



Radical Dream – transcript – OH 64 Extract

Irene Bell 1989

I remember when we just touched upon the Union of Australian Women last week, and you were mentioning how Dr Finger recommended that you get really involved in things outside the home after Eric was killed, you said you'd already been a member of the union before Eric's death. How had that come about?

I think it was a couple of friends - a couple of friends I'd made. We used to have groups. There'd be the Port Adelaide group, there'd be the Enfield group, there'd be one out at Tusmore way. There was five of six groups. Well naturally I went to the Port group. I was riding a bike then. Like, we'd bought the bike I think for Irene - - I think it was Irene to go to school. Well, that's when I start, you see, getting out, and taking Ruth on the back of the bike, and I'd go messages and that and do messages on the bike. And we used to have a group meeting once a month. Might come to my place this month, we'd go to Ina's place another month, and we'd go round like that, and we always bought some little thing to raffle to raise money for the organisation. And I want to boast here. The Port group raised more money. We kept the UAW going at one time there. Nobody else seemed to be getting any money, but we were raising money all right. We had no trouble at all.

I'd like to talk with you a bit more about this early involvement. Who were these friends that told you about the Union of Australian Women?

Well Ina Robins - she's still around as a matter of fact - and Lola Hallett, she was a school teacher. We used to have bugs nights - not bingo, but bugs night. We used to throw dice and you had to have a six for a body before you could start, and then you'd have one for his leg or five for his head and all that sort of thing. You couldn't start until you got the six. And we'd have this bugs night and we'd go to different houses for that, and that's how we raised some of our



money. And one month probably be my turn to supply a little parcel for the raffle, and that'd be threepence or sixpence or whatever. And that's how we sort of got our money.

I think there was about seven or eight of us in the group. There was Dossie Frape, Ina, Lola, Phyl - Phyl Symon - Marcia, old Mrs Symon. Yes, there was quite a group of them.

How did you get to know Ina and Lola?

Well they were sisters, so naturally, knowing Ina, I sort of got to know Lola. Phyll Symon, my husband knew Peter Symon, and I sort of met up with her that way. They had a very good platform. Because in the early days, they were sort of considered to have a pink - not a red image, but a pink image - and a lot of people thought they were communist, you see, because their platform was for world peace, the welfare of women, and also the welfare of children. That was the three main things, and it was a good platform, because we walked the streets of Adelaide with Ban the Bomb and all this thing. Sort of anything. We stopped that too - the war toys. We stopped the big stores putting war toys in the shop windows, and John Martins and Myers and that, they took them out. We won that, like here in South Australia. Well that was sort of - - -.

We had headquarters in Sydney, and we were responsible to Sydney. Every so often you'd have a conference, and my first conference I went to in Sydney as a delegate from here was in 1956. I went over there and it was really a new experience to me. I was never much of a speaker, but I'd listen. I could never sort of put things together, but I knew what I wanted, and somehow or other I'd sort of explain it. So that was part of it.

Had you met Ina and Lola through your husband's friends, or how do you think you?

No, I can't really remember now how I met Ina in the first place, but we were very close, I know. I don't know whether the kids met - - -. Through the kids. It could have been that way.



So were most of the women involved married women with children?

Yes. Oh, and Ruth Weber, that's right, she had children. She lived at Seaton. She was very good.

You would have been in your forties at that time. Were these other women round about your age?

Yes, we were all about the same age group.

So your children would have been school age or older.

That's right, yes. I think Ruth at the time - - I think Ruth was the youngest one of all the children that were around. I think she was the youngest. I think she was about four - nearly four - when I started going. I can remember going on my bike up to Mrs Weber's. She lived at Seaton, and I can remember riding the bike with her on the back, going up there. And the little devil, she used to make me that cross. She'd be shy and she wouldn't want to talk, and she'd sort of - - -. You know how kids are - they hide behind you and all that sort of thing. Then when it was time to come home, she didn't want to go home. She was enjoying herself then and she didn't want to go home. (laughs) Typical child I suppose.

So Ruth came with you in those early days before she went to school.

That's right.

So about 1951?

Yes, it was about 1951. And then once a month we would have a committee meeting in Adelaide and members from each group was in the committee, you see, would form the - - -. And we'd have a discussion what each group was



supposed to concentrate on. So we'd go to town. Oh, several times we had different rooms where we would meet. It all depended how much money, like, for rent that we could pay. I was eventually elected on to the committee. I was a committee member you see. That's how it was I went to town. And we used to hold them on a Sunday - Sunday afternoon.

You've mentioned that Lola Hallett was a teacher. Was she still working when she was involved?

Oh yes. Yes, she was still working.

What about the other women - were there working women amongst them?

No, none of them worked. In fact Ina had a terrible time because her husband cleared off and left her, and left her with three girls to bring up. And he was supposed to pay maintenance, and of course in those days it was hard to get maintenance from a man. He'd shoot through and she wouldn't be able to get it, and I think half the time Lola sort of helped with the children. So things were tough with Ina.

Would you describe all these women as working class?

Oh yes, they were all working class. Yes, there was no high falluting ones amongst them.

What about in the branches in other suburbs? Were there different sorts of women involved?

Yes, some of them thought themselves a little bit above the others, but they worked all right in their branches. I suppose it was in the area that they lived and they sort of lived the same type of life, I don't know. But I don't think - - -. There might have been a couple of widows amongst them, but there wasn't too many. They were all married with husbands, and children growing up. As I say, we'd visit



once a month as a rule. Or not always once a month to other groups, but we'd go around to different groups and have a day and discuss, you know, our problems and their problems and what we would do and what we wouldn't do.

What do you think first attracted you to the UAW?

I think it was the social contact more than anything, because I think I was sort of looking for someone - or someone to talk to, apart from -
- Well, there was nobody at home, and I didn't get very far with Mum, like, and I think that was more than anything - that was the social contact that I needed. I think I thought, "Well he goes out and has his bit - enjoys social contact". I don't suppose he thought it was social contact because he was trying to better the world, as the saying goes. But I think that was the main reason that I took it up. I needed companionship - other women to talk to.

How did you husband feel when you first started getting involved?

He didn't mind me getting involved with women. As it was women's organisation, that was quite all right But if it was men too, well, that wasn't right, you know. He didn't like that.

Were there ever men involved in UAW functions?

Oh, well not always. I can't remember them being involved, really, not unless there was a general function. No, they didn't even come to the annual meeting, and that, the men, I don't think. I think we just called on them to do work when we wanted anything done. No, I don't think they attended - from memory, I don't think they attended meetings. Might be a union bloke come at the annual meeting, or something, and talk - something like that. But, no, the men never come to the meetings.



What did your husband think of the UAW platform?

Well he thought it was a very good one, as a matter of fact. He was quite agreeable with it. And I used to discuss things with him, and this is why, in a way, he has been a help to me, because even later on in life with the UAW and things went wrong - was going wrong - I asked him what to do and he explained, you know, what to do. Because I got nominated as Secretary/ Treasurer - no Treasurer. I was Treasurer for ten years and I resigned because I said somebody else should have a go - you shouldn't have the same one for so long. And then they made me President then. So then I was President for about five years. I'm jumping the gun a bit there because - - -. Then when the things broke up, it was mainly me that caused it because - - -. Like in the groups anyway - yes, in the UAW itself - because the Secretary, she'd come to a committee meeting, and she was a person that had everything fixed before she got to the meeting - what was going to be. And all the others were like sheep and they'd vote with her, you see. Not all the time, but most of the time, I often could see that it wasn't the right way to go, and I would be perhaps the only dissenter sometimes. So I think this is why they made me President later on, because they shut me up.

What was the actual span of your involvement with the UAW? Which year did you stop being involved?

1969.

So you were involved with both UAW and International Women's Day simultaneously?

Yes, that's right, because I was the delegate from the UAW. The International Women's Day Committee was comprised of different women from all walks of life - all creeds. We had socialists, we had communists, we had Labor Party, we had church people, we had women from the Quakers and the WCTU, and



Women's International League for Peace and Freedom - Phyl Powell was the chairperson of the IWD Committee - and I went as a delegate from the UAW. Phyl Powell resigned and they called the elections - the AGM - and they nominated me to go on the IWD Committee as the Secretary/Treasurer. That was in 1960 - that's right. It was actually the end of 1959, and 1960 was my first IWD that I had to organise.

We'll certainly get on to talking more about IWD. I'd like to talk some more about UAW first of all. You say you first of all joined probably for the social contact. As you became involved, was there any sort of studying or discussion involved to learn about the tradition of UAW and learn the ropes as it were?

We had a magazine that come out every so often. Books there - I've found an old book, Our Women. That's one I've managed to keep. I gave a whole issue back to the UAW for them to keep. I was sorry afterwards - I should have kept them. But no, we sort of would discuss things and, as I say, we had a campaign about war toys. That would be in World War II I should say, wouldn't it. Yes, 1939. No, must have been later than that. Must have been the Vietnam War - that's right, the Vietnam War, because I know we were very prominent in that. We had street marches, and I always participated because I was younger then - I could walk. It was always on the weekend and there was someone - - -. The older kiddies would look after the younger ones or whatever. We had Ban the War Toys and we had Ban the Bomb. I've got photos there with aprons, you know, with Ban the Bomb. I think I'm in one, but the others, I was always the one that took the photos.

So that with that magazine and advice - - -. We'd get letters from interstate with what they were doing and they were telling us what we should do in South Australia. There wasn't really much study like you would do, I suppose, with a study course or anything. We never had that. It sort of was put to us plainly what was right and what was wrong - what we should do.



Did your local committee have the final say in what you did, or did you receive directives?

No, our local committee decided what was going to be done in South Australia. We'd sort of work along with South Australian lines. It would be sort of in accordance with Sydney, because that was the headquarters, and there was UAW in Queensland, there was UAW in Victoria. And there was one in Western Australia, but they didn't often come to the national conference. They'd have one about every three years I think, national conference, but it was too far for them to come - the expense was too much to come from Western Australia.

Let's talk some more about your very early involvement with UAW. Do you remember the first thing you did in support of their causes, as a member? The first time you went on to the street to distribute something, or anything like that?

I don't know whether it was the first one or not, but I know I walked the streets of Adelaide with a petition, getting signatures from the passersby, like, about - - -. It was mainly the bomb. We were against that - Ban the Bomb.

Can you remember how you felt when you first started doing these activities? Well, I wasn't very forward. I sort of wouldn't push myself. I'd look at some people and I'd think, "Oh, she won't sign it," you know. We'd approach men and all, but I'd think to myself, "Oh, I wouldn't ask him". And, "Oh, she looks all right". And then of course the Council had a ruling out that you weren't supposed to parade the streets with petitions and things, and I used to think to myself, "Gosh, what'll happen if I get picked up?" you know, but I never ever got chatted. I think a couple of them got told about it, but I think they left where they were and went around further - you know, a bit further away - and still went on with it.



I know we got pages of signatures. So that, I think, would be one of the first public things that I sort of did.

Would members of the public engage you in arguments?

Well I was lucky, I don't think I ever had an argument. I don't know whether I approached them right or not, but I know the Secretary, I think she had a couple of arguments with people. And I think she got told by somebody else - I think it was the Vice President told her that that was the wrong way to go about it. You know, just to ask them to sign and if they didn't want to sign, well just walk on and find somebody else. That's what I did, anyway.

Can you remember how you would have explained your position when you were approaching people with the petition?

I think I explained, you know, what terrible tragedy with the bombs, and did we want it here, you know. If it was overseas there was nothing that we knew of that wouldn't say that we would get it. And if we got the petition going and got it to the government, we might be the cause of stopping - you know, it coming here. I think that was my idea anyway, so that's why I went ahead with it.

Did your organisation have high hopes about the success of these sorts of issues?

Oh well, we were always hoping, you know. Always thought, "Well, we might be successful," and we were over the wall, as you might say, when we got the war toys taken out the big stores - you know, John Martins and Myers. To think that they did it. And I think some of the other smaller shops did it, but I know we were quite pleased about that. We reckoned we had a very successful campaign.



What did that campaign involve?

Oh well, we just got people to sign a petition. And then I think we had a small deputation to the Manager, or whoever it was, and pointed out, you know, how it was breeding war, selling the toys and that, and that wasn't going to help the country. That was the way I think we went about it.

Would you have been involved in those deputations?

No, I always tried to by-step any deputation. I went along a couple of times to sort of watch - look in and see what happened - but I never was very vocal. I sort of stayed in the background. I was a back-up, that's all I was. (laughs)

How did your husband feel about these more public activities, such as petition signing and marching?

Well, he didn't say much about it, because I had a come back at him. I said, "Well, you're doing your thing - I'm going to do my thing". So it was quite all right, he didn't have much to say. But it was a funny thing, sometimes there'd be something very important happening in the UAW through the week, and my husband was always sick that day and I had to stay home - I couldn't go. I didn't wake up to for several. Oh, I suppose it'd be a few years. Then I started thinking, and I thought, "Well, now that's funny". So I got shrewd and I never told him when anything was going to happen special. So that's how I used to get to get there then. See, it made me - - -. Well, what would you say? Sneaky? (laughs) Well he was sneaky too, wasn't he? Yes, I said to myself then one night - I was there and I thought - "Well, it's a funny thing. Tom always gets sick when there's anything important on with the Union of Australian Women. Why? He doesn't want me to go. Well, I'm not going to tell him in future. I



won't warn him that next week something's going to happen". So I used to keep quiet, and in the morning before he'd go to work I'd say, "Oh don't forget. I don't know whether I told you, but I've got to do so-and-so today". He always knew, but too late for him to stop home from work. (laughs) Oh, you had to be crafty, didn't you?

Talking again about the UAW activities, what about marching in the streets? Do you remember your first demonstration in that way?

I can't say as I remember the first one. I can remember one I took part of in Sydney. There was a whole crowd of us over there. We went over there and we were walking to the - - -. Now, what was our campaign? Increased Baby Bonuses and Maternity. Because the baby bonus I don't know even now whether there's a baby bonus around. In those days it was the same as when I'd had my first child. It'd never gone up, even though conditions had altered and everything else. So that was one campaign that the UAW instigated. I can remember taking photos of all this stream of women going into the Government Building. We got received all right. From memory now, I don't know whether we did any good or not. But that was really my first, I think - my first real march.

Back here in Adelaide, with those very early marches - say Ban the Bomb and so on - what was the public reaction?

Oh, there was always a crowd in the march, and there'd be men and women too. You'd have police around and photographers and all that. And of course my husband as usual, looking on the dim side, he said, "Don't get out the front," he said, "and stay in the middle," he said, "because those cameras are there to take your faces," he said, "and then they can look you up," he said, "and then they can book you later on". (laughs) He said, "Those that are in front," he said, "they always get into trouble first". So I was never in the foremost, although I've got a couple of photos there



when they had the revival of the Beef March. I got somebody - I was in my seventies then - - I was walking up the Port Road and I'm striding along and I got someone to take me photo. I said, "Here you are," so I said, "Take me photo".

How did you feel about taking to the streets in those early days?

Oh, I think I reckoned it was great - something different. You know, you were participating. This had been one of my problems, like, over the years, that I hadn't been where the action was. So that was my chance of getting there where the action was, and being with the - mainly a lot of the UAW girls and that, you know, that you knew. And Women's League for Peace and Freedom, and things like that. I thought it was very good.

Of course one of the issues as regards women and child rights and so forth was child care. What was your feeling about government support for child care?

Well, I thought that that was essential too, but we didn't have such a big campaign here in South Australia as what they had in Victoria. We had a woman over there in the UAW, and she really went to town and she spent quite a lot of time. She ended up, she got the. what was it, the OAM or some medal or something for her work? But she did really work - work herself to - - -. She didn't work herself to death, but she worked very hard for child care, and we were very involved in it, as much as we possibly could. But I didn't seem to be in that quite so much because, well, I wasn't in the workforce and it was more for the women going to work and things like that. So I wasn't participating very much in it, but some of the other girls here were. They were very active in it.



What about issues regarding the Aboriginal population? Was that something the South Australian group were involved in?

Well, we had Mrs Elphick - Glad Elphick. She was a member of our committee. She was on the committee, and we used to get anything - advice, anything that we needed. She'd always lead us on the right track. I know we went down to Point Pearce. We went down there one time - went down with Glad. She was a wonderful - - -. Everybody loved her in the Aboriginal people.

Let's return to talking about the UAW. Perhaps before we talk about finishing with them, I'm interested in you going interstate to conferences and the like. You said the first one was in 1956.

Yes.

How did you feel about making that trip?

Oh, that was great, that was, to go over there. And of course I had to fight to get there because my husband didn't want me to go. But anyway, I don't know who talked him into it, but somebody talked him into it and I went off. And of course we were privately billeted, like amongst other members. But that was very interesting because you heard the delegates from the other states and what they were doing and what they wasn't doing.

And then another year - I think it was in 1970 - it was much later, I went over, and we had a special train from Melbourne hired to go to Canberra, and I took part in that. [It was in the early 1960s. 113] We slept on the floor of the train. There wasn't enough room - the train was packed. No seats, no women sit here or anything else. You had to sleep where you could. And we had this big deputation to Parliament House. What the devil was it about now? Something to do with peace I think - I'm sure it was.



And then the UAW had a national conference in Sydney, like, at the same time. So we left Canberra by cars. People'd come down from Sydney to go to Canberra, and of course us from this way had met the others in Melbourne and they hired the special train, and I think it was the oldest train they had in the yard - grunts and groans. But going from Canberra to Sydney, oh, was that a nightmare! We were in these car, and we must have been on the main highway, and I was that tired. I hadn't slept properly, and I'm in the front seat. If I'd have been in the back seat, it mightn't have been so bad, but I'd be nearly asleep - - -. You can imagine, I'd be nearly asleep and the semi's was going "whoosh, whoosh, whoosh". You never had time to go to sleep. They did that the whole night, and we travelled all night up to Sydney. Oh, boy, was that a trial!

Having the opportunity to travel interstate, would you be able to comment on whether you thought that the South Australian UAW was different in organisation, or the sort of people, to the people you met in the UAW from other states?

No, I think we all had the same aim. I think this is what it was. I could see that everybody was after trying to do, like, the platform of the UAW. No, I think. Some were more sociable than others. Some were too serious - had things, you know, down, right down to earth and all that. But, no, on the whole, I think they were a very good organisation. I think it's still going in Sydney, but I think it's - - I'll tell you why I think it's defunct here, because this is the first year that we've never had a congratulation letter for International Women's Day from the Union of Australian Women. We didn't get one, so it's gradually died out.

Let's talk about International Women's Day Committee which you started being involved with in 1960, as you say as a delegate. What do you think attracted you to that organisation?



Well you see it was the same principle as the Union of Australian Women. Because we are for the status of women and world peace. What's the thing? Friendship between all nations - women of all nations - and then, like, the welfare of our children. Because if you don't have friendship between nations, how is your children going to have good welfare. As I told the interviewer on the ABC on our fiftieth anniversary, he said, "Peace," he said, "Do you mean that you want a special day set aside for peace". I said, "No," I said, "peace has got to be every day, not a special day". I said, "And International Women's Day celebrates it, and," I said, "we don't want war". He said, "What's war got to do with women?" I said, "Who suffers the most in war". I said, "You're a man. You stop and think". I said, "Certainly the soldiers go out and get killed, but," I said, "what about the women that's left at home". And I didn't go into it - that women get raped in war and all this sort of thing. I said, "You stop and think just what happens to women when war was on". Something like that - mightn't be the exact words. And he said, "Oh yes, I can see". So then he understood why we had peace as one of our aims.

What about South Australia? Did the Women's Liberation Movement have an impact on the IWD Committee here in South Australia.

Well they tried to. That was the year - - -. What year was that when Donny Dunstan - - -? He was the Premier and International Women's Day was on the Saturday I think it was, or Friday - Friday or Saturday. We decided in our committee - and I think it was me that decided it too - we decided to write to him and we told him if they have a holiday for horses - public holiday for horses - we reckoned that there should be a public holiday in South Australia for women for International Women's Day. Because in the socialist countries overseas they do - they have a holiday for International Women's Day - but I didn't mention that in the letter, but I said that we should have a holiday. We appealed to him to do something about it. Well I will give him his due - he tried. He wrote back and he said, "I can't grant a holiday, but" he said, "we'll put on a festival at the theatre". He invited all the women's organisations to set up stalls, and they could put up all their brochures and leaflets and that.



They could have a whole day there of celebration. Donny Dunstan opened it, Justice Mitchell and Jill Matthews was the other two speakers, and I had the honour of introducing Justice Mitchell and Jill Matthews from International Women's Day. But that was quite a big day.

And the Women's Liberations, they came out and they tried to spoil it in a way. They tried to take over, and they had all these - "Lesbians are Lovely" - all these great big banners. Well what got on to the TV was all the things about "Women's Liberation Celebrates International Women's Day". It wasn't the other way round, which it should be, "The Women of South Australia Celebrate International Women's Day". The Women's Liberation got all the credit. Not that we wanted the credit, but they tried to sort of come in and - - -. And of course being like it was, well of course the media played it up, didn't they - that's just what they wanted.

What did you think of the Movement when it started?

Well I thought they were over the fence myself. If they wanted to have their own rights and that, there was a different way they could have gone about it, I thought. Because there was women there dressing as men and this sort of thing. They were too far out for me. I couldn't see any sense in it. I thought, "Well, they're not going to get anywhere like that". I don't know, it just wasn't my cup of tea. And of course if you say Women's Lib., it was like saying you're a communist. I don't know, I can't understand some of them, I really can't.

How did you feel about the much more open displays and discussions of sexuality and lesbianism and so forth?

I don't approve of it. I might be a funny fuddy duddy or something, but I don't approve of it - I don't think it's right. And the way the world is, with all these gays and lesbians and that, why broadcast that you are? I know years and years and years ago there must have been gays and



lesbians and that, but you never heard of it. But now it's just a common thing. Well what is the world - it's like Rome - it won't be here one day. It'll just all collapse.

Was homosexuality spoken of when you were a child?

No, never heard of it. Never heard of lesbians. When it first came - - I don't know when I first heard about it. I think it was when Women's Liberation. I was horrified and I thought, "Lesbians". And then there was two lesbian women wanted a baby, and I thought, "Well how the hell can they have a baby?" - excuse me swearing. Yes, I suppose I was a bit simple or something, I don't know.

When we're talking about IWD over the years through the seventies and into the eighties and the Women's Liberation Movement, do you think there's developed something of a generation gap between the two groups of women?

There probably would be, I reckon. I reckon there might be. See, very few of the Women's Liberations come to our luncheon. There are some come, but very few attend the luncheon. I know some of the people that come to the luncheon go to Women's Liberation. Because our International Women's Day organisation is a very unique organisation. There's no other one like it in Adelaide. We haven't got a membership. You don't have to pay to belong to it. All you've got to do is celebrate International Women's Day on the day. And we have people from all walks of life there. We have atheists, we have church people, we have communists, we have socialists, the Liberals, we have them all - Quakers. And they all bury their differences that day. One woman'll say, "Well, see you next year," and it's, you know, like a. Well it's become an institution as you might say - International Women's Day in Adelaide.



Of course the idea of a lunch has dearly become a tradition in South Australia.

It has.

Is there any move to come up with some sort of different activity to perhaps attract other sorts of people?

Well we have had over the years. We've had forums, we've had talks. One year we had child care, and we had four or five speakers. We had speakers from interstate and speakers here talking on child care - discussion. We had a Miss Equality Quest. Three or four girls nominated and they had to raise money, and the money was donated to the Aboriginal people - whatever was going at the time. So we haven't actually really been all luncheons - we have varied a little bit. But now the Women's Liberation does their march, well, we have never been marching like, International Women's Day we've never marched. We've always started off as a luncheon, see, and that's how it started. In 1938 a little group of women got together and held a meeting in a house had a luncheon and then from there it grew bigger and bigger and, you know, went on to a hall. And then we ended out round at the Rechabite Hall in Victoria Square. And when Monitor was on Channel 9 Kevin Crease was on Monitor - know he came. And we used to have international food - we'd have different foods. There'd be Greek and Italian and we had Dutch food and some of them - there was three or four of them - dressed up in national costumes. But since then it sort of has been a tradition.

Well then the Mail had a big spread one day from the Women's Liberation - I don't know what year that was. But the Women's Liberation said we were only old fuddy duddies sitting around drinking cups of tea. And this reporter came from the Sunday Mail and she came to interview me. She said, "I'd like to take a photo and do an article," she said, "about the International Women's Day". She said, "I'd like to take your photo," she said, "pouring a cup of tea". I said, "No way". I said, "You can



take a photo," I said, "but you've got to sign a paper that you're not going to print it," I said, "because we do more than drink cups of tea". We haven't done that lately. We used to always have a resolution or something from the meeting to the government about something that was on at the time. We'd send a resolution whether we were for or against, or whatever, but we haven't done that over the last few years because we got into this bracket now of the short story competition. Because we feel the little bits of money that we had left over was building up and we put three hundred dollars in a special deposit account to be used for something. And then after all our expenses are paid, if we had fifty dollars, or thirty dollars or whatever over, that'd go into that.

And I said one day, I said, "What are we going to do with this money?" I said, "It's building up and it's come from women". I said, "It should go back to women". So several ideas was put forward and then I said "A lot of people would like to write a short story. Why can't we have a short story competition?" Well one of our members does do a bit of short story writing and she said, "I think that's a good idea". And anyway, all the committee agreed. So from that started our anthologies. We've got our third one ready to print, so that would be going about six years I suppose. Because we had the competition going one year, then we had the book, like, the next year - launched the book the next year.

When we're talking about the sorts of speakers that you have at the luncheons, it occurred to me when I was reading about it today, and also when we've been talking today, that when you're trying not to be political, you can sometimes find you become conservative, just because you don't want to *be* seen to be radical.

Yes.



Do you think that's a problem with the day?

No I don't think so. I think what we try to do is to get a speaker on a - I suppose you would call it more of a topical interest. See, we had - - -. You have seen our book, haven't you, the history of our luncheons and that and all the different speakers? Well, you see, we've had nurses, we've had local government. We've sort of gone from one thing to another. And this year we've got our speakers already. We've got Maureen Fallon - she's from the Social Justice Unit. Why we got her was because we are hoping - - -. We don't know the name yet, but we have asked the Aboriginal Women's Council - that's NADOC - to provide us with another Aboriginal speaker. And we was wondering how we could have a speaker that wouldn't cut down the Aboriginal person - that would blend in with the Aboriginal person. One of the women in the committee said, "Well, what about the lass from the Social Justice Committee?" I said, "Well that's ideal," because social justice and the Aboriginal, well, this is a necessary ploy as you might say. Because so many people rubbish the Aborigines.

I think this is what we try and do with speakers. That we try and get a variety of speakers. If we've got a first - a woman first in anything, that's never been before - well, we might ask them, well, will they speak. Some of them you would like to ask but they're not good speakers, so it's no good of asking them. This is the way we choose our speakers, and we discuss it. Throw in five or six names and then sort of sort them out and see which ones we think is the best. That's the way we sort of choose our speakers. And we've been congratulated on - at times - on the choice of speakers. And last year when Marge Tripp spoke, she spoke about her life down at Victor and how she was living out of the town and when she got to a qualifying stage she wasn't allowed to go to the Victor Harbor High School. She had to come into Adelaide to board to go in here and she run away three times because she wasn't used to the city life. And she told her life story, actually, and you could have heard a pin drop. She got wonderful applause. And the other lass too, she



was just the same. Can't even think of her name now. Terrible. [Judith Roberts. IB]

But you can hear silence. Nobody rustles anything. They eat while the speakers go and everything's in front of them and they just eat. You can see some of them's really impressed, listening to the people.