How far do these sources suggest the wspu was run undemocratically



How far do these sources suggest that the WSPU was run undemocratically? The WSPU, proved themselves to be very determine to succeed in what they did. They did a great deal for the women's suffrage movement and without their strength and determination many historians believe it would have taken much longer to receive the vote. Some do say that this group of women went the wrong way about it however, but in the end they brought themselves publicity, attention, and got their campaign noticed nationwide.

The use of violence and protests in their campaign did numerous of times end them up imprisoned and many historians would argue that the WSPU was run undemocratically whilst others often disagree saying there was formal equality. There are many similarities between sources 1 and 3 which show that the WSPU was run undemocratically. Firstly, in both of these sources the need for organisation and smooth running is highly emphasised. Source 1 is written by Christabel Pankhurst who was the leader of the WSPU.

This means the source is primary evidence as it was written by not just a member of the society but by someone who ran it, resulting in us receiving firsthand knowledge on the nature of the WSPU. "The founders and leaders must lead, the officers must carry out instructions" This shows how the leaders and founders were the ones in control and the rest had to just obey their orders. This is an example of how the WSPU was thought to be run undemocratically. Both sources one and three, give the impression that the WSPU was run very similarly to how an army is run.

Source one mentions that those who join the rebellions must come as soldiers. This gives us an incredibly violent and strong minded impression of

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how the leaders wanted the WSPU to be run. Sources 1 and 3 both emphasise the need for action to be taken and which again makes the WSPU comparable to the army in the sense that each individual must be willing to fight for their cause and the constant repetitiveness of the world ' rank' in source 1, makes you automatically think of the army and tactical behaviour. The word ' battle' again reinforces the aggressive behaviour they carried out.

This all shows how the WSPU was run undemocratically as there was often someone who was in charge and then the others who just follow instructions in comparison to an army general and his soldiers. Source 3 was written by Teresa Billington-Greig who was one of the WSPU's first organisers. She writes " The crime of the militant suffrage movement in my eyes is hypocrisy. The movement displays rebellion in its public actions... " The use of the word militant again reflects back to the image of the WSPU run in an army like way.

As well as this, T. Billington –Greig writes about how the WSPU does not practice what it preaches. She believed that the members of the movement should be commited to one aim, however not go so far as to go against or stop practising democracy itself as this meant that although one aim is slowly being achieved (women's suffrage) an important principle, being democracy , is being pushed as side and not thought about even though the WSPU ranted about the significance of it on society as a whole and women being equal to men.

This shows how even one of the WSPU's leaders thought it was run in a undemocratic manner. However, it can also be argued that the WSPU was

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run democratically. Firstly, source one was written by Christabel Pankhurst in response to a rebellion so would have been emphasising on strength in order to boost peoples comfidence, this means that the source may be slightly exaggerated.

As well as this Teresa Billington-Greig left the WSPU in 1907 so may have just experienced negative aspects but not been there to see how the movement was run democratically and efficiently (as mentioned in source 2). Source 2 was from the WSPU annual report in 1908. The source recognises the willingness of the people in the WSPU to work together. It mentions the word ' harmonious' which shows how people worked as one to achieve their goal of women's suffrage. Source 2 backs up the point made in source one about the WSPU working together to achieve the vote for women.

Source 2 uses the word " harmonious" which emphasises that the WSPU all had to work together as one, if they were to make progress. . Source 2 backs this point up by saying that the local unions, worked independently administering their own funds. They also arranged their own schemes of organisation and propaganda which reveals how they did not all work together in a democratic style. It suggests that the people in control organised what was to be done and the majority had to just follow instead of having their own say.