

PERFECTLY ORDINARY:
WOMEN STRIKE FOR PEACE IN EARLY 1960S AMERICA

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What would make ordinary housewives put down their pot roasts and pick up a poster? What would make women meet in living rooms and then march in protest? What would make mothers write letters, talk to congressmen, and join a movement? Fear. Women joined Women Strike for Peace because they believed the escalation of the nuclear arms race threatened their families. These women had been born around the time of the Great Depression, lived through a war fought a world away, and now their lives and the lives of their children were threatened in their own backyards. In the early 1960s national and international events converged that called women to action. Ruth Gage-Colby stated, “Women from the beginning of time have always hated war and longed for peace and all that is new is the *kind of war* we face.”¹ Women felt compelled to strike for peace; for themselves, for their families, and for the world. Their motivation was maternal and their tactics were unapologetically feminine in nature.

Some of the fear that women felt had been years in the making. The bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki might have ended a war, but they left the world in fear of a surprise attack and nuclear destruction. The Federal Civil Defense Agency (FCDA) distributed sixteen million copies of its 1950 booklet *Survival under Atomic Attack*.² The FCDA enlisted televi-

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1. Ruth Gage-Colby, “Women Strike for Peace,” *New World Review* 31 (June 1963): 6. <http://illiad-csus-edu.proxy.lib.csus.edu/illiad/illiad.dll?Action=10&Form=75&Value=176404> (accessed October 24, 2009).
 2. National Security Resources Board, *Survival under Atomic Attack*, Civil Defense Office (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1950).

sion, newspapers and magazines to cooperate in minimizing the perception of atomic danger to the public. The media showed happy, smiling families as they emerged from fallout shelters after the “all-clear” signal was given. Mothers were advised in pamphlets to calm their children by making a

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game out of an air raid or attack. The stated intention of “duck and cover” school drills was to “alert, not alarm” school children.³ Magazines printed pieces on how women could properly outfit the pantry of a bomb shelter.⁴

Not everyone was fooled into complacency by the propaganda. Radiation fallout was, quite literally, everywhere. By

1960, the United States and Russia had performed over 200 nuclear bomb tests.⁵ There were thirty-one nuclear tests in 1961 alone. The Soviet tests were said to be responsible for creating more fallout than all of the other nuclear powers combined.⁶ The public was bombarded with books, newspaper accounts, and magazine articles on the danger of radiation contamination in the food supply. In 1958, Linus Pauling, a noted chemist, published the book, *No More War!* with chapter titles such as “Radiation and Heredity,” “Radiation and Disease,” and “What Are the Facts about Fallout?”⁷ He outlined the link between radiation exposure and leukemia, strontium-90 and bone cancer, iodine-131 and thyroid cancer, and cesium-137 and genetic mutations, in graphic detail.⁸

Newspapers were a daily reminder of dangers at home and abroad. A perusal of *New York Times* headlines in November 1961 found articles on

3. Dee Garrison, “Our Skirts Gave Them Courage: Civil Defense Protest Movement in New York City, 1955-1961,” in *Not June Cleaver: Women and Gender in Postwar America, 1945-1960*, ed. Joanne Meyerowitz (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994), 205 -206.

4. *Ibid.*, 206.

5. Harriet Hyman Alonso, *Peace as a Women's Issue* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1993), 207.

6. *New York Times*, November 9, 1961.

7. Linus Pauling, *No More War!* (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1958), 9.

8. Pauling, 77-111.

the tensions between the United States and Russia, nuclear testing, radiation fallout, and radiation disease.⁹ The paper printed the speech President Kennedy made to the United Nations on November 9, 1961, where he acknowledged that there may be genetic damage from fallout to children. As president, he said he must balance the risks of damage with the “responsibility that this country has to preserve the freedom of hundreds of millions of people.”¹⁰ The *Sacramento Bee* printed a three-part story on the effects of radiation fallout, the possible damage to current and future generations of children, and the dangers of strontium-90, iodine-131 and cesium-137 in the food chain.¹¹ A subsequent front page headline announced: “JFK says US to resume atmospheric nuclear tests as necessary for US security.”¹² That same issue contained articles on fallout over Alaska from Russia’s latest test, birth defects caused by fallout, and the announcement of underground testing to begin in Nevada.¹³

Magazines were no exception to the building climate of fear. *Time* magazine published an article on the atomic bomb with a section entitled: “Ten Questions and Answers about Fallout” which declared, “Scientists agree that it can cause cancer, leukemia, sterility, and mutations in future generations.”¹⁴ *Consumer Reports* published a series of articles on the effects of radiation over several years. It published a ten-page article on strontium-90 in milk in March of 1959. Strontium-90, a byproduct of nuclear testing, replaced calcium in bone and released radiation into the body.¹⁵ The magazine published a follow-up study on strontium-90, and later detailed the health hazards of iodine-131 in the milk supply which caused thyroid cancer in children.¹⁶ As a result of those dangers, many mothers chose not to serve milk to their children. This alarmed the dairy industry which outlined in a *Farm Journal* article ways in which dairymen could feed

9. *New York Times*, November 1961.

10. *New York Times*, November 9, 1961.

11. *Sacramento Bee*, November 1, 1961.

12. *Sacramento Bee*, November 2, 1961.

13. *Ibid.*

14. “The Nation,” *Time*, November 10, 1961, 21.

15. “The Milk All of Us Drink – and Fallout,” *Consumer Reports*, March 1959, 152.

16. “A Follow-up Study on Strontium-90 in the Total Diet,” *Consumer Reports*, October 1961, 546; “Iodine-131 in fallout: a Public Health Problem,” *Consumer Reports*, September 1962, 446.

their cows to limit contamination of the milk.¹⁷

The *Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature* dated March 1961 – February 1963 listed articles on similar topics that women across America read in the magazines in their homes, in line at the grocery store, or at their local library. In these two years there were several articles on radioactive “Food Contamination,” multiple reports exposing the dangers of “Iodine” and the radioactive contamination of “Milk,” dozens referring to “Radioactive Fallout” and “Disarmament,” and over one hundred articles dealing with “Atomic Bomb Shelters.” Some of these articles appeared in more obscure publications like *The New Republic*, *The Nation*, *Science*, and *The Bulletin of Atomic Scientists*; however, many appeared in mainstream publications like *Reader's Digest*, *US News and World Report*, *Today's Health*, and *Popular Mechanics*.¹⁸ Typical was a *Redbook* article by Ruth and Edward Brecher titled, “What We Are Not Being Told about Fallout Hazards.”¹⁹ It described the unpredictability of nuclear tests as well as each radioactive substance, its risk assessment, and possible precautions to minimize the danger. The most striking thing about reading news accounts and magazine articles was that the reporting of these facts and frightening statistics was devoid of all emotion or commentary. The barrage of information was itself a call to action to those who would form Women Strike for Peace.

Housewives and mothers will venture outside the home when it involves championing a better life for their children. Historian Glen Jeansonne noted that “humanitarian women have organized to promote social reforms including peace, abolition, temperance, education, and improved living and working conditions,” although these progressive reforms were not the only reasons women have organized.²⁰ While women have often been consumed with the never-ending care of home and family, specific issues could move them to act. Perhaps because of these family responsibilities, women were less likely to be a part of formal politics and more likely

17. “Dairymen Take Action against Fallout,” *Farm Journal*, October 1962, 31.

18. Sarita Robinson and Zada Limerick, eds., *Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature*, March 1961-February 1963 (New York: H.W. Wilson Company, 1963), 23:1-2120.

19. Ruth and Edward Brecher, “What We Are Not Being Told About Fallout Hazards,” *Redbook*, September 1962, 50-51; 102-106.

20. Glen Jeansonne, *Women of the Far Right: The Mothers' Movement and World War II* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 3.

to be spurred to action in social protest.²¹ Harriett Alonso stated, “When women mobilize as mothers on behalf of their families, they become a potent political force.”²² The women of Lysistrata in Ancient Greece went on a “sex strike” to get their husbands to end the Peloponnesian War.²³ Parisian women with hungry children in 1795 fought for “bread and the Constitution.”²⁴ European women formed the Women’s Peace League in 1854 in response to the Crimean War. More recently, women formed the Women’s Peace Party in 1915 in response to World War I.²⁵

The Women’s Peace Party joined with the International Committee of Women for Permanent Peace to become the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) in 1919.²⁶ This was a group run by and mainly composed of women. The creativity and energetic participation in the WILPF progressed between the world wars in an effort to reduce armaments worldwide.²⁷ During WWII, the WILPF chose “to acknowledge the fact of war, to work for the protection of civil liberties, and to plan for the peace to follow,” but not to protest the war directly.²⁸ The fiftieth anniversary retrospective *Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom* outlined an organization that evolved from grass roots peace work to one with layers of leaders, committees, and chapters. Membership dwindled during the WWII years and those that followed; however, the WILPF continued to work for peace, freedom, and a safe environment for women and children throughout the world.²⁹

Another group working during the Cold War was the Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy (SANE) that emerged in the summer of 1957

21. Carolyn Strange, “Mothers on the March: Maternalism in Women’s Protest for Peace in North America and Western Europe, 1900-1985,” in *Women and Social Protest*, ed. Guida West and Rhoda Lois Blumberg (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 209.

22. Strange.

23. Aristophanes, *Lysistrata*, ed. Harold Bloom (Broomall, PA: Chelsea House Publishers, 2002), 89-92.

24. Strange, 209.

25. Alonso, 57.

26. Alonso, 90.

27. Amy Swerdlow, *Women Strike for Peace: Traditional Motherhood and Radical Politics in the 1960s* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 35.

28. Alonso, 144

29. Gertrude Bussey and Margaret Tims, *Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom* (London: George, Allen and Unwin, Ltd. 1965), 188.

“as the first mass organization in opposition to the nuclear arms race.”³⁰ Not only mothers were concerned with nuclear war; the diverse sponsors of SANE’s policies included such intellectuals as Norman Cousins, Linus Pauling, Bertrand Russell, Albert Schweitzer, and Martin Luther King Jr.³¹ As Americans became more aware of the implications of a nuclear war, SANE membership and influence grew. It incorporated a structure of hierarchical leadership and numerous committees to arouse the public, politicians, and international organizations to work towards a worldwide ban of nuclear testing.³² While women were allowed to participate in SANE meetings and sign petitions, men dominated the organizational leadership.

Many events converged in the summer of 1961 which brought women together to fight for peace. Fallout shelters were nothing new, but in 1961 Kennedy expanded the Civil Defense program, transferred it to the Pentagon, and Congress appropriated millions of dollars for its implementation.³³ This meant that the government was anticipating an expanded need for such protection. Increased tension between Western powers and Russia led to the construction of the Berlin Wall beginning August 13, 1961 which heightened the rift and threat of war between East and West. The Russians broke a 1958 voluntary moratorium on nuclear testing and began atmospheric tests on August 31, 1961. Contamination by radioactive fallout in the food chain gained exposure in the media and public awareness of the hazards grew as the fallout radiation from these tests was detected in the United States.³⁴ All of these events contributed to a climate of fear for those who were listening.

Dagmar Wilson, a mother of three and a children’s author and illustrator, received credit for being the mother of Women Strike for Peace. The movement came to life in her living room with like-minded friends who were concerned that these current national and world events would lead to

30. Swerdlow, *Women Strike*, 44.

31. Milton S Katz, *Ban the Bomb: A History of SANE, the Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy, 1957-1985* (Westport, CN: Greenwood Press, 1986), 28-35.

32. Katz, 24-25, 42.

33. John Whiteclay Chambers II, “Civil Defense,” *The Oxford Companion to American Military History*, Oxford University Press (2000) Encyclopedia.com, <http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1O126-CivilDefense.html> (accessed November 11, 2009).

34. Dagmar Wilson, “HUAC and the Irrepressible Women Strike for Peace,” in *The Price of Dissent: Testimonies to Political Repression in America*, ed. Bud and Ruth Schultz (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 283-284.

nuclear escalation. She read in the newspaper about a Quaker Peace March across the United States and admired the willingness of these marchers to take some action, any action, in the face of world events. When Bertrand Russell, a British philosopher and pacifist was arrested at a London peace rally, Wilson was outraged by his arrest and the fact that SANE had chosen not to issue a response. All of the events of 1961 converged to cause her to gather friends, leave her kitchen, and take to the streets in protest.

Wilson was not the only woman who felt an urgency to act and felt compelled to “do something.” A woman who picketed a Nevada test site recounted reading the book *Atom Bomb Children* about the aftermath of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, then looking at her own five sleeping children: “I said to myself, I must do something more forceful than just stay home in the kitchen.”³⁵ Dr. Frances Herring, founding member of Women for Peace in San Francisco, noted that “respectable middle-class women came out of their kitchens, off their jobs, to stir their communities to some kind of action . . . ; against the threat of nuclear war; against the contamination of milk . . . ; against the deceptive promise of survival from backyard shelters.”³⁶ Wilson thought about how people had said WWII could never happen and did nothing: “I decided there are some things the individual citizen can do. At least we can make some noise and see.”³⁷ And make noise they did.

Wilson gathered together five women she had met through SANE in her Georgetown home on September 21, 1961. They discussed world events and concerns they shared about nuclear bombs and radiation fallout. Wilson remembered, “We were worried. We were indignant. We were angry.”³⁸ They decided at this meeting to have a “strike for peace” on November 1, 1961. They called themselves Women Strike for Peace (WSP) with the intention that this was to be a one-day event to call attention to the resumption of nuclear testing. The following day these women started contacting friends and neighbors about the strike. Their call was: “We strike against death, desolation, destruction and on behalf of

35. Dr. Francis Herring, KPFK Commentary, May 1969, *Herstory*, (hereafter, *Herstory*) Reel 23, Women’s History Research Center, Berkeley, CA (Wooster, OH: Micro Photo Division, Bell and Howell, 1972-1976).

36. Herring, *Herstory*.

37. Wilson, “Irrepressible Women,” 284.

38. Swerdlow, *Women Strike*, 17.

life and liberty.”³⁹ Amy Swerdlow, an historian and WSP activist in New York, recalled that “using personal phone books, Christmas-card lists, and contacts in PTAs, church and temple groups, women’s clubs, and old-line peace organizations,”⁴⁰ the original planners rallied women from all over the country.

The estimates varied, but roughly 50,000 women protested in some way on the first of November in approximately sixty cities.⁴¹ *Newsweek* reported: “They were perfectly ordinary-looking young women, with their share of good looks. It was these women, by the thousands, who staged demonstrations in a score of cities across the nation last week, protesting atomic testing. A ‘strike for peace’ they called it.”⁴² Sophie Wyatt of Los Angeles remembered that a friend wanted to send her “literature which was the most exciting thing she had ever read. No names, no organization; would I just read it and come.”⁴³ One sentence in the WSP pamphlet stood out to Sophie: “We don’t make foreign policy, but we know to what end we want it made: the preservation of life on earth.”⁴⁴ Sophie decided to attend the rally in Downtown Los Angeles with her friend and each woman brought a friend in turn. She was amazed to see women of all ages, colors and races, babies in buggies, and a line of chartered buses full of women going to the old State Building on Spring Street.⁴⁵ Dagmar Wilson said, “Let it not be said that we participated or approved or that we accepted nuclear warfare passively.”⁴⁶ These women were anything but passive.

The women devised picket signs to proclaim their protest and inspire participation. The most potent slogan conceived in Dagmar’s living room was “End the Arms Race – Not the Human Race.”⁴⁷ Signs of protest in New York City included, “Clean Milk and Dirty Bombs Don’t Mix,” “Save My Children,” and a collie wearing the sign, “Please no More

39. Swerdlow, *Women Strike*, 18.

40. Ibid.

41. Ibid., 1.

42. “National Affairs,” *Newsweek*, November 13, 1961, 23.

43. Sophie Wyatt, statement reprinted from the *Manchester (UK) Guardian*, April 12, 1962, *Herstory*.

44. Ibid.

45. Ibid.

46. Alvin Shuster, “The Peace Ladies,” *New York Times Magazine*, May 6, 1962, 64.

47. Swerdlow, *Women Strike*, 1.

Strontium-90.”⁴⁸ Posters in other cities proclaimed, “Peace is Patriotic,” and “Let Children Grow.”⁴⁹ The signage had the desired effect. Elizabeth Moos remarked, “Whenever I saw a crowd of women with signs saying ‘We don’t want any more poison in our babies’ milk,’ I would drop whatever I was doing and join them.”⁵⁰

The protesters sought to attract the attention of the media. The *New York Times* reported on the protests in the city and all over the country. The New York demonstrations focused their efforts in response to Soviet testing and U.S. proposals to renew tests of nuclear bombs and marched in front of the Soviet Mission to the United Nations. The women were equal opportunity strikers. In Washington D.C., the marchers brought letters to the Soviet Embassy for Mrs. Khrushchev and the White House for Jackie Kennedy asking the wives to intervene with their husbands on behalf mothers all around the world. Petitions of peace were delivered to the Soviet Embassy, the White House, and the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC).⁵¹

Women not only protested in metropolitan cities, but also in small towns. Both the *Sacramento Bee* and the *Sacramento Union* reported on the local protest that brought about sixty-five women with small children to the Capitol to meet with Governor Pat Brown to ask him to help stop nuclear war. These women sent telegrams to Mrs. Khrushchev and Mrs. Kennedy appealing to their motherhood. The *Sacramento Bee* quoted Mrs. Norma Clevenger as stating, “We are a group of women who believe our children and future generations have a right to grow-up without the fear that humanity will be destroyed.”⁵² The *Sacramento Union* printed a detailed account of the strike the next day which stated that “peace pleas” were delivered to Sacramento Mayor McKinney and Congressman Moss. It described the strikers as being “housewives, working mothers, widows and teachers.”⁵³ The paper gave an account of the numbers of women who protested in other cities: two thousand in Los Angeles, two hundred at the Civic Center

48. *New York Times*, November 2, 1961.

49. Alonso, 207.

50. U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Un-American Activities, *Communist Activities in the Peace Movement (Women Strike for Peace and Other Groups): Hearings* (hereafter HUAC), (87th Cong., 2nd sess., 11-13 December 1962, 2156.

51. *New York Times*, November 2, 1961.

52. *Sacramento Bee*, November 1, 1961; *Sacramento Union*, November 2, 1961.

53. *Sacramento Union*, November 2, 1961.

in San Francisco, three hundred at Berkeley's city hall, and sixty each in Ann Arbor and Detroit, MI.⁵⁴

What was envisioned as a one-day strike to call attention to the resumption of testing and the dangers of nuclear fallout morphed into a movement. The women were so energized by the participation, the media coverage, and the feeling of accomplishment that like-minded-women in large cities and small towns across the nation formed local networks as future protests were planned.⁵⁵ After the first strike in front of the United Nations, each of the two hundred women was encouraged to bring ten friends to the next demonstration, and the following week two thousand marched in protest.⁵⁶ A WSP letter stated: "We believe a lot of people across the country feel just as we do – but thinking they are alone, do not speak out. We believe it is the special responsibility of women – who bear the children and nurture the race – to demand for their families a better future than sudden death."⁵⁷

Women Strike for Peace kept up the pressure on the White House. On January 15, 1962, President Kennedy gave a news conference on "World and Domestic Affairs" during which two thousand women demonstrated in the pouring rain in front of the White House, the Soviet Embassy, and the AEC, on behalf of disarmament and peace. When a reporter asked what he thought of the protesters, Kennedy haltingly replied, "these women are extremely earnest . . . they are concerned . . . at the possibility of nuclear war. . . . I understood what they were attempting to say, therefore, I considered that their message was received."⁵⁸ Women took the "Peace Train" from New York, Philadelphia, and Trenton, NJ, to join the protest. One woman brought her three children aged four years, two years, and ten months. On that day WSP women marched in cities throughout the nation and were joined by women from forty countries around the world.⁵⁹ While some denounced the women for protesting White House policies, Dr. Carl Kaysen, the Deputy Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, stated that the President welcomed "concrete and responsible criti-

54. *Sacramento Union*.

55. Swerdlow, *Women Strike*, 15-16.

56. *New York Times*, April 19, 1962.

57. Mary Clarke, KPFK Commentary, May 1969, *Herstory*.

58. *New York Times*, January 16, 1962. Extraneous words have been omitted.

59. Ruth Gage-Colby.

cism and is anxious to know what people think.”⁶⁰ The women of WSP told anyone who would listen what they thought about nuclear war.

Women Strike for Peace emerged so quickly that many debated the background of the participants.⁶¹ WSP member and sociologist Elise Boulding conducted a study of the group with the Center for Research on Conflict Resolution in Ann Arbor, MI, in the summer of 1962.⁶² She wondered who participated in WSP and why they chose this moment in time to protest. She found that the women of WSP were an educated group with 65% holding a bachelor's degree or higher compared with only 6% in the general female population at that time. Seventy percent of the women had husbands with professional careers. Boulding learned that women were selective as to the WSP activities in which they participated which resulted in the unique nature of each WSP group and individual experience. The women were almost evenly divided between what they considered “very active” and “not active, or slightly active” participation. She was surprised to discover that the preferred method of participation in WSP was letter writing, not marching, since marching received the most attention. Almost three quarters of the women lived in cities or suburbs where it was relatively easy to gather for meetings or protest.⁶³

The common goal of nuclear disarmament brought together women of various family situations. Whereas a small percentage of WSP participants had never married, most of the women were housewives and mothers. Nearly half of the protesters had children under the age of eighteen and half of this group had children under age six. While the women who participated ranged in age from eighteen to over ninety, two thirds of the women were ages twenty-five to forty-four. Since a majority of these women did not work outside the home, they felt they had available time to devote to the peace movement. One factor that supported these women was that almost two thirds of them had husbands who equally participated in the peace movement. There were various reasons women gave for joining WSP, but the most common responses were to educate their community about

60. *New York Times*, January 16, 1962.

61. Swerdlow, *Women Strike*, 66.

62. “*Who are these Women? A Progress Report on a Study of Women Strike for Peace*,” March 5, 1963, 1-21, Box 4, Folder 6, Third Accession, Elise M. Boulding Collection, University Libraries, Archives, University of Colorado at Boulder.

63. Boulding.

nuclear fallout and to work for disarmament. Most of the respondents reported that it was the urgency of the world situation and the resumption of testing that prompted them to join WSP in the first place.⁶⁴

They chose Women Strike for Peace instead of more established peace organizations precisely because it was different. In the general sense, Glen Jeansonne in *Women of the Far Right* correctly summed up the feelings of many women: “As mothers, they believed they possessed assets that made them different from men – indeed, far superior to men.”⁶⁵ Amy Swerdlow felt that women of WSP “shared a conviction that the men in the peace movement and government had failed them.”⁶⁶ Ordinary housewives and mothers felt the need to take action because men of the Left and the Right could not be counted upon to avert a nuclear disaster.⁶⁷ Historian Robbie Lieberman asserted that “women who found offensive SANE’s exclusionary politics and its lack of interest in women’s issues – such as milk that was contaminated due to nuclear fallout – or who found the WILPF too intimidating, bureaucratic and cautious, flocked to WSP.”⁶⁸ WSPers (as they called themselves) rejected the WILPF’s approach to educate and legislate, and SANE’s male dominated hierarchy, in favor of WSP’s “direct action tactics.”⁶⁹

One of the reasons women left both the WILPF and SANE was because of the issue of Communist infiltration. With the rise of McCarthyism, concerns about Communist participation in the WILPF came from within as branches requested that policies by the leadership to exclude Communists be established. When the national board, which rejected exclusionary policies, did not issue a Communist policy, many branches

64. Boulding.

65. Jeansonne, 6.

66. Lawrence S. Wittner, *Resisting the Bomb: A History of the World Nuclear Disarmament Movement, 1954-1970* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997), 21.

67. Amy Swerdlow, “Pure Milk, Not Poison: Women Strike for Peace,” in *Rocking the Ship of State: Toward a Feminist Peace Politics*, ed. Adrienne Harris and Ynestra King (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1989), 228.

68. Robbie Lieberman, *The Strangest Dream: Communism, Anticommunism, and the U.S. Peace Movement, 1945-1963* (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 2000), 165.

69. Amy Schneidhorst, “Little Old Ladies and Dangerous Women: Women’s Peace and Social Justice Activism in Chicago, 1960-1975,” *Peace & Change* 26, no. 3 (July 2001): <http://proxy.lib.csus.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=mth&AN=4687427&site=ehost.live> (accessed October 25, 2009), 376.

could not withstand Communist suspicions and folded.⁷⁰ SANE handled the threat of communism in a completely different way, but no more successfully. Its leadership was strongly anti-Communist and issued formal policies that stated that Communists would not be tolerated. When Senator Thomas Dodd, of the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee, held hearings on Communism in the nuclear test ban movement, SANE leader Norman Cousins initiated his own internal investigations. Cousins suspended Henry Abrams, co-chairman of a New York chapter of SANE, when he refused on principle to state that he “was not a Communist.”⁷¹ This caused a rift in the organization and many members left the movement or formed new groups.⁷²

It was because of the hierarchical nature of SANE and the WILPF that Women Strike for Peace was formed as a movement and not an organization. A call-to-action by organizers in September of 1961 stated: “We don’t want chairmen, committees, long serious meetings. We just want to speak loudly, to tell our elected representatives, that they are not properly representing **US** by continuing the arms race and increasing the threat of total destruction.”⁷³ Dagmar Wilson described their methods as effective despite being unconventional by design. From the beginning, WSP decided not to let the insidious nature of “the communist question” infiltrate the movement.⁷⁴ At their first conference, WSP leaders issued a statement: “We do not question one another about our religious beliefs or other matters of conscience. If people with political differences cannot learn to live together, how can nations?”⁷⁵

Women were attracted to WSP because of this fluid style of membership that included any and all who would work for peace. WSP was intentionally formed to be non-hierarchical, with no formal membership, and with all decisions agreed to by the whole. Issues were discussed and hotly debated, sometimes ad nauseam, and always until a consensus was reached.⁷⁶ Jean Bagby wrote, “It seemed to us that other organizations

70. Lieberman, 122-133.

71. *Ibid.*, 147.

72. *Ibid.*, 136-154.

73. Swerdlow, “Milk,” 228.

74. Wilson, “Irrepressible Women,” 283.

75. Clarke, *Herstory*.

76. New York Women Strike for Peace Newsletter, Summer 1962, *Herstory*.

invariably suffered from hierarchical, formalist impediments we so briskly ignored. Our naïve, disorganized methods seemed to annoy men of all ages.”⁷⁷ This “un-organization” allowed for spontaneity.

WSP was ready to act at a moment’s notice. One phone call could mobilize women nationwide in the following actions: write Congress; picket the White House, UN, or stores selling war toys; set up peace petition tables; or distribute leaflets to raise awareness of the dangers of fallout in milk.⁷⁸ Mary Clarke noted that “WSP’s flexibility has been its strength.”⁷⁹ Each local group was free to decide how it would protest and each woman was free to decide if she would participate. All over the country WSP “managed to establish a loosely structured communications network capable of swift and effective direct action on a national or international scale.”⁸⁰ Clarke commented that “local groups were autonomous with some ‘even rebellious’ at the thought of receiving plans of action from national leaders. Our credo is let us communicate, and even cooperate, but let us never ‘corporate.’”⁸¹

Local groups took on different names to reflect their regional differences. Women Strike for Peace (WSP) was the original name which many kept the entire time they were active. Some groups formed Women’s International Strike for Peace (WISP) when they joined forces with peace groups in the Soviet Bloc and Europe to lobby the United Nations and world powers for nuclear disarmament.⁸² The Los Angeles WISP chapter chose *La Wisp* as the title of its newsletter. In the Bay Area, San Francisco stayed WSP, but the East Bay and Sacramento groups chose to be Women for Peace (WFP), as did Chicago and many other Midwest groups.⁸³ Some believed that “strike” did not adequately describe their mission; thus Seattle women allied under the unique moniker of Seattle Women Act for Peace

77. Swerdlow, “Milk,” 232.

78. Shuster, 46.

79. Clarke, *Herstory*.

80. Amy Swerdlow, “Motherhood and the Subversion of the Military State: Women Strike for Peace Confronts the House Committee on Un-American Activities,” in *Women, Militarism, and War: Essays in History, Politics, and Social Theory*, ed. Jean Bethke Elshtain and Shelia Tobias, (Savage, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 1990), 10.

81. Clarke, *Herstory*.

82. Swerdlow, *Women Strike*, 192-193.

83. Berkeley Women for Peace Newsletter, February 1963, *Herstory*; Schneidhorst, 378.

(SWAP).⁸⁴

Women Strike for Peace had no formal members and collected no dues. It used “housewifely techniques”⁸⁵ like bake sales, rummage sales, and picnics to raise funds that were used to pay for mailings, leaflets, or advertisements in newspapers or on buses.⁸⁶ Ethel Taylor, of Philadelphia WSP, recalled that at meetings at her home she put out a sugar bowl for donations. Some women contributed birthday money, leftover grocery money, “beauty parlor allowances,” and one woman “sold her blood to the Red Cross” because she didn’t have extra cash to donate.⁸⁷ A chapter in Berkeley voted to send twenty-five dollars it had collected to the national office which was short on rent money.⁸⁸ The Los Angeles chapter produced a cookbook they named, “Peace de Resistance,” because they needed to raise money for stamps, printed material, and ad space.⁸⁹

Women Strike for Peace had an unorthodox system for communication and outreach. Rather than have a formal publication, WSP printed the “National Information Memo,” a “clearinghouse for ideas for future action which are sent in by any subscriber,” whenever enough material accumulated.⁹⁰ The Washington, D.C. branch of WISP issued a “United Nations Newsletter” and the New York branch mimeographed the “WSP Bulletin” of recent peace activities submitted by local groups. These national newsletters were distributed to one member of each local group who saw that the information was disbursed to the whole. Some local chapters focused on disarmament, some protested nuclear fallout, and some endorsed political candidates.⁹¹ The Disarmament Committee of the Washington, D.C. Women Strike for Peace published a ninety-six page booklet *The Story of*

84. Swerdlow, *Women Strike*, 74.

85. Swerdlow, “Milk,” 231.

86. Berkeley Women for Peace Newsletters, 1962 - 1964, *Herstory*.

87. Ethel Barol Taylor, *We Made a Difference: My Personal Journey with Women Strike for Peace* (Philadelphia: Camino Books, 1998), 1.

88. Berkeley Women for Peace, Minutes of the Coordinating Committee, February 4, 1964, *Herstory*.

89. Reprint of an article in the *Seattle Times*, 18 September 1966, *Herstory*.

90. New York Women Strike for Peace Newsletter, Summer 1962, *Herstory*.

91. Schneidhorst, 377.

Disarmament 1945-1963.⁹² Women in other groups became experts about the dangers of radio isotopes and many knew more than “men in Congress and even in the Atomic Energy Commission.”⁹³ Local groups shared information and activity updates with one another to inspire and encourage one another.

Mothers of WSP rallied around issues of most importance to them. Amy Swerdlow recalled that “WSPers viewed motherhood as more than a responsibility to the private family. They saw it as a service to the world community and to social progress.”⁹⁴ A major issue of concern for mothers was the radioactive fallout from the testing that was poisoning milk. Mothers had their children’s baby teeth tested for strontium-90 and sent the results along with the teeth to their Senators to raise awareness.⁹⁵ The prevalence of these substances led some mothers to switch to dry milk which had been collected in non-fallout areas, during times of no testing, or to ban milk drinking completely. This prompted the U.S. Public Health Service to issue a warning not to stop serving milk to children in light of nuclear test resumption.⁹⁶

Other issues of importance to mothers included fallout shelters and toys. On February 1, 1962, WSP encouraged members to participate in “Operation Mailback” which requested that members mail back to Washington, D.C. the government booklet “Fall-out Protection.”⁹⁷ As Ethel Taylor described it, “WSP felt that the whole shelter idea was ridiculous, and we set out to inform the American people.”⁹⁸ Her Philadelphia group went as far as to rent a fallout shelter, haul it to a shopping mall, convert it into a “Peace Shelter,” and pass out peace literature.⁹⁹ Mothers were also concerned with war toys. Minutes from a Berkeley WFP meeting noted that the Toy Committee decided not to march against war toys, but opted in-

92. Disarmament Committee of Washington D.C. Women Strike for Peace, *The Story of Disarmament 1945-1969* (Washington D.C.: Women Strike for Peace), 1963.

93. Swerdlow, “Milk,” 231.

94. *Ibid.*, 229.

95. Alonso, 207

96. Swerdlow, *Women Strike*, 84.

97. *New York Times*, January 8, 1962.

98. Taylor, 11.

99. *Ibid.*, 12.

stead to pass out leaflets to Christmas shoppers.¹⁰⁰ A New York WSP newsletter congratulated a letter-writing campaign that succeeded in the discontinuation of the Amaco Toy Manufacturing Company's Combat Medical Kit with adhesive "battle wounds."¹⁰¹ Women Strike for Peace printed the alarming "Disarmament Coloring Book."¹⁰² Rather than a warm and fuzzy publication, pictures included generals and tanks. One page depicted a mushroom cloud from a nuclear test that read, "But if we don't ever stop the Arms Race, the final explosion is inevitable. Color it a fiery red."¹⁰³ Amy Swerdlow made the observation that WSP helped "change the image of the good mother from passive to militant, from silent to eloquent, from private to public."¹⁰⁴

In the summer of 1962, WSP Ann Arbor, MI, invited all WSPers to meet one another. It was at this meeting that a National Policy Statement was adopted. The New York area newsletter stated, "Long and earnest discussion resulted in unanimous approval of the following statement of policy for use and adaptation as local groups see fit."¹⁰⁵ Fitting with the movement's non-organizational philosophy, this statement was merely offered to the local groups to tailor to their group without expectation that it would be adopted word for word. The statement read: "WSP represents a resolute stand of women in the United States against the unprecedented threat to life from the nuclear holocaust. We are women of all races, creeds, and political persuasions who are dedicated to the achievement of general and complete disarmament under effective international control."¹⁰⁶ It went on to proclaim the right to democratic protest, to demand nuclear disarmament and the end to nuclear testing, to urge planning for a peacetime economy, and to pledge to work with women around the world for peace.¹⁰⁷ The sentiment in this statement would prove to be instrumental in

100. Berkeley Women for Peace, Minutes of the Coordinating Committee, December 4, 1963, *Herstory*.

101. New York Women Strike for Peace Newsletter, October 1964, *Herstory*.

102. *The Disarmament Coloring Book*, 3rd ed. (Washington, D.C.: Women Strike for Peace, 1996).

103. *Coloring Book*, 8.

104. Swerdlow, "Milk," 234.

105. New York Women Strike for Peace Newsletter, Summer 1962, *Herstory*.

106. NY WSP.

107. *Ibid.*

successfully navigating future threats to the movement.

In November 1962, members of Women Strike for Peace were subpoenaed to appear before The House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) from December 11-13 of that year. The women believed this was an attempt to intimidate the movement, and after seeing what had happened to other peace groups, chose to go on the offensive. The decision was “made by the New York and Washington women not ‘to cower’ before the committee, to conduct no purges, and to acknowledge each woman’s right to work for peace.”¹⁰⁸ They sent out telegrams throughout the country asking women to volunteer to appear before the committee. The reasoning was that fourteen women were not a representative sample if the committee truly wanted to understand WSP. Over one hundred women expressed their desire to be called as witnesses, but none were invited.¹⁰⁹ Oddly, some of the women asked to testify were not WSP members. The decision was made to treat them equally, and to offer support and legal assistance to all the women subpoenaed “regardless of their past or present affiliation.”¹¹⁰ Women Strike for Peace issued a preemptive statement to the press: “With the fate of all humanity resting on a push button, the request for peace has become the highest form of patriotism. We do not ask an oath of loyalty to any set of beliefs. Instead we ask loyalty to the race of man.”¹¹¹

The hearings were called “Communist Activities in the Peace Movement (Women Strike for Peace and Certain Other Groups).”¹¹² Clyde Doyle (Democrat) of California, Sub-committee Chairman, in his opening statement expressed that while many countries and individuals “cry for peace – they foment war and unrest.”¹¹³ The Chairman claimed that peace talk served Communism because it was really just another way to “destroy capitalism” and “prevents adequate defense preparation.”¹¹⁴ Women Strike for Peace was under investigation to determine the extent to which Com-

108. Swerdlow, *Women Strike*, 98.

109. Wilson, “Irrepressible Women,” 281.

110. Swerdlow, “Motherhood”, 13.

111. Berkeley Women for Peace, Letter, December 4, 1962, *Herstory*.

112. HUAC, 2063.

113. HUAC, 2064.

114. HUAC, 2065.

munists had infiltrated the group.¹¹⁵

Thirteen women testified over three days employing unconventional tactics on the witness stand and in the gallery. Compatible with the traditional roles of most WSP members, all but three responded to the question about occupation as “housewife or mother.”¹¹⁶ Blanche Posner of New York WSP was the first to testify. Committee Counsel Alfred Nittle tried to get Mrs. Posner to state her position with WSP through a series of exhibits on committee structure. She declined to answer those questions, but went on to make a speech, frequently interrupted by Chairman Doyle and Counsel Nittle, representative of WSP beliefs:

I don't know, sir, why I am here, but I do know why you are here. I think because you don't quite understand the nature of this movement. This movement was inspired and motivated by mothers' love for their children. When they were putting their breakfast on the table, they saw not only wheaties and milk, but they also saw strontium-90 and iodine-131. They feared for the health and life of their children. That is the only motivation. If you gentlemen have children or grandchildren, you should be grateful to Women Strike for Peace or whatever peace movement is working to stop nuclear testing. Every nuclear test has resulted in malformation, has resulted in still births, has resulted in leukemia, has resulted in cancer, has resulted in the possibility of nuclear holocaust.¹¹⁷

The rest of the questioning about her participation in WSP resulted in Mrs. Posner politely and repeatedly invoking her Fifth Amendment rights. Bored with the committee harping on the subject of her participation, Posner dug in her purse for a cigarette and asked for a question to be repeated because she “was busy hunting for a match.”¹¹⁸ Blanche Posner was not about to be bullied or intimidated by the committee.

The other women called upon to testify had similar questions and responses. The committee time and again asked the women about “the

115. HUAC, 2066.

116. HUAC 2073-2201.

117. HUAC, 2074. Multiple interruptions by Doyle and Nittle have been edited out of Mrs. Posner's speech.

118. HUAC, 2083.

organization” of WSP. To this line of questioning the women had comparable answers. Ruth Meyers stated, “Women Strike for Peace has no membership.”¹¹⁹ “I just repeat again that Women Strike for Peace is not a membership organization, so we don’t have members. We have a communication system,” confirmed Lyla Hoffman.¹²⁰ Miriam Chesman explained, “You know, I think one of the difficulties here is that it is hard for men to understand that women can work in a very vague and nebulous way, and I think I am very sympathetic to you in that.”¹²¹ The witnesses would not, no matter how many times they were asked, discuss other WSP members nor would they talk about past affiliations. They considered this line of questioning irrelevant and invoked their Fifth Amendment right each and every time.¹²²

By the time Dagmar Wilson was called to testify on the third day, the hostility of the committee had been eroded by the stalwart witnesses, the gallery of supporters, and the favorable press which resulted in a line of questioning that took on a decidedly friendlier tone. They shifted the focus from Communist infiltration to one of understanding the workings of Women Strike for Peace. When asked if she was “the leader” of WSP, Wilson answered that it was merely an honorary title with no real function.¹²³ When asked about who “controlled” the movement, she answered, “Well, nobody is controlled by anybody in Women Strike for Peace. We do have, however, communication with each other constantly, and I can explain how we do that later if you would like me to.”¹²⁴ When Counsel Nittle tried to confirm that “the New York group played a dominant role in WSP activities,” Wilson replied, “Heavens, I think the women in other cities would be mortified if I said that.”¹²⁵ Wilson would not state that there were any leaders in the group. Nittle asked Wilson if she had ever “exercised direction or control?” “Never any direction or control, only suggestions,” was

119. HUAC, 2095.

120. HUAC, 2106.

121. HUAC, 2169.

122. HUAC, 2072 – 2200.

123. HUAC, 2188.

124. HUAC, 2188.

125. HUAC, 2191.

her reply.¹²⁶

At the end of the questioning, Counsel Nittle asked Wilson about Communists in the group. Her reply was quoted more often in newspapers than any other portion of the hearing testimony: “Well, my dear sir, I have absolutely no way of controlling, do not desire to control, who wishes to join the demonstration and the efforts that the women strikers have made for peace. In fact, I would also like to go even further. I would like to say that unless everybody in the world joins us in this fight, then God help us.”¹²⁷ Nittle asked Dagmar if this included Nazis and Fascists. The hearing transcript records her answer as, “Whether we could get them or not, I don’t think we could.”¹²⁸ The transcript included a footnote that newspapers, committee members and staff recalled the answer as, “If only we could get them on our side.”¹²⁹ Dagmar Wilson was thanked for her helpful testimony and promptly dismissed.

The hearing transcripts recounted the testimony of the witnesses, but not the tenor of the courtroom or the response to the proceedings. Amy Swerdlow stated that at the HUAC hearings, the women “stressed their role as mothers because it was that role that was being threatened both by the government’s atomic policies and by HUAC.”¹³⁰ Women Strike for Peace invited women to Washington by telegram: “Come if you can. Hospitality provided. Bring your babies if necessary.”¹³¹ Estimates varied, but somewhere between three hundred and five hundred women with their children crowded into the gallery until it was overflowing. Dagmar recounted, “It was more like an enlarged PTA meeting than a congressional hearing.”¹³² *Newsweek* noted, “For the women – some of them impeccably tailored, some of them old ladies wearing long wool socks to fend off the winter chill, some with babes in arms who punctuated the proceedings with crying fits – were formidable adversaries.”¹³³ The women presented a unified front

126. HUAC, 2197.

127. HUAC, 2200.

128. HUAC, 2200.

129. HUAC, 2200.

130. Swerdlow, “Motherhood,” 23.

131. Wilson, “Irrepressible Women,” 281.

132. *Ibid.*

133. “National Affairs,” *Newsweek*, December 24, 1962, 12.

at the hearings.

The women decided ahead of time that whenever one of them was called to testify, the whole room would stand with her.¹³⁴ HUAC Chairman Doyle promptly outlawed standing. Spontaneously, they applauded the next witness, and Doyle outlawed applause. The next day, they greeted each witness with a bouquet of flowers and kisses.¹³⁵ The *Vancouver (B.C.) Sun* recounted that by “the third day the crowd was giving standing ovations to its heroines with impunity.”¹³⁶ In general, the movement received favorable media coverage. Newspapers around the country displayed supportive headlines. The *Vancouver (B.C.) Sun* stated, “It’s not Un-American to Giggle.” “It’s Ladies Day at the Capitol: Hoots, Howls – and Charm,” trumpeted the *Chicago Daily News*. The *Pennsylvania Guardian* reported that “Peace Women Baffle HUAC’s Masculine Minds,” and the *Toledo (Ohio) Blade* queried, “Un-American Motherhood?”¹³⁷ In response to Daggmar’s testimony, the *Washington (D.C.) Evening Star* remarked that no man would ever admit that they were “not a leader of anything” or didn’t know exactly how things worked in an organization.¹³⁸ Amy Swerdlow observed that WSP’s performance at the hearings “was so original, so winning, and so unexpectedly ‘feminine’ that it succeeded in captivating the media.”¹³⁹ *New York Times* columnist Russell Baker commented that the women of WSP were so enthusiastic that American housewives were a force for peace with which politicians would have to reckon.¹⁴⁰ Contrary to the outcome of other HUAC investigations, WSP emerged from the hearings stronger and more unified than ever before.

After the hearings, Women Strike for Peace took on the monumental effort of working for a Test Ban Treaty signed by the United States and the Soviet Union. There had been disarmament talks in Geneva, Switzerland for years, and many countries had come to partial agreement, but the super-powers could not find consensus. After the Cuban Missile Crisis, the

134. Amy Swerdlow, KPFK Commentary, May 1969, *Herstory*.

135. Wilson, “Irrepressible Women,” 282.

136. Women Strike for Peace National Information Clearing Office, Washington D.C., January 1963, *Herstory*.

137. WSP, WDC.

138. *Ibid.*

139. Swerdlow, “Motherhood,” 15.

140. Women Strike for Peace National Information Clearing Office, *Herstory*.

clamor from the populace of both countries was for disarmament.¹⁴¹ WSP, along with other groups including the WILPF and SANE, put pressure on the White House, worked with the United Nations, and lobbied Congress for nuclear disarmament throughout 1963. On August 5, 1963, Great Britain, the United States, and the Soviet Union signed the Limited Test Ban Treaty. It gained Senate approval in September and went into effect on October 10, 1963. The treaty banned the testing of nuclear weapons in the atmosphere, in space, and under water.¹⁴² It did not ban underground testing. WSP called the treaty the “first step to disarmament.”¹⁴³

Supporters said that legislators signed the treaty because the “fall-out from mothers” might have been worse than the fallout from radiation.¹⁴⁴ Senator Maurine Neuberger of Oregon commented that the “mother’s vote” was not sentimental: “It is a vote that flows from rational concern of any mother for the welfare of her children, and her natural and acute sensitivity to the survival of future generations in recognizable form.”¹⁴⁵ Women were instrumental in raising awareness and getting the treaty signed. The magazine *Science* reported that Jerome Wiesner, who was President Kennedy’s Science Advisor, “gave the major credit” to the passage of the treaty to “Women Strike for Peace and to SANE and Linus Pauling.”¹⁴⁶ In a speech made while Congress debated the treaty, John F. Kennedy stated that the United States and Russia must “concentrate less on our differences and more on the means of resolving them peacefully.”¹⁴⁷ Peace was on the horizon at long last.

The achievement of the test ban treaty was not the end of WSP which put out a call that women could not “retire to our kitchens and job. We ‘need a peace sentiment.”¹⁴⁸ On the same day that the Senate passed

141. Taylor, 15-17.

142. Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, July 26, 1963; Treaties and Other International Agreements Series #5433; General Records of the U.S. Government; Record Group 11; National Archives. [http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php? flash=old&doc=95](http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=old&doc=95) (accessed November 15, 2009).

143. Berkeley Women for Peace Newsletter, October 1963, *Herstory*.

144. Taylor, xi.

145. New York Women Strike for Peace Newsletter, October 1963, *Herstory*.

146. Swerdlow, “Motherhood,” 11.

147. *New York Times*, November 21, 1963.

148. New York Women Strike for Peace Newsletter, October 1963, *Herstory*.

the Limited Test Ban Treaty, the Senate approved a 47.3 billion Arms Budget and the House approved 175 million for a Fallout Shelter Program.¹⁴⁹ WSP now concentrated its forces to fight the shelter program and underground testing, which leaked toxins into ground water and surrounding areas. In 1964, it began a decade-long protest of U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War with a banner hundreds of feet long, made from dish towels, hung from the fence in front of the White House that read: “Mr. President—make 1964 the year the world turns away from war.”¹⁵⁰

WSP continued in the 1970s and 1980s to champion nuclear disarmament, but also fought against the Star Wars program and clamored for the cleanup of toxic waste sites. At its height, the participants in Women Strike for Peace numbered in the hundreds of thousands, perhaps as high as half a million.¹⁵¹ The lack of organization of the movement prevented an accurate count from ever being conducted. Ethel Taylor, a founding WSP member in Philadelphia recalled, “Our hopes that our daughters would follow in our footsteps did not materialize.”¹⁵² Over the years, women joined women’s rights organizations instead of peace groups and many more entered the work force, which resulted in fewer women available or willing to work for peace.¹⁵³ WSP continued the fight, in some form, until the early 1990s when the last of the surviving branches of Women Strike for Peace folded and turned the bulk of their papers over to the archives of the Swarthmore College Peace Collection.¹⁵⁴

Women Strike for Peace responded to the mounting fear that was posed by radiation fallout and nuclear annihilation. Mothers were afraid for their families, their neighborhoods, and the world by what they read in the papers and magazines, and saw on television. These women did the one thing they knew how to do, act to protect their families. Cultural anthropologist Margaret Mead wrote an article praising the peacekeepers and equating peacekeeping to housekeeping: “Men speak of ‘making peace’ or ‘waging peace.’ It fits the masculine idea of winning something. Peacekeeping demands the patience, the fortitude and the endless, unremitting efforts

149. NY WSP.

150. New York Women Strike for Peace Newsletter, March 1964, *Herstory*.

151. Joseph Roddy, “The Big March for Peace,” *Look*, July 17, 1962, 15.

152. Taylor, 153.

153. *Ibid.*

154. Swerdlow, *Women Strike*, 283.

that are so much more characteristic of a woman's than a man's role in society."¹⁵⁵ The women of WSP did not forsake their traditional roles in their fight for peace; they used these roles to create a movement that was a uniquely feminine force for change. Some victories were small: a housewife and mother realizing she had something to contribute to society. Some vic-

“The women of WSP did not forsake their traditional roles in their fight for peace; they used these roles to create a movement that was a uniquely feminine force for change. ”

tories were monumental: the Limited Test Ban Treaty of 1963. Each victory was won by individual women, joining together by the thousands, to speak with one mind, to save their children, their homes, and ultimately the human race.

155. Margaret Mead, "Peacekeeping: What Every Woman Knows," *Redbook*, October 1962, 31.