K-Katherine Ellickson, Interviewee
D-Dennis East, Interviewer

January 10, 1976 Continuation of Oral History Interview

D: Would you like to say a few words just to test the mike to see how we're doing?

K: Okay I can do that and at the same time, I decided this morning, to write out a letter to, or a memo to Phil Mason which I can then show you, this will then save my voice and keep things in order. So you might look at that and see if that helps while you are trying to test my voice.

D: All right.

K: I am Katherine Ellickson and this is the second big installment of, a rather big installment maybe, of my tape for Wayne State.

D: Let you begin Mrs. Ellickson.

K: Okay. I want to be sure today to mention documents that supplement what I am saying and what I said earlier and they are the kind of things that users of the collection may want to look at. First I have prepared a somewhat lengthy document on the President's Commission on the Status of Women which I hope to have reproduced and which will be added to the collection and be available. It contains information on the Commission which has not been made available elsewhere and it gives some of my thoughts about the women's movement and women in the labor movement. Two, I made a lengthy record, nearly 300 pages, some years ago for the Columbia Oral History Collection on the history of health insurance. By agreement with Columbia this was to be made available to Wayne State in the Labor Archives. I am today lending a copy of this in case Columbia has not made another copy available. I would like this back but there is no hurry about it. This tape goes at some length into the legislative role of the labor movement in

connection with the enactment of the health benefits for the aged and other improvements in social security. It is more detailed than what I have done for Wayne State. It also shows the interrelationship between union collective bargaining efforts and the obtaining of legislation. A third document is a poem I wrote in the summer of '74 on the fourth anniversary of my husband's death entitled, "Together - And Apart." It explains my relationship with my husband and represents recent efforts on my part to put some of my emotions into poetry. In my retirement I was taking advantage of my new leisure to study poetry as I never had done before. In fact I had never really written any before. I also have had an opportunity to enjoy art and music. The fourth type of material are 3 documents I prepared for the River Road Unitarian Church where I found recent opportunities to continue activities of a different type. One of these is the sermon, so-called, "Working for the Labor Movement," which was accompanied by labor songs by Joe Glazer. This is already in the collection. The other two were fragments of services. The fifth type of material relates to labor standards laws and explains my position and that of some of the others who were doubtful about the effects of the equal rights amendment on low-income workers who had no union or other means of protecting themselves against excessive hours and substandard wages and other oppressive conditions. I might also call attention to an article I wrote in a book published in 1951 by Prentice-Hall and Newfeldt. My article on "Labor Cooperation with Government Agencies" pages 239-42 explains a little more what we were trying to do through our labor advisory committees to the BLS and the Office of Statistical Standards of the Bureau of the Budget.

Now moving on to some additional points that I want to make, I feel that in my earlier tape I didn't say enough about my family. I was very lucky in having parents that encouraged my taking initiative, in having

confidence in my ability to carry on intellectual and physical activities. I had many advantages in education even though as I have indicated elsewhere I feel that my social environment didn't build up self confidence and social contacts.

After marriage my husband and especially my children were extremely important to me. I always put my children before my job if there was a real conflict. I remember a conversation once with someone who had worked closely with Anna Rosenberg and this woman said she herself had done the same. I think involved here is a potential conflict that complicates activities of women in prominent positions. Without a competent live-in nurse I would never have been able to accomplish what I did though I know younger people now are managing a great deal without such help. I have already mentioned that my husband did not make many demands upon me to help him in his profession. He was most of the time unusually easy-going and would give me support and it was fortunate we could both work in the District of Columbia so that there was no conflict between the demands of his job and mine. He did not actually assist me in my work though I occasionally got his reaction to something I had written. We had a common viewpoint and enthusiasm about political and economic issues. I was very fortunate in my children who were born healthy and were able to get along very well in school and later in their professions.

Another area on which I want to expand is what it is like to look back on my activities in the labor movement. I still have great confidence in the potential of the union movement to make substantial advances in the welfare of its members and in the general community. The story of what we accomplished in social security and health benefits and unemployment insurance and supplementary unemployment benefits is potentially in my materials as well as in those of other people. I have been very much struck in my contacts

with professional people in the Unitarian community by their lack of adequate understanding of the union movement and its contribution even though they are generally sympathetic to it. I have tried to find good books which would convey the feeling and record of the union movement to such people and at the same time really be interesting reading. It is very difficult to find such books, although I have not made a thorough canvas. When Tom Brooks came to see me recently I told him that I thought his book on Clinton S. Golden was an opportunity to prepare something which would be readable and which would convey the human aspects and the dramatic story of a man who was committed to the union movement, who worked hard for it, who played a remarkable part in the unionization of the steel workers and who was not seeking power or fame, at least not to any distorting degree.

I certainly am glad I decided to work for the labor movement. Most of my years thus spent were very satisfying even during the months of frustration when progress seemed slow. The people I worked with were an unusually fine group of people. This applies to the Workers Education Movement, to John Brophy and others who worked with him in the CIO and to Stanley Ruttenberg and his staff and to the social security department staff under Nelson Cruikshank. We had disagreements at times but this was only to be expected.

The unions were in the forefront of many issues but their voice was too weak to prevail. I can remember 20-30 years back arguing before a Congressional committee on the need for limiting the poisoning of rivers and other environmental factors by industrial operations. I also testified on the need for social indicators so that the measures of progress would not be only in monetary terms. This is an angle that is still being developed, but all too slowly.

When my friends refer to some activities by craft unions which seem

overselfish, I explain that I feel no need to defend the job monopoly craft unions since it was with them that the CIO had its greatest difficulties - indeed it was because of the job monopoly attitude of the crafts in the depression years that the CIO had to operate to form industrial unions independent of craft jurisdictional claims.

I should also stress the positive and conscious efforts of the CIO to avoid being involved with corrupt elements such as racketeers. I can remember one delegation from New York, coming and wanting a charter for some granite tunnel workers in 1936. I could sense that they were not above suspicion and Brophy immediately refused to give them a charter or have any further dealings with them. Later when the CIO and steel workers were chartering local unions for the first time, every effort was made to set up a bookkeeping and accounting system for them which would assure accountability and honest handling of all funds. I think the CIO was extremely successful in this effort. Honesty is, of course, a constant problem in this society where racketeering or bribery is more prevalent than desirable. In my Columbia manuscript I referred to the efforts of insurance company agents to bribe local and national union officials to throw business their way.

This scheme reminds me of something that Emil Rieve, President of the Textile Workers union said to me a few years after the merger of the AF of L. He said that the CIO-people did not realize before merger how much corruption there was among some of the AF of L unions.

I was always amused as I entered the AFL-CIO building on 16th Street just north of the White House to think that when I started working for the labor movement in the very difficult years of the 20's and then in the depths of the depression, I never expected to end up in a marble, almost - palace, near the White House!

D: Where did you think you were going to end up?

K: I guess in those days I didn't know. Maybe with a revolution or something. My experience gives me continuing faith that the human race has a future, as I put it in my sermon. This is a faith that is all too lacking among many people today, which I think is most regrettable. People are very slow to rebel against injustices and needless suffering but when they do move, they show great heroism, willingness to sacrifice and a common feeling of being uplifted in a worthwhile cause. Certainly tremendous advances have been made in the material situation of most working people, indeed, virtually all working people in the U.S., since the 1920's. The progress is not simply a material thing but in the ability of the individual to avoid being exploited at his place of work. This is quite apart from the tremendous advances in science, civil rights and even in women's rights. Working for the labor movement gave me a feeling of doing something worthwhile which I feel was an unusually fortunate opportunity. To be sure I've had a similar opportunity in some of my government jobs especially the company union study, the President's Commission on the Status of Women, and President's Committee on Equal Employment Opportunity. One regrets the shortcomings of the people one works with as well as one's own. Obviously progress can be made nevertheless.

Another comment I might make is that the drive for power is very strong in people who do achieve positions of prominence in unions, women's organizations, or politics, and that there is a constant need to put appropriate limits on individuals to avoid being taken advantage of by them. Similarly a movement in any one country seeking to advance the welfare of its members needs to avoid being guided by the needs of a foreign power such as the Communist International. All this does not mean that I assume that the dangers of atomic war will be overcome - that will take careful management.

Going back to the transcript of the Columbia Oral History for a minute, I could give some page references to supplement the limited index. The social security activities after World War II are dealt with beginning with page 29; under the Eisenhower Administration, on page 83 following, including the development of the Forand Bill, the precursor of Medicare; and pages 114 following, the efforts in states to improve unemployment insurance and workmen's compensation. In this document will be found explanation of our reluctance to have the insurance companies involved in health benefits legislation because of their record in workmen's compensation. This is, of course, an issue by no means settled for future health insurance legislation.

I might dictate, if I may, something I said on August 14, 1975 at the 40th anniversary ceremonies that Wilbur Cohen arranged for people involved in the early years of social security. I said there were two other institutions that were born in 1935 - in July the National Labor Relations Board and in November the CIO. So far as I knew no celebrations for them were being held. Yet their efforts were equally enduring and their impact on social security of great importance. Among so many experts, perhaps my only distinction was that I had had the privilege of working for all three of these highly important institutions.

Then I referred to the fact that back in 1936, when many of the social security staff were busily preparing the structure of social security I was working with the CIO helping to organize the great mass production industries. And when we heard that the social security board was saying that workers could get their social security numbers through unions among other ways, John Brophy, the CIO director and I went to Arthur Altmeyer and said: You should warn the unions and workers that if they cooperate, the social security board numbers, issued in sequence, would enable employers to tell who were union members and to discriminate against them and Altmeyer agreed. At that time

the same Liberty Leaguers who were attacking social security and talking about workers having to wear dog tags were saying that the NRLA was clearly unconstitutional and should be ignored. Through the years the unions, old and new, have been the most powerful supporters of improved social security. Then I ended up making up two predictions (since we were supposed to be looking into the future) that so long as the unions are strong the social security system will continue to render yeoman service and second, that as women organize the present system will have to be adapted to their special needs as homemakers with less regular paid employment.

Incidentally my memo for the conference with Altmeyer is indexed as being in Box 15, folder 1 or folder 3.

This section will deal with my experiences as a woman in the labor movement and my impressions about the role of women in the labor movement. First, on some personal matters supplementing what was in my earlier transcript and my document on The President's Commission on the Status of Women.

My activities in the labor movement were unusual but not unique for a woman. I was aided in being able to do what I did by the following factors. 1) I had acquired background and necessary experience in the 1920's and the early 30's before I had married and before I had children. Having some independent income and a husband who was earning, I was not dependent on what I myself could earn, and therefore, could acquire this knowledge and background whereas somebody less fortunately placed might not have had the option of working for the labor movement at the time when it paid very little. 2) When I married, my husband did not expect me to devote myself entirely to him or to the family. He was undemanding and very absorbed in his own intellectual and job interests. He was proud of my accomplishments and completely sympathetic with my objectives. My working and accomplishments

may have been a threat to him but he did not protest. Again I refer to the poem I wrote after his death. 3) I had very competent help at home, in my home, for the children, and again I could afford this, and I could also attend meetings of educational conferences or CIO Executive Board and convention sessions. It was necessary to have this help since I never had a great deal of energy. 4) The war and the drafting of men opened up opportunities for me which I would not have had otherwise. 5) I could work fast and accommodate to changing situations and be a good assistant but also be creative. My training at Vassar as well as at school and in the family had developed my confidence in the feeling that women could do things. I was clearly not a sex object and never had affairs with any of the labor men or anyone else outside my marriage. 6) I was very lucky in the tolerance of John Brophy and later Stanley Ruttenberg in their feeling that women should be given opportunities and be paid the same amount as men, though I was certainly unlucky in the attitude of John L. Lewis. More of that later. 7) Other women had, of course, been active in unions, even in the coal fields, such as Mother Jones.

Now a few specific incidents. The top officers of the Mine Workers did not have women as personal secretaries, and of course the United Mine Workers had no women members in the 1935 days. Clint Golden told me later that when Phil Murray was setting up the Steel Workers Organizing Committee office in Pittsburgh, Clint had to persuade him to hire women secretaries because this was so outside the experience of the Mine Workers. One of my friends who has worked for the Steel Workers says part of the problem was that many union men knew only wives or the kind of women they picked up at bars, and this may well have been true. Another interesting incident is that when Brophy hired me to work for the CIO in November '35, he didn't know I was married, apparently because I was still using my maiden name and not wearing a ring, although we had been duly married in '33. Brophy was trying very

hard to re-establish a good relationship with Lewis since he had run against him for president of the mine workers in '27 and accused Lewis of stealing the election, which was by referendum. One day Chet had come into my office, that's my husband, and was sitting there talking to me with his feet on the desk, when Brophy walked in and I introduced him. Brophy made no comment and was friendly. But later I found out that whenever the United Mine Workers found that one of their women employees had married, she was discharged. Later, one of the women who was working for me, Frieda Senturia, became pregnant, and very obviously pregnant. That was in '37. By that time it had become the custom that when girls were discharged by the United Mine Workers for marrying or being pregnant, they came over to the CIO. But I feel sure that Brophy would not have hired me originally and my whole opportunity with the CIO might have been queered if he had known that I was married, not because of his prejudice, but because of Lewis's.

When I was taking the minutes of the Committee For Industrial Organization in '35 to '37, I was often the only woman present. Certainly in '35 and '36 this was the case. Tom McMahon of the United Textile Workers - the president, - was used to swearing, but whenever he swore in the committee sessions, he would apologize to me - not knowing that my background was such in the labor movement that this doesn't faze me at all.

As a woman, it was certainly more difficult for me to function in the labor movement. I was not one of the boys. I was not free to ask the men to have lunch with me or to have a drink after work. I am talking now not merely in the early years but later on all through my experience. This was not so true actually under Stanley Ruttenberg after my return to the CIO in the years from '42 to '55. But it became a very definite problem after merger because in the AF of L there had not been the same feeling of equal treatment for women that there was in the CIO. This sense of not being

accepted fully makes it much more difficult for women to function in a relaxed way in connection with their male colleagues - they are more apt to be tense, and become over sensitive, competitive and aggressive. These adjectives I am using are not necessarily the best but I think this is a phase that is a real factor in the operations of women not only in the labor movement but elsewhere. This, of course, depends in part on the personality of the individual.

D: I wonder if I might ask a couple of questions. You say that it was standard policy of the United Mine Workers to discharge female employees if they became pregnant and then they went to the CIO. There was more acceptance of the female employee who was pregnant or who was a mother at the CIO than there was at the Mine Workers?

K: Yes. This policy had become established by that time at the CIO.

D: And what you seem to be saying is that the policy of the United Mine Workers was the policy of John L. Lewis.

K: Oh, obviously.

D: The other thing you mentioned that you were not one of the boys, that you couldn't do certain things, invite them for a drink or that sort of thing after work. Was this so much a function of CIO policy or a reflection of the values of society at that time? In other words, was it a conscious policy on the part of the CIO and within the labor movement to not accept that kind of action, or that kind of behavior on the part of women or was this just a mirror of the society in its attitude towards women, vis-a-vis men in such sort...

K: Oh I think it was very much the attitude of society. Yes. And I ran

into some of the same things in the government too but I'll deal with this a little more.

D: How would you say and could you perhaps elaborate on the attitude exhibited by the AF of L people towards women after the merger? Can you give an example of how that might differ in regards to CIO?

K: Yes. In the CIO, and I am talking now about the later stages after the war, we called the girls by their first names but they called us by our first names too. There was no status distinction in terms of how you talked to somebody. This was not true of the AF of L after the merger. The secretaries called you Mrs. or Mr. and this was very amusing to me. A nice illustration occurred in the cafeteria, where the AF of L had the tradition of serving lunches so we could buy a nice lunch for 25¢, sort of a sandwich lunch with dessert and coffee. One of the women who had worked at the CIO as a cleaning woman, a Black woman, was working helping to make the sandwiches and so on there. When I went in there she would always say, Hello Kitty, and I would say hello whatever her name was to her and this was just taken for granted, but this was so contrary to AF of L policy, it was really amusing. In fact, when we merged, the AF of L had not had a single Black person on its national office staff so far as I know at any level.

D: Well that's consistent with their history, to be sure.

K: I had a Black secretary working for me in the CIO and I wanted her to come with me to the social security department where I had been told I should work and she did not want to come with me and when I questioned her further it developed that she was uneasy about how she would be treated if she shifted to a department which was predominantly one of AF of L people and she wanted to stay where there were other Black secretaries as there

were in the research department. Now actually, Nelson Cruikshank would not have had any feeling about a Black secretary, but this girl didn't know it.

D: I think it is interesting that this little vignette here illustrates the problem when the CIO and the AF of L after its, and CIO after merger are maligned for not taking a more positive role in organizing blacks or organizing women. So you can see the tremendous barriers to that even within the organization and what happened at the national headquarters doesn't make it perhaps any more powerful but it makes it, maybe, a little more understandable from certain perspectives.

K: Yes.

D: Well, go ahead, I'm sorry.

K: Well, as a matter of fact, I can now say something I was going to say a little later but if fits in perfectly right here. The AF of L had had Margaret Scattergood and Florence Thorne running their research department for years. Gompers had brought in Florence Thorne and she was very influential with Green. They were very much exceptions and they had left before the merger. As far as I can figure out there were only two women who might have been in as high positions as Hollace Ransdell and I held in the merged organization - and Hollace came out of the publicity department of the CIO. One was the librarian and after all, being a librarian is obviously a woman's occupation, and the other I think was Meany's niece, who was very influential and carried a lot of influence, a lot of responsibility with Meany.

K: Meany's niece was a kind of general assistant, right-hand man to Meany. I don't know what she was paid, or what her status was, this was within the President's office.

D: What was her name?

K: I've forgotten her name. And then there was Margaret Thornberg, who was active in political action, a kind of a counterpart to Esther Murray who worked for the CIO PAC. But it also developed the AF of L policy had not necessarily been for equal status in pay so that my pay after merger lagged behind the people of equal status in research. And I remember Nelson mentioning to me one day after I had been there about a year or two that either the union had bargained for equal salaries or Stanley Ruttenberg had raised the issue, so my pay was raised. As I explained in my earlier transcript (page 32 of the first typing) the AF of L had opposed equal pay legislation but when Nancy Pratt who worked in the research department of the AF of L in the merged organization and I managed to get that changed. I did not mention Nancy earlier because she was a kind of an assistant, she did not have a title equivalent to mine of Assistant Director of Research though she was a very able person.

D: Do you want to discuss a little bit how you went about to change the AF of L policy on this decision?

K: I covered that in my earlier transcript.

Now backing up a little, I have not attempted to keep up with recent literature on women in the labor movement nor done special research on this subject so what I am saying may be covered elsewhere, but it seems worth putting down some thoughts at this point in case they are useful or suggestive of further research. In speaking of women in the labor movement it is necessary to realize that are very diverse in skills, education, cultural background, physique and attitudes. They function for unions at various levels; as officers (national, state, or local), as staff, or simply as members. The problems of each type are, of course, different. There is great

difference between the situation in the needle trades, the communication workers, the UAW, southern textiles, movie stars, government workers, and teachers, to mention only some. Much of the approach of women and men in the various industries depends on the cultural background from which they come, whether Slavic, Jewish, Irish, Appalachian white, Black or otherwise. Studies have been made that show the great differences in the cultural approach of these various groups. This reinforces what you raised about the effect of society. It is among intellectuals that there has tended to be a feeling of equality and ease in relationships. My experience in North Dakota, where I was close to the frontier, indicated that while the women were recognized as equally important in the family economy, there was still quite a bit of separation in the roles they played. A study by Yale University has indicated the great differences between the working class, middle class and upper classes, in terms of the degree of participation by women in voluntary organizations, and this had, of course, affected their participation in unions too.

The psychological differences that exist currently among men and women are still being explored and I think psychologists today, as I get the picture from current reading, is that one cannot separate genetic and cultural differences with any ease, but there is evidence that female babies may be less aggressive than male babies. Certainly in our culture, by and large, this tends to be true. To become an effective woman leader through the process of election, up the ladder to national office, requires both great energy and great satisfactions. Men as well as women have to have unusual physical endurance to be able to succeed in such accomplishment. In our society, and or particularly in the peasant societies which lie not very far behind many of the working class, men and women hold tasks and patterns that were set through the centuries. Woman's work was never done. Most working class women tended to marry and have children and assume they would look after the children

primarily even though they had to go to work too. Many of the better known women leaders in the 20's like Rose Schneiderman or Elizabeth Cristman of the National Women Trades Union League, did not marry and have children. In the 40's and 50's statistics show that a larger percent of women married and had children than in the 20's. Exceptions to what I am saying about the role of men and women were found in those working class families where the men and women staggered the shifts, as in southern textile mills, so that somebody was always home looking after the kids. But notably the man was considered the wage earner, the primary wage earner. This was true I think even in the needle trades with their Jewish radical tradition because the Jewish tradition put greater emphasis on the role of the man even though in the radical movements there was an effort to get away from this.

The record of women workers in organizing in the needle trades and textiles is, of course, well known, so this need not be defended here. But in the late 20's, after the aggressive anti-union drives of the years after World War I, the unions that survived in the AF of L tended to be those of the highly skilled crafts with job monopoly control, as in printing, railroads, and building trades.

In a society where unions must deal with hostile employers, all or most of whom are men, and who are not used to dealing with women, pressures to use men for this purpose are, of course, strong. The task of elected officers is to deal not only with their own members but with employers and other elements in the community.

There may be some psychological reasons why women tend to prefer men to be leaders to women - I raise this as a question rather than as a statement, but it is an angle that needs to be explored in this whole area. It may also be that the aggressive self-confident, competitive type of woman

who succeeds in finding her way to the top and can endure the pressures is a hard type for many men to accept. Again one gets into psychological factors which are difficult to explore.

Now for economic factors. Competition for jobs and fear of unemployment have been very powerful factors in excluding women from jobs in crafts or industries. This became especially strong during the depression when there was a drive against married women holding jobs as teachers, etc. and remember in those days there was no unemployment insurance and very little welfare, if any. Men are constantly seeking promotions in industry and there is intense competition for what jobs do open up. The industrial unions have with considerable success avoided discrimination and favoritism in such promotions but nevertheless, typically, more people want a better job than can get it. Thus, as in the case of discrimination against Blacks, it is the working class people who are most apt to suffer from the competition from women. Two illustrations may be of interest in this connection. When the Brewery Workers during World War II admitted women for the first time into membership, it was on the understanding that they would hold a job only temporarily during the war emergency. In contrast I recall when I visited an Alcoa plant near Knoxville, Tennessee in 1948, with Phil Claus, the district director of United Steel Workers, he explained to me that a woman was still functioning as a crane operator because he, and I guess others in the local, had insisted she should not be forced out when the war was over. Obviously the men were dubious about her continuing. Another illustration of problems was that I as a woman was not permitted to visit the part of the plant where the aluminum was molten, because the men there were half-stripped.

In many of the cultures men and women have had separate clubs or meetings by sex. This was true in Bismarck, North Dakota when I was there in '34 and '35 for example. To some extent, a union functions like a club. Admitting

women introduces new factors that may make the men uneasy about the way they dress, speak and tell stories.

Another factor may be that in the tradition of some, women worked only where the man couldn't provide a living wage and that it was a reflection on the man if his wife had to work. For workers who have frustrating jobs and who feel they would much prefer a higher status economically, seeking psychological compensation through feeling superior to women may be an important boost. Traditionally with long and exhausting hours, men had little time or energy for child care or for household tasks, or if they did have time or energy, they were more apt to do work around the house, such as repairs, rebuilding and the grounds.

Another interesting angle is given by the Kinsey study on the inverse correlation between sex drive and education - and this may have affected attitudes towards women as equals, but again we are getting into difficult psychological questions.

Having said all this to try to explain the attitudes of men as well as women, I would like to move on to what we did in the CIO National office to try to advance the position of women. The most basic point, of course, was that in organizing industrial unions, we were organizing hundreds of thousands or millions of women who previously had not had such protection. The Women's Trade Union League had become largely inoperative years before it actually ceased to exist. One of my responsibilities was to handle women's problems for the CIO since I was one of the few professional women with economic background, etc. I think I've already covered this in my other document.

The CIO supported much good protective legislation for women from the Fair Labor Standards Act to state legislation to social security. We were active in the National Committee for Equal Pay trying to get national legis-

lation to avoid discrimination in private industry. We made some effort to get together with other union women in connection with meetings of the Women's Bureau or the National Committee on Equal Pay but there was no formal machinery within the CIO or later within the AFL-CIO for doing this. I am speaking now of the national organization. In 1962 in June the Industrial Union Department had a conference of union women and the report of that conference is in a pamphlet published by the Department called "Problems of Working Women" which is in Box 95, folder 34 of my collection and is a very useful source. But that was an exceptional conference. Very few women are listed as delegates at the CIO or AFL-CIO conventions, or at least were in my day. We would sometimes try to get together or I would check the names on lists.

I want to stress again that this was not exceptional in the unions. I served for some years as CIO alternate on the National Labor-Management Manpower Committee, I think during the Korean War. I was the only woman who attended as alternate or full participant at these meetings. On social security advisory committees there would be one or two other women, but they were very much in the minority.

Each international union, of course, made its own policies in regard to women. They varied greatly. The UAW had a Women's Department. The IUE had conferences of women delegates maybe once a year, maybe not so often. I attended a couple of these and they were very illuminating on the problems of local union women. Gloria Johnson of the IUE staff has done a very good job with this. The IUE has played a notable part in advancing the cause of women in avoiding discrimination and has helped bring cases before the courts, where necessary. Some unions had research directors who were women, such as Gladys Dickason of the Amalgamated, Rosalind Shulman of the Shipyard Workers and Yetta Riesel of the American Newspaper Guild. Legislative re-

presentatives, such as Esther Peterson, of the Amalgamated and IUD, and Evelyn DuBrow of the ILG, were rare but very effective.

In addition to the statement by Bessie Hillman on discrimination in the labor movement, which I quote in my PCSW document and which appears at some length in the IUD pamphlet, I might cite a statement by Dorothy Bellanca, another member of the Amalgamated Executive Board, speaking at a CIO conference on full employment in New York in the mid-forties. She had been asked to introduce speakers at the afternoon meeting of, I think, a two-day session. The speakers were to be women speakers. I remember clearly her saying that she hoped some day that she might have the privilege of introducing men speakers.

I might add a few other little bits. When I joined the Teachers Union and later did some organizing work in North Dakota on a volunteer basis in 1934, the president of The American Federation of Teachers was a woman in the Georgia local, I think the Atlanta local. I remember also an incident when I was working for health benefits for the aged, for the AFL-CIO in the late '50s, and a radio speech was to be given on a Kentucky station, and Nelson Cruikshank explained to me, that whereas this would logically be my function, in view of the attitude of the community, he would send Clint Fair instead. Naturally this was frustrating, even though as I thought about it, I realized that a man probably would be more effective. But such are the difficulties that still need to be overcome if women are to have an equal opportunity in fact.

D: I wonder if I may interrupt your thoughts...

K: Yes. Why don't we stop a minute.

D: Well I wanted to ask a question. Some of these women that you mentioned,

Rosalind Shulman, Yetta Riesel, Evelyn DuBrow, were associated with international unions and you've indicated that they were in positions of some responsibility. Do you think, would you characterize them as window dressing?

K: Oh, no. They weren't window dressing because in those days this business of tokenism and window dressing had not become an issue really. They were functioning and doing a good job. To what extent they were paid equally or why they had been hired, I don't know.

D: Why, for example, let me pursue this a little further. What, you've indicated several factors, many factors, or elements of the difficulties of organizing women and the issue of women versus men. Can you focus on one or two primary reasons why there was not a concerted effort by the unions to tap this unorganized source? I mean is there one argument that was outstanding in this, in any discussion that you might have heard from the union leadership represented on the CIO for example of organizing women and Blacks, for example?

K: Well in answer to that I would say that if you're talking about the problem of organizing the women to become members of the unions, the whole approach of the CIO unions was, "we want to organize anybody [illegible] the employer has hired in the plants where we are trying to establish a union or where the workers have come to us for help." And in those early days it was clear that in some industries the craft workers in a plant would be organized in their departments and they wouldn't care about organizing the women in the other departments. I think it was the Glass Bottle Blowers who had an agreement like that in one of the Ohio plants that comes to mind. This was not uncommon. The feeling was you couldn't organize the less-skilled, unskilled workers. I'm talking now about the late 20's. When you get into the organizing of industrial unions as in the CIO unions, such as autos and steels

and so on, you organize everybody in the plant. That was the whole basis of the union and they might be Black, they might be white, they might be Latin-American, you wanted them as members, because the more members, the stronger the union.

In many industries, employers had played off one group against another. This was true in Aliquippa, Pennsylvania for example. And in West Virginia in that tragic lost strike of 1931 that I participated in with the West Virginia Mine Workers. In one of the mines, when the whites struck, they brought in Blacks as strike-breakers from further south, and this caused great bitterness. In other communities where the workers had organized, the workers were all Black, they had been brought in during earlier strikes to be strike-breakers, now they were good union members. But the CIO record was very good on organizing all of these people.

D: Some of the labor historians who look at race relations in the organizing of particularly the Blacks, not so much of the women, but of Blacks, have argued that the CIO accommodated itself to the more racist view than the AF of L, in order to organize workers in certain areas.

K: I think this charge has been brought against the Steel Workers down in Alabama, that the Blacks worked in certain departments and the whites in other departments. The union, going in and organizing in that situation, had to get established, they had to get the workers to agree to become members, and they had to get the companies to agree to sign an agreement on seniority and so on. And in cases where there was strong prejudice among the white workers, they couldn't overnight eliminate prejudices. So they did accommodate themselves, as you say, to some extent to these practices. But when charges are made against the industrial unions, I think what isn't realized is the extent to which the unions have already made substantial

progress in overcoming prejudices that existed long before the union came in. This would have to be explored in each case. But there is a distinct difference between industrial unions and those craft unions which have a job monopoly and which control who is hired and who don't care about the people who are not hired. They're not trying to organize the whole industry, they're not in a competitive industry in the same way.

D: I didn't mean to interrupt, but I wanted you to try to answer some questions.

K: No. I'm glad you brought out that point. And part of what I've done in going into detail about these various factors affecting women in the labor movement is to make available to women who are interested in this subject what I think are some of the factors at work. And another thing that I want to mention in that connection is that after Title 7 of the Civil Rights Act of '64 was passed, which included the nondiscrimination clause, many of the early cases that were brought before the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission on Discrimination were brought by union women. And I think to non-union women, the business and professional groups, who were not familiar with union problems, this seemed to them an indication that the unions were discriminating. Actually in many cases it was proof that the unions were already giving enough protection to their women members so the women dared bring cases. In a non-union shop, if a woman thought she was being discriminated against, she wouldn't dare bring a case to the EEOC and this I know something about because I did work for the EEOC for awhile. There was theoretically a provision that women could not be discriminated against because they brought cases. But anybody who knows the realities of offices or plants knows this is meaningless unless there is a union to protect the woman if she brings a case. Now it's true that there has been discrimination and a lot of this has been revealed and again it goes back to all these factors, upbringing, society, etc. Even in these big settlements, as the other day with the United Steel

Workers and the companies, if you had a similar case of discrimination in a non-union industry, you would never have fought it through, and you wouldn't have had a union to agree. I don't know what the role of the union is supposed to be in discrimination in that case. But in steel you have a great many workers with a background from eastern Europe, where it's assumed that women play a less important role. Actually, if you think about it, there are not many cultural traditions where there is equal treatment. That is why I made the point I made about professional groups. I don't know whether this has been thoroughly explored or not - it would be difficult to explore. But even in the English tradition this was true, certainly in many of the Catholic traditions and many of the Jewish traditions, and certainly in the southern traditions, so it is very common.

D: What is your response to the seniority issue as it relates to women and minority groups versus the affirmative action position of the government?

K: Well I haven't followed these recent cases. I think each case has to be judged on its own history. And even then it is very difficult to tell. I think that departmental seniority has been discriminatory in cases where departments have been based on race, as in some of the southern plants. But I wouldn't want to make any general statement on it.

D: Well, basically the position is you know, that unions contend that if you do not go by the seniority system, you're going to be on the road to the destruction of unionism, whereas the people who are promoting affirmative action believe that it's necessary to redress history and past grievances in regard to attitudes towards minority groups by throwing seniority out and practicing affirmative action.

K: Well, I would certainly oppose throwing seniority out entirely. What

I was talking about was the form of seniority. Certainly seniority has been an absolutely...

D: Governmental or plant-wide, or whatever.

K: Yes. Seniority is absolutely essential if you're going to avoid favoritism and fear on the part of the workers that they have to curry favor as in the apple-polishing days of the auto plants before you had the union. But there are these difficult situations that come up and...

D: It's a very complex issue.

K: It's a very complex issue.

The next topic I want to deal with is the question of alternatives to the equal rights amendment that we were offering in the years since I retired, which was about 1966. I'm giving to Mr. East today the materials I've accumulated in that period. They contain notes on various meetings that we had with the hope of developing a positive program that unions could support and to which they would commit themselves.

Howard Samuels, assistant to the president of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers took the lead in getting the group together. I developed some proposals along with Gloria Johnson but these were not accepted by the group. I refused to sign the leaflet that was signed by many of the participants which was anti-the equal rights amendment but did not come out sufficiently for a positive program. It was prepared by Henry Fleisher, and I don't know who had the final word about what would go into it. Other documents relevant to this problem are some I prepared for the National Consumers League which are also in these materials which deal with the problem of hours laws and other forms of protective labor legislation. I might mention three statements particularly. 1) My statement as chairman of the Committee on Labor Standards of

the National Consumers League on state labor standards legislation before the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, May 2, 1967. A copy of this is in that material and appended to it is a document called "Scope of Research and Analysis Needed to Improve Laws that Affect Hours of Work." I am giving a copy herewith in case it isn't already in the files. Unfortunately, the efforts to end the labor laws for women only were not being offset by adequate measures to protect the unorganized women who did not have unions to help them and who might be driven by desperation to take whatever jobs were available. There was evidence that the long hours which some of them were forced to work interfered with proper care of their children. Among the materials here in these folders is results of a hasty survey that Caroline Ware and I made at the Division of the Bureau of Labor Statistics that had union-management agreements. Through the code we were able to locate agreements dealing with overtime work. Very few cases we found indicated that overtime was voluntary. But the professional and business women who argued that these laws were no longer needed, in some cases were saying overtime should be voluntary. This is a nice theory but very difficult to obtain in practice and at that time at least was very rare in industry, even where unions were strong. The UAW at that time was trying to get it and hadn't succeeded. Recently the courts, I think the U.S. Supreme Court, threw out the effort in California to extend the existing minimum wage law for women to men. This was one of the things we feared in opposing the equal rights amendment.

My own views on the equal rights amendment changed not long after 1967, I guess when it became clear that the state laws were going out anyhow and that the psychological effect of defeating the equal rights amendment might be bad. But the full story of how the changes that the proponents of the equal rights amendment want will effect family support and low-income workers

is not yet clear. Unfortunately the Department of Labor has very little information as to what really goes on in the low-income establishments not covered by the Fair Labor Standards Act and not covered by union protection.

Another area in which I have been interested is household employment. I worked for the National Consumers League on a volunteer basis on a statement adopted in February 1968 on "Household Workers in the Modern Age." More recently I participated in a committee of the Clearing House on Women's Issues on an International Women's Year project on recognition of the economic contribution of the homemaker. I prepared a fact sheet on "Inclusion of homemakers in national measures of production and income."