ideas for use in the *MEMO*.

In addition to the informal national office, *clearing houses*, or *task forces*, were also established for the dissemination of information and action proposals on specific issues. These were self-appointed women who took an initiative to organize some action. There *were* disputes over this structure, but they never developed into a faction fight.

On 9-10 June 1962, 105 self-selected delegates attended the first WSP conference in Ann Arbor. The conference ran for two and a half days and produced a unifying policy

statement, a statement of goals and methods and consolidated the communications network. The policy statement which was agreed upon by consensus, proved to be so appropriate for WSP that it remained in use without revision throughout the 1970s and 1980s.

As was pointed out frequently during the conference, when there are no official delegates there can be no official decisions, nonetheless, the conference ended in unanimous agreement that national policy would be decided only at annual conferences and that local policy would remain the responsibility of each area.

Most of the key women believed that when there is no official hierarchy and no rewards for office, there can be no power struggle. However, an informal but entrenched leadership clique *did* develop in WSP, and the analysis that Jo Freeman put forward in 1970 in her speech, "The Tyranny of Structurelessness," was irrefutable: the informal leadership was made up of women who knew the unspoken rules and possessed the resources and the networks to bid for decision making. Such resources included experience, recognized standing in other peace groups, personal friendships with the Washington founders or other national figures, professional standing or media recognition, powerful husbands, and most importantly, personal economic resources for travel and communication, including access to domestic help to free them from housekeeping and childcare responsibilities and freedom from the need to earn a wage – the kind of resources which are normally reserved for elected paid officials. Decisions were made by those who happened to be present at a particular moment and anyone who disapproved of a decision could simply ignore it. Later on, as WSPers became aware of the problem of being an all-white movement, they made special efforts to recruit women of colour and to pay their way to international meetings, etc.

The decision to not hire staff and for members to bear the cost of travel, telephone calls, and printing on a *personal* basis, freed them from the necessity to raise money, charge membership dues and all the paraphernalia of managing funds which has figured so largely in the organizational life of all other social movements. This was crucial in maintaining the creative, free-flowing spontaneity of the movement. However, there were costs for this freedom. It put the most active women under enormous pressure and simply excluded from leadership roles those who lacked the necessary resources. The lack of structure and the absence of paid office staff produced the greatest strains in Washington, where the local WSP chapter had to run a national office with no resources other than their own personal access to spare time and money. In 1968, Dagmar Wilson withdrew from her role in WSP, though still a committed activist, but just on a local scale, as a consequence of this kind of pressure.

When WSP succeeded in getting Bella Abzug elected to Congress as a Democrat, this tended to move the focus away from the movement and absorbed much of the energy of WSP into the Democratic Party, at the same time as delivering much-needed resources and even more effective access to Congress.

Some insight into how WSP's Consensus worked can be gained by reflecting on how it handled some of its most serious challenges.

The greatest difficulties arose over demands on WSP to take positions or participate in actions directed at other issues, such as racial segregation. Such demands required WSP to step outside the informal consensus on which unity of their structureless unorganization was based.

At its second national conference in June 1963, a group of women proposed from the floor that WSP condemn US intervention in Vietnam. It took almost 24 hours of constant debate, punctuated by pauses for contemplation and soul searching, to reach a consensus that in the coming year it would “alert the public to the dangers and horrors of the war in Vietnam and the specific ways in which human morality is being violated by the U.S. attack on ... women and children.” That is, the dispute was resolved by WSP making a public statement of principle.

The scope of WSP concerns did gradually broaden however. In October 1964, WSP issued a call to its participants to cooperate with Malcolm X in a campaign of writing letters to African heads of state and in March 1965, WSP participated in a march in San Francisco protesting *both* against the Vietnam war *and* racial injustice in Alabama.

In a radio broadcast in 1969, WSP declared: “We are profoundly a part of the total movement of the American people to change our society. ... but our major commitment and activities are still overwhelmingly dedicated to the single issue of peace.”

WSP opposed mass draft card burning at one of the large antiwar mobilizations in April 1967 because civil disobedience had not been part of the original call. In a public statement presented to the head of the Draft Board, they justified their support for draft resisters:

because we believe that these young men are courageous and morally justified in rejecting the war regardless of consequences, we can do no less.

Over time, as their base was radicalized by the burgeoning protest movements, the range of issues in which WSP participated continued to widen even including labour struggles. On the September 1967 March on the White House, confronted by a police cordon blocking their access to Congress, the women tore down the fence, trampled on it, pushed through or crawled under the line of baton-wielding policemen, to push their way on to the road directly in front of the White House gate, leaving a number of women battered and bloody on the ground.

WSP and Feminism

The great majority of WSPers had never been exposed to feminist discourse. Ironically, it was precisely because so many WSPers came out of the Left of the 1930s and 1940s that they had not been exposed to feminism. On the whole they had little awareness of their own contribution to sex-role stereotyping and female oppression, and embraced the culture of domesticity, even while belying it in much of their own activity. As was made transparent during the 1960s, the gendered division of labour and power was as dominant in the Left as it was in the general culture.

However, in the years of struggle, planning strategies, and making programmatic and tactical decisions, writing and speaking in public, challenging the political elite, WSPers began to feel their power, enjoy their victories, and savour their political acuity. They began to perceive the continuity between the strings that bound them to their homes and the forces that controlled public life.

When the WSP women found themselves under attack from their own daughters, they were generally already prepared to hear, understand, and embrace what their daughters were telling them about gender-stereotyping. Although the WSP women were far from being in the front ranks of feminist critique (a task that fell to their daughters), a decade

spent demonstrating the capacity of women for political struggle and building the sense of female solidarity based on working in a separatist movement, justifies us in saying that WSP gave birth to and 'raised' the modern women's liberation movement.

Bit by bit, the WSP moms themselves became feminists. No women's history study groups or consciousness-raising groups were established within WSP, but many women were becoming aware that their own experiences had historical roots.

It was the Jeanette Rankin Brigade in 1968 which was the turning point in WSPers gaining a feminist consciousness. In 1967, a number of WSP activists joined forces with Jeanette Rankin (87-year-old Gandhian pacifist and the first woman elected to Congress) to organize a new broad-based women's coalition called the Jeanette Rankin Brigade to end the draft. Participants included Ella Baker, a key person in the founding of SNCC. The JRB consciously united war and poverty as twin issues, thus reaching across race and class lines. Jeanette Rankin had been a suffragist, and the JRB attracted a group of young women who decided to use the event to insert feminist consciousness and demands into the struggle for peace. It was this collaboration which won many key women in WSP to feminism and allowed them to see their own struggle in its full historical context as part of a history of women's struggle for peace and for their own emancipation.

Most of the women of WSP never returned to their domestic roles after the end of the Vietnam War. Things would never be the same again.

Mickey Flacks, who was a twenty-one-year-old member of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), living in Ann Arbor in the early 1960s, recalls that she joined WSP because the women offered "a new vision of how to operate politically" and did not seem to be talking in old political terms. In 1980, Flacks told Amy Swerdlow that she still thought of WSP as "the most participatory organization of its time," and that WSP's "unorganizational" style, played a key role in shaping the later anti-war movement and the women's liberation movement. "It was never given enough credit for this," she stated in a 1980 interview.

Casey Hayden, who had been involved with WSP in Ann Arbor from the first strike, after having worked with James Lawson in SNCC, would go on to be one of the leading critics of SDS for the way in which it used women to do traditional female work and kept them from leadership. Hayden confirmed that WSP used the periods of silent contemplation to find consensus, and told me that:

Mostly in SNCC, as I recall, everyone just talked a lot, but we didn't make decisions about actions until everyone was ok with the decision or had opted out and that was ok. I don't remember any silences like in WSP. (private email message, 2 July 2014)

Commenting on my quest to find the origins of consensus decision making, she said:

I'd be interested to know if either of you ever come up with why we were committed to consensus decision making in SNCC. (I love it, myself, and have argued for it for decades in many settings. It was easier to achieve, of course, when we viewed love as our primary value, unity as a core issue, and our actions as nonviolent theatre, before we got into political theorizing which prefers/demands votes and splits.) (private email message 23 June 2014)

This difference – the presence/absence of silences – seems to have been the marker of consensus decision making having Quaker origins in the case of WSP, or African America in the case of SNCC. So far as my experience in social change activism has gone, the periods of quiet reflection have disappeared from Consensus decision making.

WSPers strongly associated their consensus style of decision making with the structureless of their “unorganization,” which in turn was proudly held up in contrast to the “rigid authoritarianism” of traditional “male” organs of power and the failed peace organizations of the past. They also took it to be part of their maternal ethos.

For WSP, Consensus was also linked to the fact that participation in any action was *optional*. The fact that the organization nonetheless continued to exist and maintained consistency of policy, tactics and strategy over a period of twenty-years without any capacity to mandate or expel and was able to achieve consensus throughout can be put down to the commitment to the shared maternal ethos, the norms of which were well-known to everyone and met the expectations of the established society. Consensus and unity would always be put at risk if WSPers stepped beyond the boundaries of what was seen to be acceptable to “the average woman.”

It is important to note that the adoption of Consensus for decision making has no necessary relation to WSP’s “unorganization.” The general workers unions of the early 1900s for example combined Majority decision making with branch autonomy within the Rules. Nor is Consensus necessarily tied to the absence of membership fees or clear criteria for membership. The connection between Majority decisions, membership fees and national discipline lies in the tradition from which these elements emerged, and traditions are powerful but not immutable.

I will reflect on the wider social and historical factors underlying the emergence of Consensus in the USA in 1960 at the conclusion to this part of the work. For now I must still review a couple of threads which turned out *not* to be decisive.