

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW SUMMARY: Margaret Turner, WILPF

The following summary gives an account of the Oral History offered by Margaret Turner. The following keywords indicate the type of narrative content.

"Comment:" monologue conveying personal opinion.

"Describe:" monologue describing events.

"Mention:" Key names or places given.

Part 1

Margaret Mary Turner. DOB: 12 June 1928 Place of birth: Bolton, Lancashire. [00:00:52] Description of involvement with WILPF, namely reading emails and joining two main actions in last 12 months. First action: Manifesto for 100th anniversary. [00:01:41] Describes the manifesto as an amalgamation of the ideas of many members. [00:01:49]. Mentions Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), discussed in parliament 15/01/2015. [00:02:20] Comments on how it will affect people's lives in future. Describes engagement with WILPF via email; no longer travels to meetings. [00:02:34] Mentions a concern for economic justice that that brought her to WILPF. [00:02:49] Describes her personal situation at the time when she came to be involved with WILPF. Namely, living in Orpington with elderly parents, having a new job. [00:02:58] Describes her first few years' inactive involvement with WILPF c.1979/80. She heard about WILPF through an encounter at a United Nations association garden party [00:03:20] Comments that the initial local meetings attended didn't impress her much. Mentions Nelly Weiss [00:03:57] Describes early meetings: "general discussion of mildly relevant overseas matters." [00:04:09] Describes how she became representative on international committee. Describes: Meets others campaigning for Women's issues, human rights, militarism [00:04:40] Comments: lack of discussion of issues

of economic justice. [00:04:45] Describes: attending overnight conferences & seminars. Comments: encounters impressive women. [00:05:03] Comments: disappointment about lack of interest in Margaret Turner area of interest. [00:05:15] Describes: Suggests involvement with Jubilee 2000 campaign. Mentions: Margot Miller. International Executive Committee meeting IEC held in UK 1997. Mentions: secretary general, Barbara Lochbeiler. [00:05:57] Describes: Permission to get involved with Jubilee debt campaign. Comments: Margaret Turner's main action within the UK. [00:06:18] Describes: Needed a president. [00:06:28] Comments: Decide to discuss British Exec before 1997 [00:06:40] Describes: Late 1980s Margaret Turner on executive committee. Mentions: Young women names firstly Edwina Hughes, New Zealand, who managed office. [00:07:15] Mentions: Successor in this role: Helen Harris [00:07:31] Comments: Weren't enough people going to exec from around country [00:07:53] Describes: regular weekend meetings in Brighton, Aldermaston etc. [00:07:57] Comments: Initial unease followed by eventual peace with notion of planning meetings outside of the exec. [00:08:11] Describes: treasurer dwindling finances. Comments: perception of roles and hierarchy, where Exec functioned as decision-makers [00:08:42] Describes: office move to Worthing in house of a member [00:09:09] Mentions: Helen Harris role as main activist in that area [presumably referring to Worthing]. [00:09:15] Describes: successful relationship with administrators and monthly structure of subscription collection [00:09:44] Describes: 1992 travel to international conference as a retired person at own expense. [00:10:01] Comments: meeting WILPF international community was revelatory. [00:10:19] Mentions: Deidre Leask, international representative at that time [00:10:26] Comments: Margaret Turner impressed by DL. [00:10:32] Describes: travel in Bolivia with DL. [00:10:40] Describes: Congress theme: indigenous Bolivian women, non-members of WILPF. Describes: first-hand exploration of labour conditions of wives of Bolivian

miners. Comments: this experience deepened Margaret Turner commitment to WILPF. [00:11:23] Describes: retired 1988 became treasurer. Describes 3 year rotation of roles within the WILPF executive [00:12:19] 1995 next congress Margaret Turner travels at own expense. Mentions: International representative: Helen Harris. [00:12:29] Describes: Helen Harris unemployed graduate working to WILPF. Describes: Helen Harris van trip to Eastern Europe. Travelled on "Peace Train" at her own expense with a loan from her parents. Not funded by WILPF, even though she was international rep. [00:13:16] Describes: Peace Train: Helsinki to Beijing for womens' conference. Publicity drive to send two young women on Peace Train. Mentions: Josephine Ocloo worked on anti racist issues [00:13:56] Mentions: Thalia Campbell creator of banners, one made for Peace Train. Describes: Thalia Campbell becomes WILPF international representative at a later date. [00:14:31] Describes: 1997 International Exec committee; action of Margot Miller giving up Presidency [00:15:01] Comments: Reluctance of members to be President. Mentions: Hazel Rennie takes up role [00:15:14] Describes: decision to take over as treasurer based upon Helen Harris' pre-occupation with "other things". [00:15:25] Describes: financial problems of administering WILPF. [00:15:42] Describes: authorisation by exec to close office in Bristol. [00:15:52] Comments: sadness at closure of office. Mentions: refers listener to minutes of WILPF meetings to corroborate narrative with precise dates. [00:16:14] Comments: structuring narrative to include both international and national events. Mentions: Conference in Baltimore, USA in 1998. [00:16:33] Comments: Margaret Turner travels at own expense. [00:16:39] Describes: organisation procedure: WILPF paid only for international representative to attend event. [00:16:49] Mentions: Betty Kaplanis, Liverpool, assistant book-keeper to Margaret Turner. [00:17:09] Baltimore theme: debt. Describes: pleasure to be involved with a theme of particular concern to Margaret Turner. [00:17:22] Describes: demonstrations

around IMF & world bank in Washington [00:17:37] Describes: inspirational nature of trip [00:17:45] Describes: difficulty of finding President. Comments: initial feelings of inhibition because of lack of specific knowledge about political issues e.g. militarism and human rights. [00:18:28] Describes: broader organisation role of President and practicality of providing a postal address (geographical location) for the organisation; and decision to take on role of President under condition that Margaret Turner relieved of role as Treasurer [00:18:55] Mentions: typical time of year of exec meetings; March/April. [00:19:05] Describes: Period with no president, secretary, no office worker when office in Bristol closed. [00:19:41] Mentions: Ruth Osborn, volunteer administrator. Describes: technological extent of equipment in the WILPF office at that time; a photocopier. [00:20:11] Mentions: Rosalie Huzzard, Secretary, who lived in Orpington. Describes: one-to-one process of training within the organisation; Osborne passes skills to Huzzard. [00:20:45] Sept 1998 Comments: Joan Eggmore, who worked with mothers for peace. Describes: Joan becomes treasurer, Margaret Turner becomes president. [00:21:07] Problems in first few months in this role gives as example, racist remarks at international executive meeting. [00:22:00] Describes: Margaret Turner called to exercise mediation with member who had made racist comments. [00:22:12] Comments: this point perceived as a period of downturn for the organisation and a need for revival. [00:22:40] Comments: concern about role as chairwoman mediating across members of group. Comments: evaluation that she handled the situation badly. [00:23:19] Describes: rift within membership continued throughout presidency. Members outspoken about controversial issues: lesbianism, the Jewish community. Describes: matter resolved ultimately with apology from outspoken WILPF member. [00:24:25] Peace made privately not publicly [00:24:41] Describes: another problem during Margaret Turner presidency: grant for project to do with militarism carried over from previous president. Office back-up

required in order to accept grant, but difficult for WILPF to provide. Project to be carried out at a University in Leeds (possibly Leeds Metropolitan) carried out by Cat Euler. [00:26:54] Office work carried out by Leeds University rather than by WILPF office, which remained closed. Comments: considerable stress in managing the resolution of situation involving grant application. [00:27:32] Margaret Turner encouraged at Baltimore International congress, to continue to campaign on area of interest: debt. Comments: dialogue with UK Government office of trade and UK trade body concerned with development, that brought together key campaign groups and charities e.g. Oxfam, World Development Movement, Christian Aid, War on want. Comments: "gatecrashed" meeting between these parties. [00:29:16] Regular attendance at meetings. Comments: ignorance on specifics of trade issues, but recognised importance of the meetings. Comments: Jubilee Debt Campaign (concluded 2000) met with the Government occasionally. Was accepted as the "women's voice" representing "grassroots" women. [00:30:50] Comments: attendance with Rosalie Huzzard at trade justice meeting. Action on behalf of WILPF to question the founding document of the organisation, on grounds that concern of women were not represented in the document. Campaigned successfully on behalf of WILPF for an annex involving women in the trade justice movement. [00:32:22] Describes: detail annex trade effects women differently. All women to be consulted and represented. [00:32:52] Describes: attendance at UK government consultative women's group including Margaret Turner (only non-academic), experts in humans rights, women's issues, academics, development programmes throughout the world. Comments: Chairwoman not knowlegable either, but a good chairperson. Wrote a paper covering issues surrounding globalisation. Describes: process of government formalisation of the paper, including misrepresentation of original meaning in Government's formal draft of paper. Margaret Turner intervenes in order to edit and correct the meaning. [00:34:49] re-

iterates civil service incursion in process of representation and documentation, followed by disbandment of consultative body. [00:35:30] Comments: suggests the consultative group may have been assembled by Government through confirmation bias and possibly intended as a "yes" group to give currency to pre-existing governmental opinion. [00:35:45] Describes: Action as co-convener of group within WILPF (international rather than UK section) concerned with capitalist globalisation Comments: upon perception of her own "ignorance", but a conviction that she could represent the views of foreign women in English. Describes role as representative in contrast to originator of ideas and opinions. Comments: worked with Filipina Rosario Padilla "Cherry" (international vice president), who Margaret Turner Comments: as "very capable". Wrote a paper [00:37:13] Describes: Information gathering exercise, to present voices of other women regarding globalisation and economic justice. [00:37:25] Describes: becoming key, sole convener in the absence of "Cherry" who Margaret Turner describes as preoccupied with other political actions. [00:37:58] Comments: papers written by globalisation group were repetitious in content. Describes: Margaret Turner self-nominated to act as self-funded delegate for WILPF at World Trade Organisation meetings. As part of this activity, Margaret Turner attended a meeting in Cancun under auspices of Women's International Coalition for Economic Justice WICEJ (not enough members of WILPF in attendance to form a delegation). [00:39:04] Comments: Josephine Camel from Egypt. Describes: practical aspect of attendance: one pass to enter WTO shared between three delegates. Meetings outside of WTO were open to all, Margaret Turner attended different group meetings for a few days. [00:40:03] Comments: Doha Agenda. Explains agenda as a precursor of TTIP. Comments: coercion of poorer countries to sign the agenda, citing threat of developmental disadvantage as natural consequence of non-compliance. [00:40:59] Comments: excitement of tensions surrounding Doha agenda, and its rejection by poorer

countries. [00:42:41] Describes: Margaret Turner attended consequent meeting of a group of people representing the third world. Comments: continued excitement about non-compliance of poorer countries with DOHA agenda. [00:43:09] Describes: Margaret Turner reported back to WILPF about these meetings that were of personal interest. Comments: primary concerns for WILPF are human rights and militarism. [00:43:30] Describes: Margaret Turner wrote to UK government re: trade & debt issues. Also concerned about racism. [00:43:58] International WILPF in Geneva requested members to attend elections in South Africa as observers. [00:44:49] Comments: an exciting experience. Describes: staying at hotels in Johannesburg. fare expenses covered by local WILPF group, grant covered other expenses. Describes: Training received at Witwatersrand University. Briefly met other WILPF international members; all dispersed to observe across S.A. Margaret Turner stays in Pretoria. Comments: tension of waiting. Describes: party network opportunities and National Election Observer offices. Comments: very capable South African female organiser and other observers: Silvia McFadyen-Jones from Canada; and two black male observers - one a driver, the other a linguist. Describes: gives anecdote evidencing obvious social conflict between native observer and Afrikaans. [00:48:36] Describes: visits to polling stations around Pretoria, observing the voting process. Comments: important experience. Reported back to WILPF and gave talks about the experience. [00:49:48] Joined WILPF member Hanan Awwad in Palestine. Initially invited to attend a general meeting. Visit coincided with invasion by Israeli armed forces. Visits to Palestinians evicted from houses. Jerusalem, Ramallah interview president Arafat. Describes: dereliction of war-torn architectural setting of interview Comments: Arafat as "charming" and "affable". [00:52:00] Comments: feeling of unease that Palestine not opposed to militant tactics themselves. Describes: Israeli/Palestinian shared water reserves. Describes: existence of WILPF middle east committee.

[00:53:20] UK trade network negotiated with government. Comments: Sheila Triggs who attended trade network meetings when Margaret Turner could no longer do so due to fatigue. [00:54:01] Describes: Research in Croydon archives looking at local WILPF group (called "WIL") that ceased to exist in 1967. Describes: Croydon Museum objects: a banner, audio recordings. Comments: Barbara Duncan Smith a founder member in 1917. [00:55:36] Margaret Turner suggests that Croydon Museum display should include WILPF website address. [00:56:45] Hopes to attend the centenary celebrations in the Hague. [00:57:13] Comments: through WILPF, Margaret Turner met capable women, comparatively "more knowledgeable" than herself. Describes: actions within WILPF "you just do what you can". [00:58:12] Describes: various other actions: Firstly, attendance at Gertrude Baer seminar after IEC meetings for young and old. Secondly visits both to Aldermaston peace camp learnt of nuclear traffic to and from site; and to Menwith Hill US military sites and women's campsites (not all WILPF). Describes: agitation, via deliberate trespass on to site, by women's groups hoping -but failing- to gain publicity through their actions. Describes: waning email correspondence with these groups. [01:01:02] Comments: Helen Harris imprisoned on several occasions for non-violent direct action. Comments: WILPF full of "brave, hard-working women who have dedicated a great deal of their lives" to WILPF actions. Margaret Turner compares to her own, apparently relatively short-term involvement with the group since her retirement. [01:01:53]

Part two

Margaret explains acronymns: UNA -United National Association; IMF - International Monetary Fund; IEC a WILPF body formerly International Executive Committee now called 'the board' WTO World Trade Organisation. [00:01:11] Comments: tribute to members' dedication to peace and justice, the ultimate aims of

WILPF. WILPF as, "a means to an end". [00:01:49] Nelly Weiss; Mary Pimm enabler of Nelly; International: Hanna Awwad (Palestine); Aliya Strauss (Israel); Edith Ballantyne. Comments: many women, known and unknown, deserve to be remembered and thought about. [00:03:29] Comments: Topic of strength and opposition. Firm but gentle leadership. Tolerance. WILPF seeks to understand both sides of an argument in any conflict by seeking to understand what is "good" and what to be "against". Comments: A difficult process. [00:05:16] Concerns with economic injustice explained. Philosophical standpoint: assessment that there is a current and ongoing situation of inequality (rich & poor) and that poverty results from external conditions, rather than individual effort. Comments: addressing these issues was impetus for joining WILPF, where Margaret Turner learnt that militarism and human rights injustices are inseparably linked to economic injustice. [00:06:00] Comments: Margaret Turner lauds the holistic perspective of WILPF in exploring the relationship between these problems, aware that her interests are personal to her and do not reflect the approach of the organisation as a whole. Emphasis within WILPF upon different areas of injustice shifts over time. Comments: Margaret Turner has at times perceived a lack of emphasis on economic issues. Comments: Margaret Turner offers anecdotal evidence of her personal interest in TTIP (an issue that she continues to raise with WILPF) and the problematic relationship between individual, society, corporation. [00:08:09] Comments: her own perceptions of the world and the ways that the aims of WILPF meet her concerns. I.e. Margaret Turner perceives misery and suffering and sees importance, internationally, of having organisations (e.g. WILPF) that seek to address the unequal experience of these factors by human beings worldwide. [00:08:49] Margaret Turner Comments: perceives the importance of grassroots representation. [00:09:14]. Comments: Scientific background. Importance of knowledge. Reconciling money spent on science with everyday experiences of poverty. Comments: apparent

dichotomy drawn between practical, political development and academic advance. [00:10:27] Comments: National Health Service quality and length of life the life that you live is important. [00:11:25] Individuals can only work as groups. Comments: Nelson Mandela, Mother Theresa. Women as a body to work for their ideals. Comments: Necessity of women to work separately from men because they have been kept separate from men in many fields of endeavour. [00:13:18] Comments: Current importance of scientific research and its uses for the improvement of human life e.g. technologies of warfare as well as medicine. Describes: interest in learning about past civilisations to inform understanding of the present. Comments: perception that warfare has been a constant throughout the history of civilisations. [00:15:58] Comments: Certain objects held in the archive. [00:16:31] Describes: South African elections. Process of selection to attend involved an open call to each country to send volunteers. Comments: other countries in attendance were Canada, USA, Holland. 7 in all. Describes: compromises and boundaries involved in selecting delegates to attend. Describes: emotional attachments of some candidates hopeful to be selected to attend SA elections. [00:18:05] Describes: shortage of time to organise delegation meant Margaret Turner attendance happened under the World Council of Churches. Comments: WILPF is a non-denominational organisation, but there are believers and non-believers within the organisation. Describes: Experience of disorganisation of process in South Africa. [00:19:19] Describes: experiences of travelling briefly after political duties were complete and of engaging with native people and culture through people met as part of the observation process. [00:20:15] Comments: Margaret Turner attends church. Describes attendance at a musical performance in South Africa. Concert relayed as an exhilarating and positive experience of racial, ethnic and cultural interaction. [00:21:37] Personal experiences as part of travel for political action; initiated through involvement with WILPF. Describes:

racial segregation on public transport and help received from local people to navigate foreign environment. Personal and political history interweaves with the actions of WILPF. Cultural experiences seem central to the knowledge base that allows for tolerance, integration that allows for forms of inter-ethnic, inter-national, inter-cultural representation. [00:25:57] Describes personal history of another member: Silvia McFadyen-Jones. Comments: experiences in: Estonia, Concentration camp, UK, Canada. Comments: Sylvia a strong personality. Warm anecdotes about travel and cultural exchange. Conversations with local South Africans about the theme of racism. e.g. "I'm not a racist, even my servant has tea with me". [00:28:27] Parties were an example of these cultural exchanges. Describes tension and heightened emotions on the ground in a critical moment in world history. Comments: Evelyn Maus from USA. [00:30:52] Reflects upon the situation now in South Africa; poverty. [00:31:13] Comments: Bolivia, Costa Rica. Describes: organisation of WILPF international congresses and financial structure within international group for sending delegates. Comments: Rosalie Huzzard, a Quaker with an influential husband. Comments: WILPF UK only paid for one delegate to attend meetings, but others could elect to pay for themselves to attend. [00:33:52] Describes: focus of one congress on sweatshop workers Describes: memorable narratives of under-represented women. Comments: personally affected by these narratives. Comments: Informational, thought-provoking nature of WILPF meeting. Reflects: speculates that current situation may be the same. [00:35:07] Elaborates on the current situation of sweatshop workers. [00:36:24] Describes: past letter-writing activities to represent such sweatshop workers. Comments: importance to WILPF of the issue of representing labouring women and supporting them to achieve justice and human rights. [00:36:41] Comments: congress held every ten years. In 1995 the subject of this congress was racism. Describes: Beijing peace train. Comments: CSW. CEDAW [00:37:50]

Describes: activity of peace train and archival material relating to the congress. [00:38:54] Comments: accusations of racism in WILPF. Mentions inability to join the peace train, in spite of interest, because of other personal priorities at the time. [00:40:07] Describes: communication and diplomacy within WILPF. [00:40:43] Comments: comparison of institutional racism and paternalism; the assumption of responsibility on behalf of another party without adequate communication or representation from the party in question. [00:41:16] Comments: discusses political correctness and the difficulties and transience of socially definitive descriptive vocabulary. [00:42:02] Comments: Questions consensus through language formation as a preface to Comments: unacceptability of racism. Comments: perceives a widespread lack of awareness of the difficulties inherent in political representation; specifically representation on behalf of perceived minority groups. [00:42:36] Comments: on the consequent difficulties of miscommunication by NGOs. [00:43:03] Comments: People go on learning all their lives. Comments: expresses faith in knowledge gained in different settings. [00:43:31] Comments: tribute to all WILPF women working at all levels. [00:43:52] Comments: re-iterates belief that WILPF is a means to an end: peace and justice. Comments: non-specific acknowledgement of other organisations that work towards that same goals. [00:44:10] Comments: "Charlie Hebdo" incident. Comments: difference between freedom of expression at large and in a group. Describes: instigation of WILPF protocol for managing member adherence to party line. Comments: specific instance of intransigence, where personal and political representation were confused. [00:47:05] Comments: awareness of power and strength of political opinion, and the need to manage this within an organisational setting. [00:47:53] Mentions: Patricia Hewitt. Cancun congress. Describes: dialogue with UK governmental representative about enforced trade in Africa, in which Margaret Turner represented perspectives gleaned directly from native African labourers.

[00:49:56] Mentioned: Mary Robinson. Describes: directed questions to Mary Robinson regarding UN's role in enforcing the preservation of human rights in developing world. [00:51:12] Comments: inability to measure outcome or utility of her own activities involving political representation. [00:51:25] Comments: Margaret Turner states belief that women's political self-representation within UK trade Network was successful in gaining broader participation and involvement for, rather than on behalf of, women. [00:51:42] Elision between causes of gender and racial minorities. [00:52:26] Comments: personal history. Describes: lack of discussion of politics within Margaret Turner's family and personal ignorance of current affairs growing up, even during wartime. Comments: specific effect of WWI and flu epidemic upon parents' personal lives. Expresses empathy for the unhappy experiences of family and hints that her own activism was perhaps enacted vicariously on behalf of parents who -she speculates- may have held pacifist views. [00:54:52]

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