THE TWENTIETH CENTURY TRADE UNION WOMAN: VEHICLE FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Oral History Interview

with

JOYCE MAUPIN

Union WAGE [Women's Alliance to Gain Equality]

by

Patricia Yeghissian

Program on Women and Work

Institute of Labor and Industrial Relations

University of Michigan - Wayne State University

Ann Arbor, Michigan

JOYCE MAUPIN

Joyce Maupin's parents moved frequently while she was growing up. She says this made it difficult to develop lasting friendships and describes her childhood self as a "loner." Her parents were socialists who did not discourage her enthusiasm for politics, which began with a school speech on Sacco and Vanzetti when she was 13. In high school she campaigned for Norman Thomas in a mock election.

A high school drop out, Maupin went to France in her late teens. Later she travelled to Berlin, arriving just before Hitler came to power. She describes this period as "the most vivid...of my life." Maupin considered herself a communist and was shocked by the failure of German communists to organize against Hitler. When she returned to the States she became a Trotskyist.

Maupin arrived home during the Great Depression and worked on-and-off as a sales clerk, model, and office worker. She also worked, sometimes for money and sometimes as a volunteer, for a socialist publication, The Modern Monthly. In 1934 she joined an office workers' union but did not become active.

Maupin's daughter was born around 1940 and she found steadier work. Two years later she met and married Pete Hesser, a Merchant Marine and member of the Socialist Workers' Party (SWP). Though she warned her new husband against trying to recruit her for the Party she became interested on her own and joined the SWP while he was at sea.

During the forties and fifties Pete and Joyce lived in California, Oregon, Washington, and Massachusetts. They held many jobs: Joyce worked at Bemis Bag in San Francisco, at Boeing in Seattle, and everywhere as a waitress. Though her experiences with union officials was discouraging she became more and more active in work place politics. As SWP organizers Joyce and Pete had little success, but Joyce continued to develop her considerable speaking and writing skills.

Early in the fifties Joyce left Pete and returned to New York. She worked as a waitress and clerical and, despite many criticisms, continued her work with the Party. Maupin ran for mayor of New York City, and other positions, on the SWP ticket. She also served on the Political Committee and wrote a regular column for The Militant.

Maupin moved to California in 1960 and got a job with millionaire contractor, Charles Harney. She worked for Harney for about 18 months before falling seriously ill--she had three operations within a year. While confined to bed she wrote fiction. As she began to recover she took temporary office jobs. Maupin had left the SWP in 1962 convinced she could not help them change their sexist, bureaucratic, opportunist, and middle class ways. She could not, however, remain politically inactive for long. While working in the Benefit Funds Office of the Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union she was elected steward of Local 29, Office and Professional Employees' Union (OPEU). She organized a sick-out aimed at improving conditions.

Her dissatisfaction with OPEU propelled her into the Union Women's Alliance to Gain Equality (Union WAGE), founded in 1971. She recalls a strike at Lucky Stores in 1970 (the strike lead to the founding of Union WAGE) as "something new in the labor movement....[and I] got quite excited." She served as coordinator of Union WAGE during the early years and is currently president of the organization. She describes the goal of Union WAGE as linking the union movement--which is not meeting the needs of women--to the women's movement--which is not meeting the needs of working class women.

Oral History Interview

with

Joyce Maupin

July 16, 1978

by

Patricia Yeghissian

INTERVIEWER: San Francisco. Interview with Joyce Maupin, currently president of the Union WAGE [Women's Alliance to Gain Equality]. I'm curious right now as to why you think I might be here. What about your life do you think I might want to get at that brings me here today to interview you? What would you pinpoint?

MAUPIN: I really wouldn't. That's what's been happening [the] last few years. A number of people, for one reason or another [want to interview me]. They have different approaches of course, starting with the one I told you about. She was about sixteen years old and she won twenty-five dollars from NOW [National Organization for Women].

INTERVIEWER: You've been active how long now in union and political work?

MAUPIN: Well, if you want to go really back to the beginning, since age thirteen.

INTERVIEWER: Age thirteen?

MAUPIN: When I gave a speech--I was in eighth grade--on Sacco and Vanzetti for some sort of speech thing that we had. It caused a mild sensation.

INTERVIEWER: How so?

MAUPIN: Well, they didn't really expect....I think you were just supposed to prepare a speech for some sort of class. I don't recall the occasion, but they didn't expect me to choose that subject. I had gotten involved emotionally with the Sacco and Vanzetti case because it meant a lot of things to me personally. My parents were--my mother was a journalist. For some reason that I've never understood, they preferred to live in small towns telling me it was for my own good, but I never found that it was. And they were kind of ostracized; they were atheists, they were socialists, my mother

MAUPIN: was a journalist, and they were considered peculiar people. As a result I never really integrated into any of the little towns where we lived and I felt very much an outsider. At times I was actively persecuted as an outsider. So when the Sacco/Vanzetti case broke--I don't know just how long before their execution, not too long, maybe six or eight months--when it really got into a lot of national headlines . . . . [I understood], they were anarchists and they were atheists and they were foreigners, and that's what people were picking on them for; they didn't fit in. I did identify with it.

INTERVIEWER: With the feeling of not fitting in?

MAUPIN: Not fitting in.

INTERVIEWER: Did you also draw some sort of identification because they were similar to your own parents?

MAUPIN: No, because my own parents went much further back in this country. My mother's family had come over after the revolution of 1848 in Germany. One of her uncles had trained black troops during the Civil War. But that was fairly recent. My father's family had come--they were Huguenots--they went back to the settlement of Virginia, way, way back. Before the Civil War they freed their slaves and moved up to Illinois and my grandfather was a friend of Lincoln. There were all kinds of traditions in the family. My parents had a falling out with the Socialist Party;that came during World War I. They had a farm when I was a very small child in New Jersey, thirty miles out of New York. So their whole branch in the Socialist Party used to spend all their weekends there.

INTERVIEWER: With your parents?

MAUPIN: Yes. (laughter) They had tennis courts and all. I remember it vaguely; it stopped when I was about six. But the break with them came over World War I, and my parents became kind of patriotic.

INTERVIEWER: Why, what were their feelings?

MAUPIN: Oh, the usual thing; the Hun is at our gate. There was a serious split in the Socialist Party then. They always loved Debs [Eugene] although he was on the other side of that split. They had known all these people like Big Bill Haywood and I heard about them all when I was a child. Although they had split by that time, they always had a sort of friendly attitude towards them all.

INTERVIEWER: What happened to their politics after they split?

MAUPIN: Not very much. I mean they didn't really pursue it. Their attitude--that's why they didn't fit into the small town--

MAUPIN: their attitude was still a bit radical.

INTERVIEWER: How old were you then?

MAUPIN: At the time of the split I was about three years old. I don't remember that, but I do remember . . . . Let's see, the war was 1917, 1918, and I was born in 1914. But I remember a lot of the people--not clearly. They spent quite a bit of time in the Greenwich Village of that period.

INTERVIEWER: What, in the Twenties?

MAUPIN: No earlier, beginning of the century. They had known a lot of people, Big Bill Haywood and people like Frances Perkins who later became . . . the first woman in the Cabinet, the Secretary of Labor.

INTERVIEWER: Secretary of Labor.

MAUPIN: At the time it seemed . . .

INTERVIEWER: Was the Village at this time a sort of hotbed for politics?

MAUPIN: Politics and free love and similar things. They--my parents --were considered very conservative because they'd gotten married! They knew a lot of theater people and others too, many of whom I met, writers and actors.

INTERVIEWER: What did your father do?

MAUPIN: The big thing is that he had very bad health so that he had very intermittent employment and a great deal of the time my mother supported the family. He was, he had started as a teacher but I think he got screened out of his job at some point, or at any rate, he had problems.

INTERVIEWER: Why?

MAUPIN: As a radical. He was very good with mathematics and wound up later in his life selling businessmen calculators because he could explain all the businessmen's problems. He was twice in a TB sanitarium, he had cancer at one time and other illnesses, so he had a pretty bad time of it. His working life was intermittent.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think it was unusual as a child having your mother basically support the family?

MAUPIN: I don't think I was too conscious of it at first, and then people pointed it out to me later. I do remember sort of a funny incident not having to do with her supporting the family. When I was eleven they left me alone all night and when they came back they asked was I worried and I said, "I certainly was, suppose you and daddy had died, how

MAUPIN: would I pay the rent?" (laughter) I was certainly very conscious of economic factors, not who did it but at least that it was quite a problem.

INTERVIEWER: Did you have brothers and sisters?

MAUPIN: One sister who died when I was an infant.

INTERVIEWER: So you were an only child. Then it was sort of hard to know how you were with other children. Now you can say that a lot of it was unusual.

MAUPIN: It was difficult, it was difficult. I know I always knew I wasn't adjusting well with other children when we were messing around with each other. And I think I, yes, I had a lifelong thing with that. It did improve as I got older. It was hard, I was sort of a loner wandering off into the hills getting and thinking fantasies. Not getting along with most of the children in the areas where we lived.

INTERVIEWER: It sort of comes back to how we opened about you being an outsider and identifying with Sacco and Vanzetti.

MAUPIN: Well, the next year things improved a little. I got into the Unitarian Young People's Religious Union and there was a minister in that town who considered himself a socialist and had opposed World War I. His daughter was in high school. So at that point, this was 1928, as I recall, they decided to have mock elections in high school. They had a Republican, a Democrat and Norman Thomas on the ballot although this was a very heavy Republican town.

INTERVIEWER: Where were you?

MAUPIN: In Metuchen, New Jersey. So I got together with the minister's daughter and we decided to campaign for Norman Thomas. I turned out all sorts of leaflets of "What is Socialism?" all by longhand as I recall. We wound up with 40 percent of the vote in the high school, (laughter) which absolutely threw everybody.

INTERVIEWER: What did your parents think of that?

MAUPIN: Well they went to my parents because they were talking about expelling me and she [my mother] said, "Oh, fine!" She said, "She did that!" Then she just laughed. She had teacher's credentials anyway, she said, "I'll teach you, that's alright." But they never did expel me. I do remember that the principal of that high school was named Mr. Best, and he got me in and he said, "You see, forever after this, when anybody writes me for a reference, I'll have to tell them about your activities." I said, "Thanks for letting me know, I won't give you as a reference." I was about fourteen. So I started rather early. That's why when you said, "When did you get into politics," it seemed

MAUPIN: like it's been forever.

INTERVIEWER: Did you think of yourself as a socialist at that age?

MAUPIN: Well, at about fourteen I decided I was a communist, but there weren't any in the town where I lived. Then we found out, the minister's daughter and I, that there were six children of Russian-Jewish communists in the high school, so we had a united front with them.

INTERVIEWER: Are you also of Jewish descent?

MAUPIN: No. That was very interesting for me. I went into all their homes and drank tea from glasses, all sorts of things I wasn't familiar with. When I first started to go into New York--it was only thirty miles from Metuchen [New Jersey]-- ...this was in 1928, they'd say, "What are you doint here? You're not a Jewish girl." It was so heavily, New York, so predominantly Jewish-American at that time.

INTERVIEWER: Yes, that's very true. Do you remember having difficulties with teachers, when you were thirteen, fourteen, or fifteen, throughout high school because of your political beliefs?

MAUPIN: Not too much. It was a fairly good school the first three years. The fourth year I went to New York and it was terrible. But the classes were small, some of the teachers were pretty nice, and also if you maintained a certain average you didn't have to take tests, which I hated. So I maintained the average and came out with some sort of medal; my only scholastic achievement because I never got through the fourth year. But in New York I got into a big school, Washington Irving, where my daughter went later, in the lower east not lower east side but middle east side. It was terrible; it was depression, the classes were enormous, there were no supplies, the teachers were just overburdened and a little impossible. I was miserable, I was used to small classes and lots of attention. Somewhere towards the end of the year I got sick.

My mother interviewed businessmen and some businesswomen on their careers--she wrote a lot for popular magazines--one of the women she interviewed was named Miss Gleason, she was an engineer, one of the first women engineers. She was in France, rebuilding some town pulverized in the war, and she invited me over. It didn't turn out, we didn't get along very well when I got there. But at that time--it was towards the end of my fourth year of high school and as I said I'd been out sick anyway.... When I went back to try to tell them why I was out they said, "What are you doing here?" It was so crowded that they didn't want anybody

MAUPIN: to come back. I had a little money. It seems like nothing today, maybe a thousand dollars,that had come from my grandparents I'd always saved it to go to Europe. She [my mother] said she'd pay my fare over and also, if I stayed for a year, pay it back. She didn't want me to change my mind as soon as I got there. So I went, and I had a really difficult time with this Miss Gleason [the engineer].

INTERVIEWER: You went with her to Europe?

MAUPIN: No. She was there, she had a project, she had another woman engineer there and an artist. They were rebuilding some of the things that had been bombed in the First World War. The thing is that she was quite a wealthy woman, maybe eight or ten million, something like that, and she had a lot of people hanging around her. They were all very flattering because of her money, and I didn't fit in with this, I was that foreign radical and I obviously wasn't part of that little community. It was quite a crisis in my life because she told me to write my mother that I wanted to go home, which I didn't want to do. I had a boyfriend back in the United States to whom I wrote the truth, and he told my mother, so it wound up that I got to Paris.

INTERVIEWER: Where were you before that?

MAUPIN: Soissons was the name of the town, a little bit to the north of Paris. I stayed in Paris for another nine months until I went up to Berlin, just when Hitler got to power. I got to Berlin the night before Hitler got to power.

INTERVIEWER: How long were you in Berlin?

MAUPIN: About, I think about three months. I was planning to stay there and work too, but . . .

INTERVIEWER: Do you remember anything?

MAUPIN: I remember everything like it was now, it was probably the most vivid period of my life.

INTERVIEWER: Why?

MAUPIN: The first thing is that I went there as a convinced communist, and the first tremendous shock was that Hitler came to power and it seemed that the communists weren't doing anything. I couldn't believe it.

INTERVIEWER: To stop him?

MAUPIN: Yes, to stop him, and nobody else was doing anything, but I wasn't expecting anyone else to do it. It was so much of a shock. I didn't know what had happened. Also the boyfriend I had in the United States was a German Jewish boy that I had planned to marry, and I was visiting his family there in Germany. Later when I discussed all this with him, he was older and a little more philosophical. Because I said, "All these people went crazy. The people who had been radical and the leftists and everyone, some of them rushed into Nazi uniforms." I couldn't believe it, I couldn't understand it. He said, "When fire breaks out people rush for the exits and trample all the other people." But I had no such philosophical feeling about the whole situation and I, I really went home in this total state of despair, I had no idea what had happened, why it had happened....

INTERVIEWER: How old were you?

MAUPIN: Eighteen. I had a tremendous feeling of doom which wasn't understood when I got home. People didn't understand why I was going around speaking of doom. The usual attitude among both the people I knew in Berlin, not all of them, but most of them, and the people back home was, "Oh, he's some kind of buffoon," and, "Give him enough rope and he'll hang himself." I just remember one person in a Berlin cafe saying, "Yes, but he is going to hang all of us first." But most of the people were laughing and joking, and they didn't think . . .

INTERVIEWER: Do you suppose that's why the communists rushed into establishment kinds of things like the army and stuff because they were assuming that he was a buffoon?

MAUPIN: Some of them, Bettleheim writes about this in The Informed Heart, went into the Nazi SS as part of their underground work, to give information to their comrades and to be in a situation to help them escape; they were fighting Hitler from within. But I think that a great many people,and most of them that I saw personally, just panicked.

There was something that happened in the United States around that time in New England called the Coconut Grove fire in which everybody ran for the exits and about six or eight hundred people were trampled to death before revolving doors and there were back exits that they could have gone through. Because it was total panic when the fire broke out. It was something like that in Germany.

INTERVIEWER: That seems somewhat contradictory, becuase on one hand you're saying that people think he's a buffoon and going to topple soon.

MAUPIN: Some, not everybody. What you might call the intellectuals,

MAUPIN: the more enlightened people took this attitude. But then things began to happen while I was there. I was there for the burning of the Reichstag, the March elections and the boycott of Jewish stores when people were saying, "Oh, we'll go back the next day." Then where I lived, I was boarding with the family of the man who was editor of Welt Am Abend, which was one of the big communist newspapers. He was arrested almost immediately, then he was released right before the March 5 elections. They [the Nazis] arrested a lot of people as soon as they got into power and then released them the night before the elections to give the impression that they weren't going to really be so rough. After the elections he was immediately rearrested. He figured he was going to be rearrested, by that time, he had caught on. He was in the apartment when Nazi storm-troopers came to arrest him. I went up to meet them because I looked like such a nice German girl. I had braids around my head. I told them what nice uniforms they had (laughter) while he was getting out the back door.

That was only happening to leadership people. They didn't crack down on other people until much later. But there was enough of it that people--especially people in certain political parties and situations--began to get, within three months they began to get nervous. I had a tutor in German, at that time. He was a Nazi, I mean an incipient Nazi, I don't think that he was involved with them organizationally. He kept telling me that he was a socialist, it was National Socialism and Hitler was going to bring about all these socialist changes. I kept saying, "I don't see anything socialist being instituted." He said, "You're very impatient, he's only been around a couple of months, wait a little." A year later when he took a trip to Switzerland, he sent me a postcard and it said, "Ich warte noch," which means, I'm still waiting. So, some of these people were serious about socialism and they really thought that he didn't mean any of this stuff about the Jews and that it was just propaganda and that he was really going to bring about good reforms.

INTERVIEWER: So you'd say that a lot of the leftists that you saw held that view?

MAUPIN: No, that was more some of the people in the middle. The leftists didn't take him too seriously. They began to when, as I said, things happened, but they just didn't think he would last. They really didn't, most of them. They thought he would make a lot of stupid mistakes and fall on his face and he would be out, which of course ties in with their whole policy of years before which I didn't know anything about then.

MAUPIN: I became a Trotskyist afterwards. I knew nothing about Trotsky at the time except one thing that I read on the front page of the paper--he had gone through Paris while I was there. But I had no idea what had happened or why and one of the things I read, I don't know if it was Trotsky himself or somebody else, said that the hardest kind of defeat to understand is one where nobody fights. That was the German experience, because later in Spain it was very different, they were fighting there to the very last person. You didn't have this strange feeling of total frustration. I mean, whatever happened to the thirteen million communists and socialists in Germany? Where were they?

INTERVIEWER: Did they all just go into the woodwork, or did many of them flee?

MAUPIN: Some fled but not.... I couldn't give you statistics on what everybody did, but they weren't even that worried to begin with. That was one of the things I.... Richer Jewish families mostly stayed there. A few got out fast, they were allowed to get out with about fifteen percent of their former capital which most of them felt was a lousy offer, although it was a very good offer in view of what happened later. I remember one who was somehow vaguely connected with this family, but he had no money. He had just walked across the border at some point, which was possible to do in certain sections, he was really taking a chance,of course.

People said, "Well, what did you bring with you?" He said, "I didn't bring anything with me, I didn't have anything to bring." They would say, "Oh, that's dreadful." Their whole preoccupation was with what can we get out before we leave, if we're leaving.

One of my friends had been in a jail, not a concentration camp. I think it was the end of 1933, beginning of 1934, and she said.... She was an actress and her problem was that she had a communist boyfriend, and they came to pick him up and she was there so they picked her up, too. But they didn't have concentration camps yet, they put her in jail. It was in Hamburg where she knew people. It's one of these crazy stories.... She tried, she knew someone in the prison hospital and he said that if she could get to the prison hospital he could help her get out. So she lay in a wet nightgown on the cement floor to try very hard to get a cold, but it didn't work out. Later she went on a hunger strike and did escape. She got to Paris, sat in a draft, and got pneumonia. She said that she had never had any interest in politics previous to this experience. Her

MAUPIN: parents left on the last ship out of Germany before the war. She had married a movie director in Hollywood and she tried to get them out earlier but they didn't want to get out. But they did on the very last ship, and then it was torpedoed and they were in an open lifeboat for a week. They finally went to South America, then she got them into this country.

All of those years, from 1934 until the beginning of the war, there was this putting off of reality. I think that the best thing that I've ever read on it was Bettleheim's The Informed Heart. He was a psychiatrist, he was in a concentration camp, and he discussed all the attitudes about how to survive and explained many things which I had found incomprehensible.

INTERVIEWER: He said just generally how people could have allowed Hitler to come to pass?

MAUPIN: He didn't deal with that, he dealt with how people survived in the camps, if they did. He had several categories of people who did. One group was convinced communists, another group was the Jehovah's Witnesses, and another the former aristocracy, the common element was these people had a profound sense of their own worth, of their own importance, and were not too easily destroyed by the conditions. Other people, there were all kinds of adaptations, but one of the bad adaptations was sometimes the communists went into the prison system with the idea of helping people to get out, but they adapted to it so much that they couldn't function anymore.

INTERVIEWER: Yes. Now you talked about coming back to the states and being sort of the voice of doom. How else, what did this do to your political views?

MAUPIN: I didn't do anything for a while, I just couldn't believe in anything. I used to wander around the cheap theaters, the WPA [Works Progress Administration] theater, and I saw something called The Sailors of Cattaro. I remember it because it was one of these decisive things. The conflict in the play was about some sailors who took over a battleship and the officers are imprisoned. Later they ask for their democratic right to speak, which they are eventually given, and they [the sailors] begin to get defectors because they [the officers are] very eloquent. Eventually the people who led the battle are isolated. It had all these questions about under what conditions to struggle, and democracy and can you use it or can't you use it. I remember it very vividly just like Germany. But somehow it got me

MAUPIN: out of my lethargy. Because it had so many provocative questions.

INTERVIEWER: Where did you go from there?

MAUPIN: I got onto a small magazine called The Modern Monthly which. . .

INTERVIEWER: Writer?

MAUPIN: No, I was called the business manager. I was twenty then and it was edited by V. F. Calverton whom you've possibly heard of.

INTERVIEWER: No.

MAUPIN: Well, he wrote a lot of books. He died about 1949. He also had this magazine--it was an independent radical monthly, which is what attracted me--in which there was supposed to be an open forum where people would discuss different viewpoints. But I had become totally bewildered by all these varied experiences. I got extremely involved in this--it seems to be a disease of mine--in all the day-to-day stuff, the subscriptions, the forums and everything else. Although a lot of interesting things happened along the way.

INTERVIEWER: Sort of the general organizing of it?

MAUPIN: Yes. I can't get away from it so I'm always torn between trying to write things and getting very involved in organizational stuff. About the same time there was an elevator strike in New York, 1932, and there was a flying squadron of girls developed to pull people out of the building, which I joined, and we got arrested.

INTERVIEWER: You say to pull people out, you mean nonstrikers?

MAUPIN: Nonstrikers.

INTERVIEWER: No, the strikebreakers were there too; we pulled out the nonstrikers and the strikebreakers pulled us out, threw us out, whatever. I was told, I remember, that it was okay to resist which made me feel very happy because they didn't have any legal basis for being there, these strikebreakers. They pulled us out eventually. I got a little bruised and got arrested.

INTERVIEWER: Did you go to jail?

MAUPIN: No, we got into court and these two huge guys,about six-foot-six, said that I had assaulted them; it did look a little silly. (laughter)

INTERVIEWER: Just a slight bit.

MAUPIN: That was the same time I had started working on the magazine.

INTERVIEWER: Was that your first job?

MAUPIN: It wasn't actually a job. No, the first job was. . . when I got back from Europe I worked as a salesgirl for the Christmas season, another unforgettable experience. It was in the depths of the depression. They advertised for Christmas help and I think I was something like eight hundredth in line. It went on all day until about.... You couldn't leave your place in line for any reason, so I finally got inside in late afternoon. About four o'clock I finally got interviewed and they said, "We don't think you're aggressive enough." That's when I exploded. I said, "Aggressive! I've been here since early in the morning standing in the cold and then in the heat and I haven't had anything to eat and now you want me to be aggressive!" So, they hired me.

INTERVIEWER: Were you conscious of what you were doing or were you acting for them?

MAUPIN: No, no, I really exploded. I got my first job ever because I lost my temper. Then I heard the person in front of me--they wanted a college education for the temporary Christmas help, and she didn't have it. When they asked me I immediately jumped my age up two years and said, "Oh, I studied abroad." (laughter) Then they gave you training, you did get paid money for training. So they tested you while you were training, what you knew about. It turned out I tested very high in politics and poetry but I tested zilch in children's books, so what did they do? They put me in children's books. I stomped into personnel again and I said, "What's the idea of all this testing and you put me in the one area where I tested zero?" So they transferred me to politics.

INTERVIEWER: Why did you apply for a salesgirl job at that point?

MAUPIN: It was the only job advertised. There was very little around. So occasionally I did some modeling.

INTERVIEWER: What kind, for artists?

MAUPIN: Artists. A friend of my mother's was an artist and I occasionally met one. I didn't get too much money from it, but some of them paid me.

INTERVIEWER: Now you came back from Germany, did you live with your family or your boyfriend or what?

MAUPIN: I went back temporarily with my family and then I went off on my own because I didn't get along with them.

INTERVIEWER: This was who, your parents?

MAUPIN: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: And then did you move to New York?

MAUPIN: They had moved to New York in the meantime, because of the depression. They no longer could afford suburban life. My mother wound up on a WPA project, a writer's project. She got me a WPA job for about three weeks, but I couldn't stand it. I had to file pink slips by number, and the pink slips were the dismissal slips. By the end of three weeks I was climbing up the wall. Nobody ever quit anything in those days, so they just couldn't believe it [that I quit].

INTERVIEWER: And from there you went to the Macy's job?

MAUPIN: I had all sorts of little dinky jobs at one time or another but I wound up in office work primarily.

INTERVIEWER: Were you doing politics on the side this whole time?

MAUPIN: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: You went to Germany a communist but you were disillusioned?

MAUPIN: I was disillusioned.

INTERVIEWER: If you were disillusioned, what did you come back as?

MAUPIN: I didn't affiliate with anything. I did work on The Modern Monthly because I considered it a forum for a wide range of ideas, which seemed badly needed. Then

MAUPIN: I joined my first office worker's union when I was twenty, in 1934. I wasn't especially active in it because I didn't really keep any of my office jobs very long, sometimes one week! There was an office worker's union in New York at that time.

INTERVIEWER: Why did you join the union?

MAUPIN: On principle .... They were a little surprised. I walked into their office and they asked why did I want to join, and I said my principles!

INTERVIEWER: Which were what?

MAUPIN: That workers should be unionized. But I wanted also to get into it, that's why I also volunteered in the elevator strike.

INTERVIEWER: But then it was just your own principles. You weren't doing this in affiliation with any sort of party? Or attempt to colonize?

MAUPIN: No, no, some of that came later.

INTERVIEWER: I'd like to jump back to the beginning of that stage. It seems like it's a part we sort of skirted around. I was kind of intrigued by your family traditions that we talked about, and your grandfather that was a friend of Lincoln's.

MAUPIN: And an uncle who, the great uncle who trained black troops during the Civil War. My grandmother was left a widow with two children, two and four, to support.

INTERVIEWER: Your mother's mother?

MAUPIN: My mother's mother. She first took in sewing, and then . . .I forget what her early jobs were. Eventually her uncle got her something in City Hall, a job in the mint I believe. In her old age she got a little pension and travelled all around. She was for suffrage and she was a very independent woman because she had about nine older brothers and apparently every one of them might have taken her in and helped her. But she was going to do it on her own, and did.

INTERVIEWER: Did you know your grandmother?

MAUPIN: Oh yes. She died when I was eleven. I was crazy about her as a matter of fact.

INTERVIEWER: Did she live near you?

MAUPIN: Well a part of the time. We travelled around a lot. Part of the time we lived near her in Philadelphia, especially for the last two years. She was a lot of fun, laughing a lot. My mother was harder to get along with. Of course, my mother always said my grandmother was hard to get along with too, but maybe.... She wasn't in her older years, as I recall. When we visited her in Philadelphia. . .she had an apartment that had a bureau I later inherited which had a secret drawer where she stored a lot of things from her life.

INTERVIEWER: Is that how you began to learn the family history, going through her bureau?

MAUPIN: Some, some, but my mother wrote an article which was called--a popular article in a women's journal--"What My Mother Did For Me." She described their life. She and her sister from a very early age were trained to do a great deal around the house. From about five or six they were trained to hold down a great deal of responsibility and do chores around the house and they rose very early. My grandmother not only did all the housework before she left for a ten-hour day, but came back and sewed all their clothes. And she had only a grade school education but she took all their high school classes with them because she wanted more education. She took them to the opera and the theater and they could only afford the top balconies, so they'd go with newspapers to keep their feet warm, stand on them instead of the cement. She was quite a person.

INTERVIEWER: Do you know these stories from her or from your mother?

MAUPIN: Mostly from my mother. At one point when I was trying to write fiction again I wrote a story about my grandmother and my mother, as my mother had told it. It was called The Old Jew Around the Corner, which may not seem to have any meaning, but what happened was that my mother and her sister were pretty much on their own because my grandmother worked full time. My mother was a great reader and always walked long distances to the library. When she was about eleven this strange old man approached her, he had a beard and a little cap. He said he had noticed that she was always going back and forth to the library with books and that he had a very fine library around the corner if she would like to borrow books. She got very excited

MAUPIN: about it and went to see him and he had this marvelous apartment with books lining the walls, and he turned out to be quite a famous Jewish scholar. But she had to get my grandmother's permission to visit him. All the neighbors were quite outraged that this little girl was going to visit an old Jew and it was all very weird. But my grandmother supported this because he was a very great scholar. How she knew I don't even know. So for years, until she got to high school, my mother went there for books and she would discuss them with him. She figured that was what started her in jounalism. And he also had a very positive position about women's liberation.

INTERVIEWER: Did you say that's what started her on being. . .

MAUPIN: Being a writer.

INTERVIEWER: On being a writer.

Did she learn other things from him as well? Were there political and philosophical discussions or did that come from. . .

MAUPIN: I think philosophical, not much political. Then she met other people through him and they led totally different lives. What's interesting, and which I brought out to a limited extent in my story, is that my aunt Bertha was totally different. In the first place she wanted to dress and go out with boys and she thought it was really weird that my mother went to this old Jew's house, and that it was kind of disgraceful. So she fought with her about it. I guess in a way, because of my mother's isolation and the fact that her mother was working all the time, it was the first thing that gave her a feeling that she might become really important; that somebody would listen to her. I'm sure my grandmother would listen to her but her time was pretty limited. So that was all part of the early story which my mother told me and which I tried to write one time.

INTERVIEWER: Your grandmother lived in Philly [Philadelphia] so you didn't see her on any daily basis.

MAUPIN: No.

INTERVIEWER: So did you have anyone in your life during your young years, a mentor or something?

MAUPIN: Occasionally I had a best friend for a while, but it didn't really last, partly because of moving, not anyone that I

MAUPIN: remember that vividly now. One of my friends was named Abigail, and she really was quite a good friend. I saw her occasionally over the years. She, well, everybody was always moving it seemed to me. I wasn't going to move when I grew up, but I did. Also, there was some friction between families, which caused problems.

INTERVIEWER: Why? Was it political again?

MAUPIN: What it was. . .apparently Abigail's mother.... She was very fond of men and tried to have an affair with my father when my mother was away, which my mother didn't forgive her for. So I wasn't supposed to see Abigail, which I thought was extremely unfair.

INTERVIEWER: Did you know the reason at the time?

MAUPIN: I deduced it.

INTERVIEWER: Were you proud of your grandmother?

MAUPIN: Well later, at first I just was very fond of her. I didn't have much you know....

INTERVIEWER: She was just a nice old lady?

MAUPIN: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: Did you talk much to her as a child? When you say you had fun, was that just playing games?

MAUPIN: Well, she was. . .she joked and did play a lot of games and things like that. I was told later that she had terribly severe depressions and I didn't know her during that time. Her final illness, she was in our house. . . so I saw her as a sick old woman. But all the time that I had a relationship with her she was lively and joking and playing; much more than my mother was.

INTERVIEWER: Did she have any dreams for you?

MAUPIN: No, and I, what I had with my mother was a kind of--she was very excited about her first child who at age two and a half died. She felt that she was very brilliant, and I heard all my life about how brilliant she was and all of the things she would have accomplished. I even opened her memory book once which said, "The dreams that I dreamed for Doris, Joyce must fulfill," which made me very resentful. But that was my mother's tragedy, of course, that her first child died.

INTERVIEWER: Did you get much positive support from your mother, or father, or did you always feel like you were living in your sister's shadow?

MAUPIN: Well it wasn't just the sister's shadow, but my father was a very cool and distant man. He was kind of nice, actually, and he also had a very odd dry sense of humor at times. But I remember, my friends did not realize he was around, that he was alive. I didn't mention him much because there didn't seem to be much to mention. There was a period when he got quite ill, in the fifties, he was put in the hospital. I went to talk to him and to see him and I felt embarrassed because I didn't have anything to say to him. But then I hadn't said anything to him ever since I was a child, so it was a little hard to start then. Any my mother was overbearing. She was very forceful, and very opinionated, especially about me and I found it very difficult, which is why I wanted to get away.

INTERVIEWER: When you say about you, how so?

MAUPIN: What I should be and what I should be doing and I think that she never quite forgave me.

The last few years of her life she was in a nursing home, she died when she was eighty-eight.

INTERVIEWER: Your mother?

MAUPIN: Yes. My father died when he was eighty-five. And she was pretty much out of her mind most of those last three years partly because she was heavily tranquilized. She was a very cranky old lady, and that's what they do in nursing homes. So when I went to see her she might or might not know who I was, but she'd occasionally come out of the fog and say, "I know you, you're my daughter, the failure." She had this attitude and held a grudge all of her life. She thought my daughter was doing well and she said, "Obviously the strength in the family skipped a generation."

INTERVIEWER: Your parents were political though, or did that end when they left the party?

MAUPIN: Sort of, except they remembered. . .they never got very conservative. So when I asked them questions about things .... I still remember some of them. I asked mother about the Sacco and Vanzetti case, when I was thirteen, "What's a Red?" And she said, "Well, Reds are people who believe

MAUPIN: that all people are equal because they all have red blood in their veins," which sounded alright to me. Also she was very permissive when I got in trouble with my opinions, I mean, that didn't bother her. In fact she thought that was kind of fun, but.... Well, it's hard to tell about my father although he was the original socialist, I think he recruited my mother. But he was quiet so it was very hard to tell what he thought about anything.

INTERVIEWER: Were they supportive of your political views, I mean during school it sounds like they sort of encouraged it because they thought it was neat that you were a socialist.

MAUPIN: Later on when I was quite active in the Socialist Workers Party and ran for office and wrote, my mother got rather supportive because she felt that it was a career of some kind, and my father was mildly supportive, except that he wasn't very much involved in anything. But more support than not, let's put it that way.

INTERVIEWER: What do you think they thought of you? I mean, when you were younger, in your twenties or thirties, whatever.

MAUPIN: I guess both my mother and father couldn't figure out why I didn't settle down and have a conventional marriage, even though they had been around all those free lovers in the Village. They couldn't understand my attitudes about sex and men, so they were always hoping that somehow I would straighten out.

INTERVIEWER: Straighten out and get married and have a family and that ....

MAUPIN: I did it sort of the other way around, I got pregnant and had a child before I was married, and that didn't make too great an impression on them. Although in a way, in the end, my mother understood it better than my father.

INTERVIEWER: Is that why you married, because you were pregnant?

MAUPIN: No, I didn't. I married when my daughter was two and a half--not her father, somebody else. (laughter) But they just didn't understand my attitude. My father was immediately going to stalk forth and make him marry me, and I said, "I think you might make him marry me, because he's a coward, but you can't make me marry him." That didn't go over very well.

INTERVIEWER: Did they just sort of see your free lifestyle and your political life as just all one and the same thing? I mean....

MAUPIN: I don't know, I think it just was hard for them to understand. Although as I say, in the end, with all her contradictions, I think mother understood it better than he did. He just had the attitude, "Well, I should get a gun and go after this man who made her pregnant," which was kind of ridiculous. So, when I did get married, I married a merchant sailor who was in the Socialist Workers Party and who never made much money. Again they considered it a very strange choice and didn't like him very much. They loved Irene when they got used to the idea.

INTERVIEWER: That's your daughter?

MAUPIN: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: Was she close to your parents, when you all lived in New York?

MAUPIN: Yes, because when I broke up with my husband--we were in Massachusetts -- I went back to New York, partly because my parents were there and she was about ten then and I had the usual child-care problems. She got along with them quite well at that time. I wanted to come back to California but Irene wanted to stay there. So it took some years before we all got out to California.

INTERVIEWER: Did your parents want you to go to college at that time? I mean, since there was that stress on a career?

MAUPIN: Earlier, at the time I went to Europe they rather wished that I had gone to college instead. The chances are that since their whole financial situation fell apart at that time I would never have had the money to continue anyway, I might have gone for a year or so. At the time I came back I decided I would like to work with children in childcare centers and I looked into what courses I would have to take. It seemed quite oppressive, years and years and years to become a nursery school teacher which I felt was ridiculous. I even went so far as to try and get a job in somebody's household taking care of kids. Nobody wanted to hire me because they said I would be too superior.

INTERVIEWER: What do you think that meant?

MAUPIN: Well, people like servants that they could order around.

INTERVIEWER: You had a mind of your own?

MAUPIN: I didn't look like the type. That was the period when I

MAUPIN: was doing a little bit of everything, a little modeling, whatever came along. When I did get permanent work, it was office work.

INTERVIEWER: Did your early political views come out of the fact that it was just what your parents were into, or were they based on a sense of you own values?

MAUPIN: I still think that this early feeling of being an outsider had a great deal to do with it, which started with my identification with Sacco and Vanzetti.

INTERVIEWER: And that's when you first became politicized.

MAUPIN: Yes, there were people who didn't fit in, and I was obviously one of them, I didn't quite know why.... I hated the small towns where we lived and I hated the people in them. They struck me as being very snobbish and immature and I had all these wild, romantic, poetic, revolutionary ideas. But I didn't fit into anything around me, and it made life very difficult.

When I was about fifteen and my mother was away, I took the night boat to Boston. It turned out that this night boat was a general stomping ground for prostitutes. So I ran into a lot of unexpected experiences on that trip. I had all sorts of feelings of identification and hostility. Hostility towards the men who were there. When I wrote this story in writing class--I took a workshop at University of California-- the reaction was that no fifteen year old girl was that hostile to small townspeople. But I was. I couldn't stand the people, so I identified with the prostitutes and hated these men on the boat, these lousy hypocrites from small towns. I identified immediately with this young prostitute who tried to protect me all through the trip so that I wouldn't be too shook up by this whole thing. My story has a vague romantic conclusion, that I looked out at the swirling water and that--I forget what her name was--she was there and I was there and we were forever part of the darkness. It was my reaction against this whole small town environment, it never has changed. I could not live in a small town again.

INTERVIEWER: Did you ever express your discontent with them?

MAUPIN: I'd tell them and they'd say that it was for my own good, that I needed the social life of the small town rather than the big city and I cursed.

INTERVIEWER: Do you remember resenting them?

MAUPIN: Well, my mother built up a whole social life for me. She was nothing if not energetic. We lived in a big house at one time and there was a barn behind it, and so she fixed up the barn for parties. We got the floor waxed and we held parties there all the time and everybody loved my barn, but they didn't love me. I hadn't much to do with it, you know. I was very unpopular in high school, especially with men. Her idea was that I should overcome it by lots of nice practical measures; she was an activist. The trouble was I didn't take any measures, she was taking them all. I began to resent her enormously because whenever anybody sort of interesting came along she monopolized the conversation. She'd just come back from Russia, done this and she'd done that, and they sat there absolutely enthralled at my mother. So this man came and he said, "Your mother drives me crazy, she's kind of a steam roller." (laughs) So I finally had somebody who understood me, but most of them were enthralled, they didn't know mothers like that.

INTERVIEWER: Were you proud of her or were you somewhat jealous of her?

MAUPIN: Yes, proud, jealous, mixed. It was always a very complicated relationship where I fought her and I admired her, it was very mixed up.

INTERVIEWER: Did you want to be like her, or do you remember wanting to be the opposite?

MAUPIN: No, I'm not sure I wanted to be the opposite. My daughter wanted to be the opposite of me for a while, but I didn't exactly want to be the opposite of my mother because I didn't want to be a homebody. My daughter went through a homebody phase but I didn't; I always was very scornful about that.

INTERVIEWER: Your mother seems, I don't want to say full of contradictions, but a sort of mesh on one hand being very progressive and on the other hand embodying a lot of traditional values. Being very independent, supporting a family, traipsing off here and there as a journalist and yet really seeming to want to place you in a conventional mold of family and husband. Do you think that may have been because she didn't see you developing a career, and decided that if you didn't have a career you should have something else?

MAUPIN: I think maybe it did. Because in her opinion I wasn't really doing anything. After--I was out of school--we were going home from a social of some radical party and were all a little bit drunk--I was eighteen--we were all singing loudly, I couldn't see the harm of it. We were there on Fourteenth street, there were mainly warehouses on Fourteenth street then. But the police came up and said we were being drunk and disorderly. Somehow we talked our way out of it, and I said, "Oh, my mother will never stand this." She didn't mind my being arrested because I was working with the elevator operators, but getting arrested for being drunk and disorderly. . .she would never recover!

Somebody interviewed me, I didn't know at the time this was coming out in a book. A lot of students come here, it's near Stanford. She looked like a student to me. She wrote me later and wanted a release. The interview wasn't bad, although it opened with my saying, "My mother told me not to bother with housework and all that shit." That was a word that my mother would never use; I may have said in the interview I didn't like all that shit and my mother told me not to bother with it, but I certainly wasn't quoting her. I still remember one time when my daughter was about fourteen my mother called me and she seemed quite upset. She said, "There's one thing that I think is very important in a girl, it's a clean mouth." I said, "Gee, Irene isn't brushing her teeth," or something like that. So after a long conversation it turned out that Irene had said shit. Mother said, "You will speak to her won't you?" I said, "Yes mother, I'll speak to her." So when she came in I said, "Irene, when you go to your grandmother's you shouldn't say shit, she doesn't like it." She said, "But mother, Nixon was on television." (laughter)

INTERVIEWER: How old was your daughter?

MAUPIN: Fourteen!

INTERVIEWER: It's interesting since you were involved in Sacco and Vanzetti at thirteen, and your daughter knew where Nixon stood at fourteen.

MAUPIN: I withdrew my objections.

INTERVIEWER: In some ways it seems though that your mother had the sort of values one thinks of with a small town.

MAUPIN: No, she grew up in Philadelphia. . .

INTERVIEWER: No, but I mean in terms of identifying with her, and why you were uncomfortable and how.

MAUPIN: I think they were comfortable in a small town, that's the problem. I can't believe they really did it just for me, all of that was a rationale. She had an interesting life. They lived on a farm for seven years. I was born not on the farm but in New Brunswick, New Jersey, delivered by a woman doctor. When she was living on the farm, she was also working on The Delineator staff when Theodore Dreiser was editor. She took a horse from the farm and tied it up in a graveyard several miles away. Then she got a bus and then a train to commute to New York, about thirty miles. When I was four or five I started writing scrawls on pages saying that I was going to send them to Pictorial Review and get a check.

INTERVIEWER: Did you enjoy writing much when you were in your teens?

MAUPIN: I started writing about politics, which I wasn't very good at, then I went on to fiction and when I was twenty-one I wrote a novel about my life at high school. It was called No Gods to Serve. A literary agent took it and tried to sell it and some publisher got interested although he never did publish it, but I had some talks with him. I always wondered what would have happened if that first novel had been published. I might have decided I was to be a novel writer, not a politician. I did try to write a second novel but I never got finished with it.

INTERVIEWER: Did you write that in between jobs?

MAUPIN: Sort of, but there weren't many jobs when I was twenty so I had a lot of free time. The first more or less steady job, I had it for six months, was for a literary agent. He was not a leftist but he had a lot of leftist clients including Trotsky.

INTERVIEWER: Ah!

I'm intrigued by the fact that at fourteen you decided to be a socialist, why not a communist? At that point, did that come from reading literature?

MAUPIN: Well I moved along to being a communist. I don't know what I had read. I started out asking, what is an anarchist?--because Sacco and Vanzetti were anarchists--Then what is a Red? And, what's an atheist? I started to go to the library and look all this stuff up. One of the first things that I read was Engel's Socialism:

MAUPIN: Scientific and Utopian and that is what I based my texts on in school in our election campaign, but I didn't see that as communism. Later on, I suddenly discovered the Russian Revolution and got very excited. I discovered it by seeing the movie "Potemkin" which oddly enough got to the little town where we were living.

INTERVIEWER: You thought this was really remarkable?

MAUPIN: Yes, I don't remember anything else like that. It was quite overwhelming, I was fourteen. . .

INTERVIEWER: You mentioned that you were friends with a Unitarian minister's daughter.

MAUPIN: Yes, and the minister himself. Also the rabbi, the Reformed rabbi. The minister was Dr. Robinson, and so we called them Robbie and the Rabbit. (laughter) And the Unitarian young people considered themselves quite radical, they weren't very, but probably for that town they were.

INTERVIEWER: So did you make friends for a while?

MAUPIN: Also they had a young theater group and I was always very interested in theater. Never having shown any talent for it I have to admit, but I played in.... I was the Prophet Amos in one thing and I was an unwed mother in another play. I enjoyed having the theater group. Most of them were older than I was in that group, but it varied, they had a few young ones. Yes, that was my only social base, because I didn't get along in high school at all. I can't describe what it was like, waiting in line at high school dances for someone to cut in and dance with you. I wanted to commit suicide because no one wanted to dance with me. It was really awful in my opinion. I had one girl friend at the time and I think she became my friend because she was very light-hearted sort of frivilous happy-go-lucky person and she was sorry for me, I always sat around looking so miserable. So she tried to cheer me up. I adored her, she was just lovely. But she moved away, this was always happening to me.

INTERVIEWER: What did you remember doing with your time in those years?

MAUPIN: I read. Voluminously. If I were able to read that way now, I'd be very well educated. I sometimes read two books a day.

INTERVIEWER: Did you identify with any of the sort of spiritual meaning of the Unitarian church, or was this just social?

MAUPIN: No, it was the social group and theater, and then a lot of people had these advanced ideas. Including Robbie, I mean he was really a nice sort of guy.

INTERVIEWER: Was this the rabbi or the minister?

MAUPIN: The minister. I don't remember the rabbi so well. But we used to have joint meetings with the Jewish Reformed group.

INTERVIEWER: Were they also politically active?

MAUPIN: Yes, more so in a way. It was a small town but then it was near New York too. We used to go to New York for some of the theater competitions. There were a number of little theater groups, and some of them got prizes. I think ours did, not anything I was in. We did take a trip to New York to see the National Theater Group which I liked very much. I met interesting people that way, too.

INTERVIEWER: Was there anything like a study group in terms of political stuff?

MAUPIN: No.

INTERVIEWER: So your politics were something you pretty much studied and developed on your own time? (tape ends)

I had originally stopped you when you talked about joining the office worker's union.

MAUPIN: Well, as I said, I wasn't really very active in that union, because I wasn't an office worker. I didn't hold any jobs very long in that period. I got more stable after I had a child, out of necessity I guess. There was a period too where I was actually doing office work but it didn't have any relationship to a union because when I couldn't get work I found that quite a few of my mother's friends and acquaintances were in the Authors League of America which she had helped to organize. So she knew lots of people and I got to know many of them. So when they needed a typist, they called me. I had a little portable typewriter and I traipsed around to different author's houses with my typewriter and did all kinds of temporary work. It was survival, but that's all anything was. . .

INTERVIEWER: When was this?

MAUPIN: Before I had a child and after I was twenty.

MAUPIN: It was intermittent, but I even wrote an article for the Authors League Bulletin on the writer's secretary. I worked for some famous people, Thomas Wolfe for one.

INTERVIEWER: I'm a little confused, how old were you when you had your child?

MAUPIN: Twenty-five. I worked on The Modern Monthly when I was nineteen. At one time I even got a small salary from The Modern Monthly as office manager.

INTERVIEWER: Were the people you were socializing with at this time, the people you met through the Monthly and political kinds of things?

MAUPIN: Yes. Some of those were people well known at the time, in radical, intellectual circles in New York.

INTERVIEWER: Any people you remember?

MAUPIN: Not too well now, although some of them.... Max Nomad who wrote a book called Rebels and Renegades, among others. He was an old anarchist who had, I understand, been in jail most of the time in Europe in his earlier life and I was told he threw bombs. I asked him once if he really did and he said no, he just manufactured them. But he showed up at one of our forums, we gave forums at The Modern Monthly. I was in charge of that. He had a job translating insurance tracts into other languages that insurance salesmen used. So at this meeting the radical movement was divided among about twenty or so different factions as it is now, except the movement was bigger. Nomad was saying that it was a bad thing for radicals to attack other radicals because people got turned off. He said, it's something like the tracts that he translated for the insurance business that said don't knock the other insurance companies or people will lose faith in insurance altogether. This created an absolute storm at the forum with everybody getting up and protesting that they were not in the insurance business! Oh yes, and he had even said that there's some similarity between socialism and insurance, both are a promise for the future! (laughter) So there was this storm of abuse and I finally got up and defended him. After the meeting he said he wanted to shake my hand because I was the first person that had ever defended him at a meeting of this kind. He gave me a copy of his book, that's the one I mentioned, Rebels and Renegades, which I no longer have, I lost it along the way. But it had a little dedication in it saying, "To Joyce in the hope that her sympathy for the underdog will prove

MAUPIN: stronger than the poison of cynicism in this book." But he was a really brilliant man, I remember him better than the others.

Calverton edited the magazine. I was very much in love with him for a while. So were several dozen other women around New York, which made life rather difficult! I'm not sure why he attracted me so much, because it seems to me I met some more interesting people at that time, but certain people have this quality. At the same time I had met Thomas Wolfe through Calverton, I volunteered to work on the magazine and when I met Calverton he immediately suggested that I shouldn't go to the office but have lunch with him at his apartment, which I didn't even think was significant. He said that Thomas Wolfe was coming for lunch and he asked if I knew him. I got very excited because a boyfriend I had in New Jersey was a great admirer of Thomas Wolfe, and always wanted to meet him and nobody could meet him, he was inaccessible. So I said, "Oh yes, I want to meet him," and I guess he thought I was infatuated with Wolfe, which I wasn't. But certainly I remember the luncheon because I got a little drunk; I wasn't used to drinking much then and I got so drunk that I asked Wolfe to come out to New Jersey and meet this guy, which he did! Amazingly enough because I understand he would never meet anyone, he would run away and hide. Later on he asked me to do some typing for him. This was one of the many complicated ways I met these people.

INTERVIEWER: Basically as you're talking it sounded like the men at this time were the more intriguing figures in terms of lectures, thinkers and doers.

MAUPIN: There weren't any women around. I was in the unique position of being a lone woman in that I didn't have any permanent attachments to any of these men. In the first place there were very few women and, as I said originally, it was predominantly Jewish. But by that time a lot of other people were coming into the movement but they were men. The only women around were women attached to men who had come in. Somebody who was young and not attached was almost unheard of.

INTERVIEWER: A woman then who came in because of her own political leanings. . .

MAUPIN: Yes, it was. . .

INTERVIEWER: Did you feel unusual at the time?

MAUPIN: I had to realize it after a while because there just weren't many others around. It was much later, it was almost, I would say, the World War II period before there were more women around who came on their own.

INTERVIEWER: How did you feel, I mean, was it difficult being the only woman around?

MAUPIN: Yes. I had, I always had a little edge on about radicals and women which got worse as the years went on.

INTERVIEWER: Which was what?

MAUPIN: Well, they would talk a lot about women's rights but they didn't mean it, not very much. I never changed my mind about that. But later on I started to write for The Militant and I wrote a column almost every week for about ten years. I made a deal that I would, in order to write one column on women, write two on other subjects. Now they have reprinted a lot of my stuff without telling me or asking my permission. But at that time they didn't like my writing so much about women. They tolerated it, just barely. I had this thing about women, in order to get me to do the other work they had to put up with a certain amount of it.

The reason I got to be a candidate in the Fifties was... it was the McCarthy period and it was very difficult to do anything politically. There were two reasons why they felt it made sense, to run candidates. One was that the communists were being arrested right and left, and the Socialist Workers Party was trying to establish that it was a legal party. One thing that a legal party does is run candidates. Also there wasn't really very much to do and there was equal time on tv and candidates get quite a bit of tv coverage. It gave you an occupation as a radical while it was almost impossible to work in the unions. People couldn't function in the unions, they were being thrown out. So they were saying it would be a great idea to run a candidate except there was no qualified person in the New York branch. I said, "I'll run." There was dead silence and everybody conferred, and they finally accepted me. They said, "Alright, we've decided you can run and we'll write the speeches for you." It wasn't because I was a woman, it was because of my political inexperience. But there was a Black woman who ran for office in Philadelphia at that time and they also wanted to write her speeches for her about what it was like to grow up in the ghetto and they weren't even Black!

INTERVIEWER: Was this a national office you were running for at the time?

MAUPIN: I started out, I ran for some small city office the first year. Then I ran for United States Senator, and then mayor.

INTERVIEWER: Mayor of?

MAUPIN: New York, and I got fourteen thousand votes which I always thought went to the head of the SWP [Socialist Workers Party] and they decided that someday they were going to elect someone. They got very excited about the fourteen thousand votes. The next year they had a combined campaign with the Guardian crowd. Which I didn't approve of very much.

INTERVIEWER: What were the Guardian's politics at that time?

MAUPIN: They were sort of peripheral, they weren't exactly CP [Communist Party] but within the periphery.

INTERVIEWER: And why didn't you approve of the coalition?

MAUPIN: Because we buried our own politics in order to have the coalition.... They had decided at the time, it all came out of the Hungarian uprising in 1956, they decided that this was the beginning of a great new change in the radical movement, that everybody who over the years had been in the CP would see that the Trotskyists were right and would join the Trotskyists, which of course they didn't do. I didn't think they were going to. They called it revolutionary regroupment. They were very eager for coalitions all of a sudden, although they had not been over the years. I had been very angry over the failure to build coalitions in Black neighborhoods over school issues. But suddenly they wanted to have coalitions. In doing so they were willing to bury their own ideas. They were running Corliss Lamont, whom I didn't think too highly of, he was a millionaire radical. The only difference in that campaign was the SWP still did all the work upstate but they stayed in motels instead of camping out. They had what is called democratic centralism in the SWP, so you had to abide by all the decisions. So I had to go around circulating petitions for Corliss Lamont on the ballot. In the Village in New York I would get raucus laughter: "He's the socialist you want to put on the ballot!" I couldn't say anything, not in that SWP atmosphere, especially as they knew that I was in opposition. I wouldn't have cared if they'd had a mixed ballot, some of our own people as candidates. But they were just so anxious for a coalition that they agreed to everything.

INTERVIEWER: We'll get to that later.

MAUPIN: You're not getting into the trade union movement.

INTERVIEWER: No, we'll get there, we'll get there. I want to come back to the Monthly bit. You were being supported by working at the Monthly at this point or were you also holding jobs then?

MAUPIN: Well, sometimes I got money from them and sometimes I had odd jobs. I didn't ever have very much money but nobody did then and that made it much easier. Another guy who was there was Ernest Sutherland Bates and for a while Sidney Hook. He took off and Eastman was around, Max Eastman. They had a translation of an interview with Trotsky in France and the translation was very badly written. So Calverton gave it to me and asked me to rewrite it. I struggled with it and rewrote it, as an understandable interview, which it wasn't at first. At that time my French was much better. So I found The Modern Monthly very interesting, and I met all sorts of different people and lots of things were going on: diametrically opposed points of view at times.

INTERVIEWER: This crowd sounds basically like a sort of an intellectual group. What kinds of jobs did people hold?

MAUPIN: Calverton made his living as a lecturer and writer. Later he made a deal with the Socialist Party. One of my interesting experiences in that leftwing politics: there were four members of the Socialist Party, some kind of opposition faction. Calverton made an agreement with them, he was a very sly fox. They were to contribute so much money per month to the magazine, they wanted it as a forum for this dissident wing of the Socialist Party. If any one of them defaulted the other three became liable. He got it all signed and sealed. Part of the agreement was that somebody from the Socialist Party would get a job at fifteen dollars a week as business manager. They got someone who was totally hopeless; he just didn't do anything. So I went in and I straightened out the office so at least subscibers were getting the magazine. Then they decided I should get the job. It was a little ticklish because somebody from the Socialist Party was supposed to have the job so I decided.... The Socialist Party was moving to the left and maybe I'd join it and that would straighten matters out. But they didn't want me to join! Because . . .you see, they wanted the job for somebody else. If I joined they wouldn't have a reason for not hiring me. So I discovered I was being sabotaged by Socialist Party

MAUPIN: members, so I went in to the Monthly board and reported it before they [the Socialists] reported me. I was a little disillusioned.

INTERVIEWER: Did you think that it was strange that there were all these people talking politics and talking about changing the world and there were no working people around?

MAUPIN: I also found the vocabulary very strange. I remember asking what the dictatorship of the proletariat meant and they said it meant workers' democracy. I said, "Well, why don't you say workers' democracy? It sounds a lot easier." I went to parties--I remember all of this because it bothered me at the time--where they'd sing. One of the far-out songs was "We Are the Youthful Guardsmen of the Proletariat." I don't know how they expected any American workers to relate to this, but there are people like that around now too.

INTERVIEWER: So when did you sort of leave the intellectual circle and start....

MAUPIN: After I had a child. I had to be much steadier in my work committment, I worked in an advertising [agency]. First I was in a place a few months that sold beer pumps. Then I got into an advertising agency for a year; it was awful. Then a job in an import-export place at the beginning of the war which tended to politicize me again.... One of them had owned a sixth of Indochina and the other had been a Belgian armaments manufacturer. They were working with the Vichy Regime. They bought up supplies of arms and sold them to whoever was fighting anywhere. They knew how to get arms from different places where there had been wars, where they had been stored. So they started selling to Russia, and it turned out some of the stuff they were inspecting was bad; I was at the switchboard so I found out. I understood enough French to follow it. I was going to call the Soviet purchasing agency and tell them but it turned out I didn't have to because the Belgian arms manufacturer balked at it. He said, "That stuff isn't going to blow up Germans, it's going to blow up Russians." The other one who had owned a sixth of Indochina said, "Well, they're dangerous, blow them up." But Schroeder wouldn't do it, and he was much more of a self-made roughhewn type; Rondon was very charming, suave, had a beautiful Eurasian wife.

INTERVIEWER: So this experience brought you back to politics?

MAUPIN: Well, there was a kid there too. Aside from thinking that I was going to call Amtorg and warn them that the arms were no good, they had a French guy who had been in the army and was very young, about nineteen. [Somehow through]a strange series of adventures [he] got to Africa under the Vichy Regime. He was trying to find a friend, whom he found, and during a prison revolt they both escaped and got out of the country. He still had some shrapnel in his heel from his adventures. He published an article in some American magazine called "I Saw the Shame of France" for which he got five hundred dollars. They were going to turn him in because he was here illegally, and they didn't want articles like that: trouble for the Vichy Regime. I got together with him and said, "No, we'll turn them in, they're selling lousy arms." He got quite inspired and we had a small united front. I started getting more involved again, and by that time my daughter was, how old? She was born in 1939 and this was 1941. . . about two years old. I must admit the first two years were sort of strenuous physically, because when you have a small baby and you have to support her and get to work and get her to the nursery.... It was the only time in my life I didn't have insomnia, I'd fall asleep like "plump" when I got to bed.

INTERVIEWER: Who did you leave her with?

MAUPIN: There was a nursery, one of two in New York City that took very young children, and she started there when she was ten weeks old. It was very nice. A Norwegian woman was in charge who went back to Norway after the war. She was considered rather strict but she really loved the kids and ran it very nicely.

INTERVIEWER: Did your mother criticize you for putting your child in the nursery?

MAUPIN: No, she thought that was okay. And it worked out well. Irene grew up far more social than I had ever been, with kids around when she was young.

INTERVIEWER: So you said you started to get politicized again at this point.

MAUPIN: It was somewhere along then that I met Pete and....

INTERVIEWER: Who is he?

MAUPIN: The man whom I married, hastily I have to admit. It was the beginning of the war, he was in the Merchant Marines.

MAUPIN: I remember, it was very funny, I had no connection then with the SWP but I knew some people in it. They called up that there was a New Year's Eve party and they wanted me to go with them. They had a guy who was at loose ends. I wasn't going out much then since my daughter had been born, but I thought New Year's Eve, it's time to go out. So I went to the party. I wasn't so impressed with him that night, but he evidently was very impressed. He sort of haunted me for several weeks. Every time I opened the door there he was again. I felt very touched by all this attention. Then he was shipping out in a few days and I was getting the feeling, "He's shipping out, he's going to get killed." So we got married. The first thing I told my husband was don't try to recruit me.

INTERVIEWER: To the SWP?

MAUPIN: Yes. He said okay. Then I thought, poor guy, he must think I'm some kind of Republican, something like that. So I told him I don't really have such a big quarrel with what you want to do; I just don't think you're going to do it.

INTERVIEWER: To do what?

MAUPIN: Change the world. So he said, well, that's a moot question. One of the things that attracted me to him was that he was working class. He had about one year of high school education, he'd been knocking around the country and then went into the Merchant Marine and got recruited into the CP. I was fed up with intellectuals. It was really a relief to have somebody who wasn't intellectual.

In the long run it didn't work for several reasons. He wasn't especially bright. He was not subnormal, just very average intelligence. That didn't bother me nearly as much as it bothered him. I was always sort of leaping ahead of him and in the end I felt bitterly oppressed by him. He tended to interfere with anything I wanted to do. Later on when I did join the SWP, he resented my doing any writing or anything other than rank and file work. He wanted to be the leader, he didn't want me to be a leader. That's when I left him and got a divorce. Someone said, "How do you like it? [being divorced]?" I said, "Oh, it's absolutely wonderful." I went travelling, went to conventions, wrote articles, I did all kinds of things I hadn't done for years.

There were a number of Trotskyists in the Merchant Marine during the war. But a number of them got killed early in the war because the ships were so bad, they were slow.

MAUPIN: Whole shiploads of men were going down then. No one had really thought about what bad shape the U.S. Merchant Marine was in at the beginning of the war.

INTERVIEWER: Why were they all in the Merchant Marine?

MAUPIN: They had a thing about transportation. Farrell Dobbs came from the Teamsters. He had been a truck driver and he organized the drivers. Transportation can paralyze the nation, and you have to take power some way. They got into transportation industries with the idea that this was a very vital function.

INTERVIEWER: Is that why your husband joined?

MAUPIN: Not quite, he also needed a job rather badly, and he told me he had joined originally in Louisiana; it was very hard to get in there. How you did it was by a pierhead jump. If someone didn't show up when the boat was going out then they'd call you from the pier. They told people this was how to get on. Some guy was standing there with a lead pipe waiting for the men coming back to the ship to knock one off. Things were rather rough then.

INTERVIEWER: When did he get involved?

MAUPIN: I think around.... He came from California originally and had been in the CP here in the early 1930's.

INTERVIEWER: How did he get into CP?

MAUPIN: Somebody thought he was recruitable. Oh, what took him into the CP? I don't know. It was much broader based in the Thirties, there were lots of working people.

INTERVIEWER: Was the CP interested in organizing workers into unions during the 1930's?

MAUPIN: The Communist Party was the leader of Agricultural Workers' Union in California in the Thirties. Because the AFL [American Federation of Labor] had no interest in them. Later on the CIO [Congress of Industrial Organizations] came into the canneries. But that was the late Thirties. In the other industries, I gather from what I read, in some cases they were disruptive. But they didn't set up a dual union in agriculture because there wasn't any other union. So they had a clear field for everal years. And they really were the first after the IWW [Industrial Workers of the World], which was knocked out after World War I. They were the group that did real organizing of agricultural

MAUPIN: workers here. There were very bloody battles in the fields. People being beaten and killed. I didn't know that much about the story either until I wondered how on earth I could write about Mary Imada, I had only two paragraphs about her. She had come out of agricultural labor in the field in California and had been a cannery organizer for the CIO, I got into her background and that's what it was. I read several books on it. I had sort of a hazy idea, from Steinbeck's In Dubious Battle. I'd kind of forgotten about it, I didn't know the details.

Then Elaine Yoneda, she was an oldtimer in the Communist Party and we worked in an office together for six years in the ILWU [International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union] and everybody said to me, "Oh, it's going to be awful, she's a real hard core CPer." We got along just great, wonderful woman. Her husband is Japanese, the first Japanese on the waterfront in California. She was at one time known, depending upon which paper you read, as the Red Angel or Tiger Woman. Her line was not labor organizing or I would have written about her sooner. But she was mainly into labor defense. One time the Chronicle had an inquiring reporter asking, "How did you meet your husband?" "I was bailing him out of jail," Elaine said. She's a little white-haired woman and you'd never suspect all of this if you just met her casually. So she was involved in the agricultural struggle and knew a lot about it and they, she and her husband Karl, were the ones who turned me on to Mary Imada, an organizer in the Thirties. She went to the camps, the Japanese detention camps and died shortly after she was released in the 1940's. They didn't know that much about her, they gave me what they had which was very limited. That's why I started reading about agriculture in the 1930's. That was the period when my husband got into the CP and somehow into the Trotskyists, because a friend of his thought he was recruitable.

INTERVIEWER: So back in New York what job were you holding while he was in the war, were there new advances for women because men were at war?

MAUPIN: Oh, there were, but I don't think it was so noticeable in New York at that time. I was still doing office work, for Standard Oil at one point. My mother thought then that I was really crazy because it was very easy to get work, if you were any kind of office worker. So I would take a job while he was out at sea and then I would quit when he came in for a few weeks. Then I'd find another job when he went off. I felt the jobs were really interchangeable, I never thought much about office work. It was when I went to the

MAUPIN: west coast, he.... The draft board was always after him. The way they kept the merchant sailors shipping was if they were on shore for thirty days, they drafted them if they could find them. His thirty days were up and they were looking for him so he went out to the west coast to see his mother and then he shipped out from the west coast. It turned out that he would continue to ship from the west coast. I always wanted to go west anyway so I pulled up and went to the west coast. That's when I started doing different kinds of factory work.

INTERVIEWER: Did you join the SWP [Socialist Workers Party] yet at this point?

MAUPIN: Yes. I did while he was out at sea.

INTERVIEWER: What made you do that?

MAUPIN: I guess I had already been pulled back to the radical movement by the events that were happening in the office where I worked, the import-export firm. I really had been avoiding this for several years. Then the people I had met through him I liked very much. Evidently he had laid down the word very heavily that I was not to be bothered. So I was quite impressed that nobody came around to recruit me, which I had been anticipating. I liked some of them very much, got along with them, and my real problems came many years later.

INTERVIEWER: When you were working these office jobs at the time, did you have much to do with any of the other women office workers?

MAUPIN: Not too much because I didn't really believe that the office workers were going to get unionized at that point, which is why when I came out here I decided to try to do factory work. It didn't work out very well. I managed to get into the union; I had gotten into the Textile Workers first. Then I went into Bemis Bag Company and it was awful.

INTERVIEWER: What was the name?

MAUPIN: Bemis Bag, they make sacks of heavy paper and also certain types of cloth sacks, to pack seed and stuff in. What we did in the factory among other things--I wasn't up to sewing at this point--was stack them. For instance, stack a hundred paper bags, try it sometime. Among other things it throws all sorts of dust, the dust situation was awful and the pay was awful and the work was awful and it was supposed to be union. Oh, we stopped all the machines one day, everybody....

INTERVIEWER: Where?

MAUPIN: Here, in San Francisco. Everybody got very unhappy one day about the pay and the work, and we sat at the machines and didn't work. So I decided it was time for me to go down to the union.

INTERVIEWER: What was the union?

MAUPIN: Textile Workers. Boy, what a union! I told the union rep about the sitting down at the machines and he said, "You can't do that, there's a war on." I said, "Well, actually it has already happened." He says, "You're certainly not very patriotic." And he said, "Is that all you're earning?" "Well why don't you get another job?" I said, "Well we can't, we're frozen on the job." That was a war thing, if you were considered to be in an essential industry you couldn't leave your job and get another unless the employer okayed it, and he would not okay it, especially if it was a lousy job. He said, "Really?" So I began to tell him about the conditions in the plant. I decided that I couldn't stand it and quit. I figured that was the only way I could....

INTERVIEWER: Were there primarily women employed in this factory?

MAUPIN: Yes, at least where I was working.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that had anything to do with the union's disinterest in you?

MAUPIN: I would think so, yes.

INTERVIEWER: I mean just from what you're saying, you never saw a shop steward on the floor?

MAUPIN: No.

INTERVIEWER: Did any of the women you were with have any sense of a union?

MAUPIN: No, the only thing they could think of that day was to stop working. And of course that's always a good thing. A good tactic you might say. But when I said, "I'm going to the union," they just looked a little blank, I had just gotten in, I was new. But then I had to cope with this business of not having a release from the employer and that's when I got to be a waitress because a restaurant was not an essential industry and they didn't ask you for a release. I started at a couple of little odd jobs but I worked hard to get in the union and I did get in. So from then on for some time in San Francisco and later in Portland and Seattle

MAUPIN: and New York I was in different locals of the Waitresses' Union. In the Thirties, San Francisco had three major hotel strikes and conditions in the Waitresses' Union were pretty good. The pay was relatively high, for that period, the conditions were quite strict, we worked eight hours with forty-five minutes relief, it was just eight hours. We never worked overtime because if you.... Whoever served the entree got the tip. If it was just time to leave and you wanted to leave, you walked out with a table full of people and the next person took over. Later when I worked in non-union places, I knew how remarkable this was. I worked at some terrible ones. In union restaurants you got your uniforms and they were laundered for you. In fact, one difficulty I got into with the union was I worked at the Mary Hopkins Hotel on Saturday, they didn't have a uniform my size so I wore a black dress and they gave me a little collar, cuffs and apron. I wasn't supposed to do that. They were supposed to supply me. But the union settled it by having them dry clean the dress for me.

INTERVIEWER: Were you, during all this time you worked as a unionized waitress did you become active in the union?

MAUPIN: Not especially. That's partly becuase of mobility again. I mentioned it before. Pete decided he was going to establish a Portland branch of the SWP and we went up there and then I--what did I do first--I didn't go back to waitressing anyway.

INTERVIEWER: Now as a waitress were you trying to recruit for the SWP at all?

MAUPIN: One of the things I still remember is that I had worked about ten hours at some waitress job and when I got down to SWP headquarters for a party that was going on, they said, "There's a whole shipload full of sailors you have to dance with." And I said, "Oh, my God, the things I do for socialism." My sore feet! Yes, I was pretty active in the SWP mainly on a rank-and-file basis although I started doing a little speaking and writing, but minimal at that time.

INTERVIEWER: And what was your husband doing?

MAUPIN: He was shipping still.

INTERVIEWER: No, within the SWP.

MAUPIN: Oh, not too much either, you know, he was a steady rank-and-filer, but he started to try all sorts of things. We

MAUPIN: had an organizer here at that time who encouraged people to write and make speeches, and he was working on both of us. And he said, "I wish people could write their own speeches, instead of me working on them."

INTERVIEWER: What did you do with your child while you were working?

MAUPIN: She was in a child care center.

INTERVIEWER: Again, you were able to find a child care center

MAUPIN: I had priority because he was shipping [in getting Irene into the child care center]. But that was interesting because the first place they sent me, it took three different trolleys to get there. So I spent two hours trying to get to the child care center and get back again, and it was impossible. I saw a picture in the paper and it looked like it was a child care center very close to me and I went in to where they'd given me the priority to get into the center and I said, "Well, what about this one? It's nearer." And they said, "Oh, but that's only for Negro children." So I thought, "Why don't I investigate." So I went around and I asked them if it was only for Negro children and they said, "Well, it started that way because Negro children couldn't get into the regular child care centers. But we've decided not to discriminate and so we take in some whites." She went there for the balance of the time until she got into regular schools, and it was quite close.

INTERVIEWER: Was she the only white child?

MAUPIN: No, they had, by that time, about one-third white.

INTERVIEWER: An integrated center?

MAUPIN: That was because just like me they were close and they didn't want to take three trolleys to get to a white center.

INTERVIEWER: Were there any other services at this time around, available, for working women to make it easier? Like at some of the war plants were there laundries and things?

MAUPIN: I never saw any of them. But then, of course, the waitress work wasn't war work. Only Bemis Bag was. I don't know why paper bags were war work.

INTERVIEWER: With your husband being gone, you were busy working and being a rank-and-filer, but what socializing did you do? Did you have any women friends at this time?

MAUPIN: Well, there is a tendency in any political party to live your social life within it.

INTERVIEWER: So were there more women then?

MAUPIN: Yes, lots more. As a matter of fact they were saying that in the war when all the men were being drafted, the women were taking over the leadership.

INTERVIEWER: Within the party?

MAUPIN: Not completely, but it was very obvious there were lots of them.

INTERVIEWER: How did you feel about this?

MAUPIN: Oh that was good, I started writing more stuff about women. Right now somebody named Connie Field is working on a film and I gave her something I'd written, I think it was in 1944, The Problems of Women in Industry.

INTERVIEWER: And what were those?

MAUPIN: Child care, laundry, shopping, all the things that still exist. At the beginning of the war, that's when I first started to do some of this, because I looked at what was in The Militant and I said, "You know, that's terrible, that woman doesn't know a thing about what being a working mother is." And they said, "Well, I suppose you do." And I said, "Yes, I certainly do." And they said, "Well, okay, write about it." So I started writing about all the concrete things like what do you do when the kid's sick, that's a big problem. Then getting on to some of the more general things. So by the time I got to San Francisco I was getting to the problems of women in industry.

INTERVIEWER: Do you remember women being discriminated against in industry?

MAUPIN: I wasn't enough involved with plants at that time. The next plant I went to was Boeing and that was a whole different story. I had more of a consciousness of what was going on in all the factories, and it was very exciting.

INTERVIEWER: Why were you more conscious at that time?

MAUPIN: In the first place I had been raising a child for six years and working and there's nothing like that for making you conscious of the problems. Then I thought and read more on the subject of women in particular. I always read a lot. Anything, everything, I was always reading. But I read a

MAUPIN: lot more of the first Marxist classics on the subject and then I began collecting material and files and reading about programs in England that we didn't have here.

INTERVIEWER: What kinds of programs?

MAUPIN: They had very developed programs on food preparation in the factory and shopping for war workers. They really had one of the best programs. They did a great deal more for women than what was done here. So I was trying to find out what they were doing in England as opposed to us, why we didn't do that here. And I....

INTERVIEWER: Who were you proposing it to?

MAUPIN: Well, usually within the Party but then we had members in various plants, they would take it up.

INTERVIEWER: Were people in the Party more responsive to what you were saying? Because there were more women in the Party at this time?

MAUPIN: Yes. And some of them were beginning to have children and that was quite a change. In the Thirties radicals tended not to have children. It was interfering....

INTERVIEWER: Do you know why?

MAUPIN: Yes, it would interfere with their revolutionary dedication. So I was one--actually I think there was one other woman--I was one of the first women around who had a child, it was unheard of. And they really didn't know how to cope with it when they'd say can you do this or that and I said, "Well, what about child care?" I probably did a lot of educating in getting people aware of the problems because not all the men were really that bigoted about it, they just never thought about it. And then something happened to people in the war, just like my getting married in a hurry: people got married in a hurry, they suddenly wanted to have children, they were emotional about everything. It shook people up, including all the radicals. So suddenly people started having babies and then they had child care problems and their husbands were away at war and (laughs) everything. So there was a very different atmosphere.

INTERVIEWER: From your political readings do you remember thinking women were treated better in a Marxist state?

MAUPIN: Well it seemed as if they were, yes. I hadn't gone into

MAUPIN: detail on that. But I remember we had certain disagreements because I recall that we had an argument on factories, on having child centers in the plants as against child care centers in the neighborhoods. Being a mother I said right away, "You want the center in your neighborhood because it's near, you don't have to lug the child back and forth on long trips." Rose Cannon*, who was Jim Cannon's wife, said that in the Soviet Union they had nursed the babies at the plants and so that's why you should have nurseries at the plants here. I said, "But Rose, we don't want to have nursing kids at the plant, I mean, that's what you do when you're desperate." Maybe in the Soviet Union they needed this but I am not going to advocate it. Because I don't think it's the place for a baby in a war plant, a nursing baby.

If you're working and you have a young baby I think the baby should be in another area. War plants were dangerous, a plant might blow up. It didn't seem to be the right place to bring a baby. So we had a whole debate going on whether.... Now, I wasn't opposed to the plant nursery if that was all that we could get, but it seemed to me that the neighborhood idea was much better.

INTERVIEWER: Are you still an advocate for neighborhood day care?

MAUPIN: Or in the building, like some of the Swedish cooperatives. Large apartment buildings have the child care units built into them so they can have night care too when the parents are out. From just a human point of view it's better to have care near where you live rather than take a long trip. The same way with taking your laundry. Laundries at the plant were also advised, but you have to get your laundry there! It was very awkward, and groceries.... I can understand it in emergency situations like in Britain. They did a lot of this. But I understand too that they had women select groceries and then they'd sort of gather them together and take them home to the women. Doing everything at the plant was a sort of desperate measure in my opinion.

INTERVIEWER: Are these some of the issues you cover in your writing?

MAUPIN: I started to, yes, as I said I had this problem when I was married of not being encouraged very much.

INTERVIEWER: By your husband?

* Socialist Workers Party leader

MAUPIN: Yes. Whenever I wanted to write an article he wanted to make love. (laughs)

INTERVIEWER: And you worked in the Boeing plant at this time.

MAUPIN: We both got jobs in the Boeing plant. That was at the end of the war, but they made the first planes that carried the atom bombs. I started out as a cleaner. I had three jobs before I was through. You had to scrub the airplanes and make them nice and shiny for final inspection. It was sort of interesting because you had this awful smelling glop that you used. I don't know what it was, we just called it glop. But we understood later that it made many women sterile, the fumes from it, and nobody knew that at the time. Of course, you breathed them as you scrubbed the plane to get all the dirt off and polish it up so it looked pretty. Sometimes we'd be up on the wing of the plane and all the top brass of the army would be down inspecting the plane, it was a terrible temptation just to let the glop slip.

INTERVIEWER: Did your husband have a similar job?

MAUPIN: Well he started out, we both started at the lowest labor grade and one of the things he resented was that I managed to get upgraded and he didn't. It was kind of unfair in a way because he knew much more about mechanical things than I did. But I was pushy, I figured they were upgrading people so why not me? And the next job I got was....

INTERVIEWER: Did your job change when you were upgraded?

MAUPIN: Well, it was union, so they posted jobs. I didn't think I had to know anything about it; of course, I was supposed to. But I put in for it anyway. So the next job I got was called pressure sealer and I nearly got killed on that one, from the fumes. They had something called " duct soup" you were supposed to be told to wear a gas mask with it and they didn't tell me. So I became a pressure sealer and then I had a little tank on a cart and it had a squirt gun and I went around and sealed all the seams in the planes. Then they had what they called inventory which paid a lot more. They had six or seven shops, an airfield, several plants. If something was missing you travelled around to try to find it. They produced, say, twenty-three hundred parts for the plane and they were five hundred short. Were the parts in some shop being reworked? Had they been so defective that they were tossed? I usually found what they were looking for, U.S.Army parts turned up in civilian planes.

INTERVIEWER: Did you get to run around looking for the stuff?

MAUPIN: Yes, it was wonderful.

INTERVIEWER: Boy, that must have been a great job.

MAUPIN: Very interesting. And I got aquainted with everyone, too.

INTERVIEWER: Did you have trouble when you started working in the plants being assigned to just one thing?

MAUPIN: At the bag plant I wasn't exactly attached to one thing, the work was just too heavy for me. Boeing I really wasn't that attached, airplanes are a little different. My favorite story is when I got my first promotion, I was asleep in the pilot seat and they were calling my name over the loudspeaker, they couldn't find me, and finally somebody woke me up. But you could crawl inside the plane and disappear for a long time.

Another one of my pet stories was when we had a job cleaning bullet-proof windows, and it was terrible, cleaning with little wooden sticks. The bullet proof windows in the tail were very thick and they had to be protected with some kind of gum coating and before final inspection we had to get it off. They said, "You mustn't damage these windows because they cost six hundred dollars each." So they gave us these little wooden sticks and we had to scrape slowly, and at the end of the day your hands were covered with blisters. So this began to bother me and I thought there's got to be an easier way to do this and I tried all kinds of glop hanging around in the plant and nothing happened. Then I went down to the ladies room and came out with a pail of soap and water and the gum washed right off. Here we'd spent days cleaning these windows! So I didn't tell anyone, I just, that's when I was sleeping in the pilot seat. I cleaned my window slowly and just crawled into the plane. So after about a week the foreman came over and said, "Come on, I know you're not tired enough to be doing those windows, what did you find out?"

So then on the inventory job I was just wandering around and I got along fine, I didn't know a thing I was supposed to know, blueprints and all. But I got along with the workers and they knew where the stuff was. Other people who got promoted to this job thought they had now become superior and they didn't ask the workers anything. They went around looking at blueprints they probably didn't understand either. I always asked the workers where could

MAUPIN: I find this part or that part and they always told me so I came up with a very good record of finding things.

INTERVIEWER: It seems like it would be a perfect job for organizing.

MAUPIN: Yes, it certainly was.

INTERVIEWER: You walk around and talk to people.

MAUPIN: Well afterwards.... We had a strike and it certainly came in handy when I knew people from all sections. What happened was that they had negotiated for fifteen months without an offer, nothing happened. It was IAM [International Association of Machinists]. At the time I was initiated, I will never forget it because I didn't know what was coming, I took this oath and it wound up.... I will only submit applications of qualified white candidates for membership in this union. The Black workers at Boeing were suing the union because they had to pay dues but could not be members--taxation without representation! One month before the strike they let the Blacks into the union, and they turned out to be very militant strikers in spite of the discrimination. There were quite a few Blacks, from the war years, also some women.

INTERVIEWER: Black women or white women?

MAUPIN: Both. When I was hired I wanted to get into the factory and not the office. They looked at my application, which was sort of mixed, and they tried to put me in the office, but I wanted to get into the plant. I kept telling them it was because it paid better. But by this time I was getting very political and I thought it was the place to be. The strike was a tremendous experience in my life.

INTERVIEWER: There weren't many women in the plant; was it hard being a woman in the plant?

MAUPIN: Yes, and also they weren't hiring any to speak of. I probably got hired for the weird reason that he remembered me because I knew French. He'd keep looking at my application and he'd say, "You know French? Why do you want to go into the factory?" And that stuck in his mind. So when I kept coming in every morning. . .

INTERVIEWER: Was it hard being a minority in the plant [i.e. a woman]?

MAUPIN: It wasn't too hard. The foreman used to say that the men were not going to help me. Especially when I got an ad-

MAUPIN: vanced position, the pressure sealer job, because the little tank that you had to squirt out of was pretty heavy but you usually didn't have to lift it. Sometimes if you were climbing up in the plane the foreman would say, "Don't ask the guys to help you, they resent your being here; they're not going to help you." But as soon as he went away they said don't pay any attention to him. I had a friend who had been working all through the war and she was, I believe, the first woman that ever set foot into the plant. She had been hired because she was so tiny that she could work way down in the tail where men couldn't fit. And she said they were very resentful. But by this time they were sort of accustomed to it.

INTERVIEWER: Were you aware of women being treated any different than the men in the plants?

MAUPIN: Not aside from what I said about upgrading and getting a chance for a better job, which I asked for with my thirty day trial each time. Later on when I was shop steward for office workers employed by the longshore union I would ask for a thirty day trial and the longshore union wouldn't give it to them. But I got it at Boeing.

INTERVIEWER: Do you mean you individually, or you got it in the contract?

MAUPIN: It's posted, and if you ask for it they say, "Well, we don't think you're qualified." You'd say, "I'm entitled to a thirty day trial."

INTERVIEWER: Was this something that you initiated within the union?

MAUPIN: No, it was in the contract and I knew it and so I asked for it and they gave it to me. They did say, "I don't think you can make it," but I could try for it. They just didn't think I had much experience, which was true.

INTERVIEWER: So wages and benefits were the same across the board?

MAUPIN: As far as I know. As I said there had been fifteen months of negotiations without settlement. Things were getting very, very hot in the plant; the company was getting sharp and there was very severe discipline. You couldn't be late more than three times and keep the job, the fourth time you were out. So if somebody realized that he was running late because of the traffic or something, he would go back home and call in sick. Because we got fired on our fourth tardy. There was an unusually long walk from where you clocked in and out to actual work station, it

MAUPIN: was an enormous plant. That was one of the things about the lunch period, you never could get anywhere in time to eat anything. So people started getting disciplinary layoffs because they clocked out on time and they couldn't have clocked out on time unless they left their work station five minutes earlier. People were getting furious about it. So it happened.... There were eighteen thousand workers in that plant, and I had never been in that kind of mass situation before. My husband was ill then. He'd been in lots of big plants; I don't know how many. I said, "There's going to be a strike this week." He said, "You don't know a thing about it, there can't be a strike because you have to do this, you have to have a meeting, have to take a strike vote, you have to have a waiting period, you have to have this and that." Sure enough there was a strike, it was a wildcat, and eighteen thousand people walked out.

INTERVIEWER: Do you know how it started?

MAUPIN: Somebody started walking and everybody followed. That was all, it was a really spontaneous thing.

INTERVIEWER: The whole plant just followed?

MAUPIN: I could feel it, you went in there and it cut into you like a knife -- the hostility and the tension. The question was, would anybody stay out? All through the strike, which lasted five months and was eventually defeated, the company claimed it wasn't a legal strike and the union said it was. Way back, maybe the first two or three months of negotiations, they had taken a strike vote. But half of the people who'd taken it were no longer in the plant, so the company said that only the people who were there when the vote was taken were the ones that could go on strike. Everybody went out, but nobody knew whether or not this would get official sanction from the International, whether or not we would get strike benefits.

So the next morning there were little coffee shops across from the plant and we all went in at 6:00 a.m. to watch and see what happened, if people went in or not. There were agitators, procompany agitators, and I still remember one who said we were all communists, and he said, "Me, I haven't a communist thought in my head." I looked at him and said, "Have you a thought in your head?" People did not go back, they stayed out for a week, and then it was sanctioned and became an official strike. I guess it was just a little too much for the International that

MAUPIN: there were eighteen thousand people out there hanging on. The spirit of the strikers was excellent. But the Teamsters broke the strike, they sent strikebreakers in.

INTERVIEWER: They wanted to raid your union?

MAUPIN: Yes. They tried but it turned out.... It's interesting at the end of the strike, the Teamsters finally lost in spite of everything. That plant required machinists, and the Teamsters were not machinists, so I don't know how much production they really got out. But gradually they began to get more and more people to go in. This was over five months, it was a long period. To begin with they wouldn't let women on the picket line--now we get to the discrimination!--because it wasn't ladylike. So we discovered we could get on night coffee duty, graveyard shift, that was an eight-hour assignment. I figured the most militant people would be out on the graveyard shift picketing, especially if it was raining hard. The picketing was scattered over airfield and four plants. I figured this would be the opportunity to reach them, with hot coffee at 2:00 a.m. We had a car, so we both volunteered for coffee duty.

INTERVIEWER: Who?

MAUPIN: My husband and I.

INTERVIEWER: He was allowed to strike?

MAUPIN: He was allowed to picket and he had the car, and I couldn't drive, he would never teach me to drive. So the first thing we did, we thought everybody was going to get a good paycheck but they took out the loan. When we were hired, we had to pay the union initiation fee before we got our first paycheck, so we didn't have any money. The company said that there was a very fine employee credit union, and they will give you the money to pay your initiation fee. So we all went down and got loans before we even got our first paycheck. Then you know what loans are with workers, they tend to put off paying it. You always need something else. So at the beginning of the strike they took all the loan money out of our checks. I found out the employees who were in this lovely credit union were the president of Boeing, the vice-president of Boeing etcetera. It was also a place to save money. So the guys from the midnight to 8:00 a.m. picket shift, I figured they were the old-timers, which they were. I said, "Do you have any money in that credit union?" They said, "Yes." I said, "Well, go down and take it out because here's what they did to us,

MAUPIN: and that's going to make it very hard for the new workers to survive." So there was a run on the credit union after I'd been on coffee duty for a little while. It closed, that's the one thing I accomplished and I can never forget it, that was the end of that credit union. We thought, boy, this is a great place to be. . .coffee duty. The next thing that happened, the union would not hold a general membership meeting. They had three locals and. . .

INTERVIEWER: They being the Union?

MAUPIN: Yes, and they were scared of the three locals getting together. The militancy of the rank and file was much higher than that of the leadership. So they held local meetings separately. We started in asking for a general membership meeting. Then we found out that there was some kind of council meeting that represented all three locals and it was open. So we said go to the council meeting! The council room would hold about a hundred people and several thousand arrived. They didn't get in. They massed all around because they wanted a meeting.

We had been going around on night coffee duty telling all these guys what they should do. So there would be notices on the board: take Pete and Joyce Hesser off night coffee duty. I'd tear them down and throw them in the wastebasket. Somehow we managed to stay on until I was able to picket. Our local, by a fluke, didn't vote an okay to the leadership. This was because somebody stupidly made a motion that it should be unanimous, and we had 20 percent against it. It wasn't unanimous so we had one local that never supported leadership policy.

INTERVIEWER: Did the leadership see that you and your husband were. . . causing some trouble? Were you getting reprisals, or were they associating you with being Red or....

MAUPIN: By that time we had a caucus of about forty people, forty or fifty people.

INTERVIEWER: A caucus of SWP people or....

MAUPIN: Various radicals. It turned out later there also was one informer, which was not uncommon. But we were able to do a lot to keep the leadership uncomfortable.

INTERVIEWER: What kind of stuff did you do?

MAUPIN: Mainly by advocating different policies while they were

MAUPIN: just sitting there. They weren't doing anything. Later on in the strike things got very violent and I think it was the intervention of the Teamsters but the company blamed us. The homes of people who had gone back to work were bombed. Nobody was ever hurt, which was one reason why we thought it might be a setup. One of our members had made a little stink bomb which she had thrown into a small restaurant where the scabs had coffee. They traced this to her and that's how we found out there was an informer. But the funny part was that they went to the president of the union and said, "They are going to arrest Clara for the bombing," and our president began shaking. Somebody asked, "Where were you that night Clara?" then our vice-president, he was an old miner, said, "She spent the night with me, she couldn't have thrown a bomb anywhere." This guy who was president was absolutely worthless. Gibson his name was and he was so scared! Later on we had two offers, one was for a general strike which Gibs turned down. The other was for a march on the Governor which Gibson also turned down because he didn't want to embarrass a Democratic administration. He obviously wasn't winning the strike and the Teamsters were gradually over the months getting more and more people in.

One of the amazing features of this strike was that the foremen, who under Taft-Hartley had just lost their right to be part of the union, all went out on strike : three-hundred of them. One was my foreman, we thought he was the worst son-of-a-bitch in the plant. He was really rough to work for. So about the fourth or fifth month of the strike when things were getting bad I went down to the union hall and there he was! I looked at him, and he was a little surprised and he said, "I gave you the right training in that shop didn't I?"

After five months there was a big meeting about going back to work and we voted against it, even though the union advocated a return to work. They said the Trotskyists had stuffed the ballot box or maybe the Reds; I forget who had done it, somebody'd done it. In the end the workers returned without a contract. But when there was an election between the IAM and the Teamsters, IAM won. So in spite of all the thousands of people the Teamsters sent in during that strike they didn't get the plant.

INTERVIEWER: What did you finally win out of the strike?

MAUPIN: Nothing. We got blacklisted, that's all we won.

INTERVIEWER: No, I meant that. . .what about the whole issue of the disciplinary stuff, nothing was won on that either?

MAUPIN: Nothing at that time. Shortly afterwards, when I knew we couldn't get any work there, we went back to the east coast.

INTERVIEWER: So you two were blacklisted at this point? [Seattle]

MAUPIN: And a lot of other people, several hundred were.

INTERVIEWER: Was there militancy during the strike? And the union did nothing? Because they couldn't or didn't want to?

MAUPIN: I don't think that they could, but I'm not sure that they wanted to either. We hadn't exactly become popular people. Most of our fire had to be directed at trying to get the union leadership to do something; they were just letting it go down the drain. Recently I saw this happen on a much smaller scale with the Bay Guardian strike in San Francisco. . .the Newspaper Guild and Typographical Union* over a year just letting the thing fall apart.

INTERVIEWER: What year was that?

MAUPIN: Almost two years ago. . .1976.

INTERVIEWER: Were you the only woman active at this point? [Note: in Boeing]

MAUPIN: There were some other women in the caucus. I was particularly active but not all of the others worked in the plant. Everybody sort of joined together. I had this advantage of having had a job where I got around and knew almost everybody in the plant. I'd gotten pretty vocal in the local that I was in.

INTERVIEWER: Did your husband resent your activity?

MAUPIN: He didn't resent it as much then because we were both pretty involved in the struggle itself. He resented my promotions within the plant but not so much my union activities. Then in the SWP when I tried to write and speak he really had fits.

INTERVIEWER: Were you unique as a sort of radical couple, or were there others?

*Both AFL-CIO unions

MAUPIN: There were some. Right after the war the SWP grew very rapidly for a while, we had a relatively large group in Seattle, probably larger than today.

INTERVIEWER: Were you blacklisted from Boeing at this point?

MAUPIN: Yes. I was in Portland when I first walked out on my husband. We got together again and went to Seattle, then to the east coast, Massachusetts. But I did leave him once in Portland.

INTERVIEWER: Just because of his intolerance of your activity?

MAUPIN: Also he didn't do very much. (laughs) He was interested in putting up signs about being organized, but he wasn't organizing. He got kind of pompous about it and it really turned me off.

INTERVIEWER: Based on your experiences at Boeing, did you consider becoming an organizer yourself, for the newspaper?

MAUPIN: I didn't know, but every time that we were about to break up somebody came and tried to put us together.

INTERVIEWER: Why, because they were friends?

MAUPIN: I'm not sure. Maybe they thought we made a good political team, but they talked us into going to Worcester, Massachusetts, to organize a branch. That's when we finally broke up.

INTERVIEWER: So that's what you did after Boeing?

MAUPIN: I got a job in a shoe plant there that was also union. It was pretty bad work though.

INTERVIEWER: Which union?

MAUPIN: Let's see, it was the Boot and Shoe Workers Union. The plant was organized and I was very low pay. It was piece work which was my first experience with piece work. What I did was stamp the sizes of shoes, they had 7A, 7A, 7A, 7B, 7B, 7B, very monotonous.

INTERVIEWER: Were you aware of other labor leaders, organizers, who made an impression on you?

MAUPIN: There weren't many labor leaders around in Boeing.

INTERVIEWER: No but....

MAUPIN: I'm trying to think. You see, where I functioned in the plant there were no leaders around. I knew people, like Farrell Dobbs in the SWP who had organized the Teamster drivers, and some others, but not any women, certainly not any women organizers! There were some women who ran for vice-president.

INTERVIEWER: Vice-president of what?

MAUPIN: Ran on the SWP ticket. There was one, the only one who went to jail during the war, a famous case that they were all involved in. Her name was Grace Carlson. The effect of the year in jail was to send her back to the Catholic Church.

INTERVIEWER: What was the case?

MAUPIN: It was the first Smith Act trial which nobody seems to know about, before the war began, [a] peace-time treason trial. They contended that SWP literature was subversive and that it would undermine the armed forces. There was a series of four pamphlets we were all selling at that time called Socialism on Trial. It was the actual testimony of the trial. They arrested the top twenty-six or twenty-eight leaders of the SWP. But it was much more complicated than that. In 1939 there was a deal that Dave Beck made with the Democratic administration to get....

INTERVIEWER: Who was he?

MAUPIN: The head of the Teamsters. He wanted to get rid of Farrell Dobbs and other Trotskyists in the Teamsters Union who had been in control of the Minneapolis local for some years. So getting them all arrested was rather convenient. The person who had the worst experience was Kelley Postal who was the union treasurer. The local had disaffiliated from the regular Teamster Union, and by vote of the membership he withdrew the union funds from one local, transferring them to another. He was arrested for grand larceny and got five years. The rest were just arrested for sedition which was a little unclear, was it inciting force and violence?

INTERVIEWER: And they all went to jail?

MAUPIN: How many, eighteen? I think Grace was the only woman and there was a couple, there was another woman who was arrested but she had four kids and they. . .

INTERVIEWER: Let her off?

MAUPIN: Yes. She was one of the Teamster's wives, but she'd been very active. So Grace was the only woman and Grace had been Catholic and she started drinking heavily when she got out of jail and then went back to the Church, just about when they decided to run her for vice-president again, which was rather embarrassing. (laughs) But the women--they had Myra Tanner Weiss running for vice-president instead of Grace. I resented her tremendously because she sort of played the woman, when she was running for vice-president. She played a sexist role because when she got up on the platform she'd.... Frances James, who later became one of the prominent women in the SWP--Myra was training her--Frances James told me Myra would say, quote, "When you go up to the platform don't walk up the steps, sit on the platform and swing your legs up so everybody can see them." It was disgusting. We got into a lot of rows in that period.

INTERVIEWER: We being the women especially of the Party?

MAUPIN: Women in the Party, women's role in the Party.

INTERVIEWER: Was this debated?

MAUPIN: We had one internal bulletin which we called the pink bulletin, pink for girls. (laughs) Nobody thought much of it, especially the girls. It was all about women in leadership and women's training. There was a crowd, some of them are still there, Evelyn Novak was another. She did some writing and she was one of the Party hacks. The younger women. . .Myra wasn't that much older than me, but Evelyn was, she was sort of a fixture and she didn't like us coming along and making all these criticisms about the leadership. It was alright when she made them but for us it was different.

INTERVIEWER: You would be criticizing the male leadership or female?

MAUPIN: Male leadership.

INTERVIEWER: In what ways were you criticizing the male leadership?

MAUPIN: Especially their failure to train women for leadership. Women had practically taken over during the war, but when the guys came back women were again in secondary positions. When I was on the Political Committee,for one year, I was the only woman. [The Political Committee was the guiding body of the Party.]

INTERVIEWER: What was it for?

MAUPIN: The body elected by the National Convention is called the National Committee, but the NC members who live in New York become the Political Committee and it's the directing committee of the Party. There are about, I don't know, about eighteen, twenty, people on it. The year I was there I was the only woman. I got elected with great difficulty. I'm sort of sorry I did, because I was quite popular in the New York branch and they wanted me, but the top leadership didn't want me because they had already put me down as a troublemaker. Three conventions, talk about nondemocracy! Anyway, the New York delegates would come back and say, "There's a deadlock." What they finally did was--our New York organizer was a very handsome Chicano guy, but kind of a zero politically. They compromised by putting him on the committee, too, along with me. Because the New York branch would not stop recommending me. After winning this big battle, I spent an awfully miserable year on that committee. On the other hand I wanted to see it, I had a principle, it was something like marriage; you don't break it up until you've tried to make it work. So my duty was to get on the top committee and see what was happening before I gave it all up.

INTERVIEWER: So what was it like?

MAUPIN: It was ponderous and bureaucratic. They all had fixed positions and I was always coming in with other stuff and nobody wanted to listen. When I became convinced it was really a bureaucracy, I wondered how could it be a bureaucracy without an economic base? I'd gone all through Marxism. Then I found out in a strange sort of way that there was a base. It doesn't look like one because people who work full-time in the party offices are very badly paid, but on the other hand this was their career. This was what distinguished them. They also didn't have to contend with that rough world out there where you get fired if you don't do your job right. I found that I couldn't work in the Party office. I tried to, they put me on salary a little while when I was running as a candidate because I got so many speaking engagements. Afterwards about two thousand letters came in from television viewers and no one knew what to do with them. So I said I would send out a mailing, I'd stay in the office a couple of weeks, if they'd pay me. It seemed as if they worked very hard because they put in a lot of time. But they'd come in late and work an hour or so and then have coffee for an hour or so and have big discussions and then they'd work another hour and have a long lunch.

INTERVIEWER: So the problems you had with them were not because you were the lone woman, but....

MAUPIN: Oh, there was a lot of difficulty. I told you I would not let them write my speeches for me. They didn't say I couldn't write them because I was a woman, but they were very surprised when I seemed to be making out alright without their help. Later they made a point of selecting women and I think they do today. I mean....

INTERVIEWER: When?

MAUPIN: After I left.

INTERVIEWER: You're talking about what, the Fifties?

MAUPIN: No, the women's movement, when they got into the women's movement in the Sixties. Their whole position was different, totally different. Nobody seems to know it anymore, the oldtimers have forgotten and the new ones never heard about it. They climbed on the NOW [National Organization for Women] bandwagon. They decided that NOW was the movement of the future. They are not oriented toward working-class women.

INTERVIEWER: And now what? Do you feel that they're oriented towards middle-class women?

MAUPIN: Yes. One of the first conflicts that we had with them in Union WAGE--aside from the fact they didn't like having me around since they told everybody I'd disappeared--was our position on the protective legislation, on extending it to men instead of letting it be written off. Second was our position on abortion which was free abortion on demand, a more radical slogan than abolish all abortion laws. Abolishing all abortion laws is sort of ambiguous. Abolish the laws but you still haven't got any money so you still can't get an abortion. They said that was very disruptive of us to ask for free abortion on demand. That's because they were taking a NOW position essentially. They said, "It sounds like socialized medicine." And I said, "Well what's wrong with that?" They said, "Well the United States doesn't want it yet." One of our members who is sort of friendly with them went to a NOW cocktail party and everybody at the party tried to recruit her into the SWP. The entire chapter turned out to be SWP'ers. NOW had a conference for family legal problems with a ten dollar admission fee and ten dollars for child care, per child. So you can figure how many working women ever got

MAUPIN: to that. So what's the idea of being in a revolutionary party and then getting into NOW where you have events too expensive for working women to attend? That just doesn't make any sense. But it flows, I think, from their initial opportunism which was my basic criticism, that they were very opportunistic. They jumped on anything that seemed to be moving, only late. It took them a little while to figure out that it was moving.

INTERVIEWER: Was there ever any thought of a women's caucus within the SWP in the early days?

MAUPIN: There were some caucuses, there was one especially strong one out here,but that was when I was back in New York. We didn't have one in New York because I had my own political caucus which had some men in it. We were very strong in the New York branch as you gather by their putting me on the Political Committee. But we were trying to change the whole political thing around.

INTERVIEWER: Change the Party around ?

MAUPIN: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: Were there specific issues or just generally Party bureaucracy?

MAUPIN: Well, we felt the Party was not really involved with the working class. It was very hard to get anybody to.... I remember when I went down when my daughter was in high school in New York and there was an issue over intelligence tests. I read a bit about it how they don't really reflect intelligence because of the cultural background which they assume. So there was going to be testimony about this at City Hall and I wanted to go down and represent the SWP and they were very reluctant and said, "No." I got down there and I was about the only white mother, it was packed with Black mothers. I got up and spoke about these intelligence tests and I got an ovation. Then it was in the papers and it got on television and they said, "Oh, what a wonderful job you did." But nobody wanted me to go. When they were arguing where to go, they all argued about what they called Negro work, [which] was to go up and try to start a branch in Harlem. Of course it didn't work because they were coming in from the outside. So I said, "Well if you really want to do something, go to all the white PTA's and bring up these issues about Black kids." One or two people did, that was my caucus. But they just didn't do the obvious things about really getting into working class....

INTERVIEWER: Were they changing? Were they becoming again more professional intellectual types in the SWP, instead of workers?

MAUPIN: I think what happened was the isolation and alienation of all the radicals during the McCarthy period where they got more and more ingrown. They just didn't get over it. Not that they had been so 100 percent working class previously, but that they spent more time in these little hair-splitting discussions. This always happens in periods of isolation.

INTERVIEWER: So you left Boeing in the late Forties?

MAUPIN: Yes, we went to Massachussetts. I worked in a shoe plant.

INTERVIEWER: And you worked at starting a local branch there?

MAUPIN: Yes, but it wasn't very successful. There was one in Boston and they wanted one in Worcester, too.

INTERVIEWER: And what work did your husband do?

MAUPIN: Not very much.

INTERVIEWER: And he worked in the shoe factory....

MAUPIN: No, that's what I meant when I said....After he stopped shipping he was never steadily employed except for the period in Boeing. He got very fussy about it, too. When I was working in a late bar he very nicely came and got me home at two o'clock in the morning. But he--there wasn't much work, it was the depression right before the Korean War, a very bad economic period. He got one job in a plant that he got fired from and then he wouldn't do restaurant work because he didn't like that and wouldn't do gardening because he didn't like that.

INTERVIEWER: So you were supporting the family?

MAUPIN: Yes. There was very little money, I wasn't making much either. So it got to be kind of a drag to say the least.

INTERVIEWER: Did you both take joint responsibility for setting up this branch or did one of you do more work?

MAUPIN: It was joint. It was to a certain extent what we tried to do in Portland. As a matter of fact, I did more of the work. As I said, he wasn't very aggressive and didn't

MAUPIN: really work very hard, but he talked a lot.

INTERVIEWER: Did you become very active in the Shoe Workers Union too?

MAUPIN: Not very, it wasn't, it was again something like the Textile Workers. It seemed to be one of these totally inactive unions. There was one woman only who was a cutter.

INTERVIEWER: All the other cutters were men?

MAUPIN: Yes, and women sewed and women sewers make half what cutters make. There wasn't any discrimination in wages if you were a cutter, but there was only one woman. But she was a very tough Polish woman, I mean, she must have....

INTERVIEWER: And cutters make more than sewers do?

MAUPIN: Double. She must have beat her way in, I think,but she made it. Because I wasn't even a sewer, I stamped things, and. . .I eventually gave it up because I couldn't make enough money and I went back to waitressing.

INTERVIEWER: You went back to waitressing still in Worcester?

MAUPIN: Worcester and then in New York.

INTERVIEWER: So you left Worcester?

MAUPIN: Yes, that was after I broke up with my husband and....

INTERVIEWER: And he stayed in Worcester?

MAUPIN: No,he went back to New York but then he moved on to the midwest. Then I went back, my family was there, Irene wanted to be closer to them: I wasn't sure whether I did or not, but it worked out well from some points of view.

INTERVIEWER: How old was Irene?

MAUPIN: She was about ten then.

INTERVIEWER: And what kind of work did you do in New York?

MAUPIN: I did a little waitressing but I went back to office work because waitressing was beginning to get my back. I have a bad back now.

INTERVIEWER: Did you hold any steady jobs as an office worker?

MAUPIN: Yes, I was three years at American Machine and Foundry and three years in a legal office.

INTERVIEWER: My, what a record for you!

MAUPIN: Yes,it was a record until I finally was over six years with the longshore union out here, which I think is my all-time record.

INTERVIEWER: When you went back to office work, did you rejoin the Office Worker's Union?

MAUPIN: It didn't seem to be functioning at that time.

INTERVIEWER: So again your energy was devoted to the Party?

MAUPIN: Yes, that was when I was running for office and writing a regular article. As soon as I got divorced, I began doing a weekly column and.... Now I wonder, because I had a full-time job and I had Irene and I was writing all this stuff. I must have been industrious then.

INTERVIEWER: How did you manage it all, I mean....

MAUPIN: I don't know; I didn't do much housework, which Irene didn't think much of at the time. I remember one time when I somehow managed to burn a frozen dinner and she said, "Oh, you can't even cook that!" I never liked housework and I never did any that I couldn't help doing, other than I don't like a dirty house so I would clean it up.

INTERVIEWER: Did you two have very much time to spend together, it seems like you were very busy.

MAUPIN: No, not too much.

INTERVIEWER: So what would Irene do?

MAUPIN: Oh she did all kinds of things. Of course,when she was younger, when we first went back, she spent some time with my mother.... As she got older she got into the arts and she began standing in line all day to get into the opera to stand in the opera and she took ballet. She made all the money for this herself, I didn't have enough. She walked dogs and did housework and did various things and so she'd pay for her ballet lessons and art classes.

INTERVIEWER: Sounds like she was fairly independent from you.

MAUPIN: Maybe a little too much so but that's the way.... I was

MAUPIN: very strong about she should be independent because I didn't think I had been given the chance to be until I got away from home. So maybe I overdid it, I don't know. Then she went the other way. Mothers never know what to do, it's very confusing.

INTERVIEWER: Do they know what to do in retrospect?

MAUPIN: No. It's just one of these gambles. Some of the people you know who have the damndest backgrounds turn out fine. My, the present son-in-law--if he is in-law, I don't know about that, I don't know whether they ever got legally married--but he had the most awful background with his parents and he's such a nice guy. I can't figure it [out]. Maybe it's like. . .some men are total abstainers because their mother was a good woman and some because their father was a drunkard. So maybe a reaction against particularly difficult parents but it doesn't seem.... And then other people seem really nice and their kids turn out awful, so I never really....

INTERVIEWER: Did Irene at ten tend to know much about your activities or....

MAUPIN: Oh, yes. She had a picket card at Boeing, among other things, and that was when she was seven. I have a great big scrap book on Boeing and somewhere I have a picture of a dog pulling a cart with a little baby in it and a picket sign. So she came down with that picket book and she would look at people lining up and then she would say, "Are these all the dirty scabs mommy?" At one time, I guess it's been lost or she hid it somewhere so I wouldn't play it again, I had a little recording of her at seven singing"Union Maid."

INTERVIEWER: Did she resent your divorce?

MAUPIN: I don't think she resented it,but she was pretty mixed up at that time. It was hard, upsetting, but she knew that things were very difficult.

INTERVIEWER: Did she mind your doing [work] outside of your own job?

MAUPIN: I don't think so except that I think she probably was lonely at times. But then by that age she didn't exactly encourage me to be her companion anyway. In Worcester I had only one day off and I always took her to the movies, and so one day she said, "All the movies have the same

MAUPIN: plot don't they?" Then I decided that she was growing up. But she went to college. She was very unhappy in high school. At the end of her first year, or was it second year, yes, second year....

INTERVIEWER: Did she take any interest in political work?

MAUPIN: At one time she did and then she sort of got out of it. It was when she was in her young teens. Then at about sixteen she took some tests and got into St. John's College in Annapolis as an accelerated student. They had a program like Chicago, I think Chicago still has this program, where they take people with only two years in high school. She passed all of these tests. It was very funny, she was flunking everything in school because she hated it, then she took all these tests with brilliant scores. She did have a kind of a hard time, she only went there for one year and then she got married. But I don't think the studies were the hard time, it's just that it was such a strange environment for her, in Annapolis. Annapolis is a little southern town, also it was a segregated little southern town, and this was all new to her. The first thing, she couldn't believe it, there was no movie house for Blacks to go to, because there was one only. There were movies shown on the campus because the campus was integrated. And there were separate fountains and separate toilets and separate everything, and she came back to me and she'd never seen it before, she'd been in New York and other big cities. She asked, "Mommy, is it legal?" She probably asked the sixty-four dollar question of this generation, because that was just when the civil rights movement was coming along.

INTERVIEWER: You were doing office jobs then and running for office and lecturing and speaking?

MAUPIN: And writing.

INTERVIEWER: And writing. Was Irene conscious of your speaking? Was she proud of that?

MAUPIN: Oh yes, she, I think it was mixed. Yes, but she sort of got a kick out of it. I think, she still does once in a while. My grandchildren are a little mixed. My older one thinks it's pretty cool, but the younger one thinks that I'm not much like a grandmother, although she seems to be getting a little more tolerant now.

INTERVIEWER: Because you aren't knitting and....

MAUPIN: Yes, and she also got pretty snobbish somehow, she doesn't understand my low income level.

INTERVIEWER: Does she understand your political views?

MAUPIN: No, not very well, as a matter of fact the first time I had a whole conversation with her it wasn't really political .... But she was doing some temporary office work and the conditions were very bad and among other things she wasn't getting any work breaks, which is legally required. I called her up and she was really suffering because the ventilation was terrible and at the end of the day, she felt kind of sick. Irene told me about this and said that she thought she needed a little agitating. I called her up and she said, "They can do it because they voted to do it, they wanted to leave ten minutes earlier." I said, "But you can't vote away your work breaks. It's a legal right." I had to do this with some WAGE members one time. They were in an office and it seems that they had been asked: "Would you rather have two fifteen minute breaks or an hour for lunch?" So they voted for an hour for lunch and got no breaks. But again, you cannot vote away your breaks, it's in the law. So I told them to call the Industrial Welfare Commission [IWC] and they'll tell your employer it's the law. They did, and he came in and said, "Gee, that's funny, nothing like this happens in Los Angeles." So Emily wasn't quite convinced I'm afraid. Anyway, it was a temporary job. I remember though in her ballet work when she'd get a paycheck she'd look at it and say she was just getting the minimum wage. The minimum wage is one of the big things we worked for in Union WAGE.

INTERVIEWER: So back to New York. At this time you had your caucus and you got on the political party board?

MAUPIN: Yes, and we had very strong support in the New York branch, but....

INTERVIEWER: Do you remember any issues that you all were involved in?

MAUPIN: Well, it was this general thing of orientation towards the working class. Also the whole question around how you integrate into racist issues, which we felt was not being done.

INTERVIEWER: Now what time was this?

MAUPIN: It was late Fifties, it was the beginning of the civil

MAUPIN: rights movement. They were aware of it but they didn't have any idea what to do about it because they really didn't have any base in the Black community. They tried to, by moving, but moving in just doesn't do it.

INTERVIEWER: Was there any other issue the SWP was covering or just struggling to stay alive because it was the McCarthy period?

MAUPIN: To a large extent struggling to stay alive. Then we raised the issue around women and the lack of leadership. I was solving that one in the New York branch, but....

INTERVIEWER: Were you doing anything to help other women as well?

MAUPIN: There was another woman in the caucus who was also running for office. She ran on my ticket, and we always.... My whole ticket was for the caucus, which was kind of a joke, because the party took this revolutionary regroupment line, and said that the whole election campaign was to be directed toward the people who were leaving the CP. I figured out real fast, in view of the McCarthy period and everything, that people leaving the CP would be moving right. Which they mostly were. If a few of them happened to wander by our office it would be more or less an accident. That was the way it eventually turned out. So we--the slate of candidates--just ignored the "line" completely and the party couldn't control us too well because we were on television and radio. We just directed ourselves to working-class issues.

INTERVIEWER: Which were what?

MAUPIN: The usual ones, wages and working conditions and prices and taxes and corruption in government.

INTERVIEWER: Not necessarily toward union issues, but just....

MAUPIN: No, not specifically. Unions you could hardly function in during that period. But what I did, since I was running for mayor, I started studying architecture and city planning. I took out some books about it and I did a whole thing on the city of the future, which I was told sounded like a real old-time socialist pitch.

INTERVIEWER: Utopian?

MAUPIN: No, it was based on actual city planning ideas in some cities, some existing cities that had been planned, cities

MAUPIN: in Europe.

INTERVIEWER: You ran for mayor of New York?

MAUPIN: Yes. That's when I got the fourteen thousand votes. (laughter)

INTERVIEWER: I think that was one election you were better off losing.

MAUPIN: Look, if I had ever thought I was going to win I would probably run away. We found out, I ran under a different name and we explored--I'd always written under that name too, because of the period--explored whether....

INTERVIEWER: You say period, you mean. . .

MAUPIN: The McCarthy period. And we explored whether or not it was legal for me to use that name running for office. It turned out it was unless I actually took office in which case.... I didn't think that was a big danger.

INTERVIEWER: Did you suffer any personal hardships during the McCarthy period?

MAUPIN: Not really. We were always very conscious of it, because .... I came home and my daughter, she was about fifteen then, had left a note, "The cops are after you, hide the loot under the mattress." So I found out that two uniformed police had been there asking for me. I was used to the FBI but they came in plain clothes. I couldn't figure out.... People told me later that it was probably the subversive squad. So this was in a slum, an Italian slum, and there was a very peculiar janitor in the building, he was probably into every racket in the area. He had another hobby, he raised baby canaries. But he didn't like these policemen because they were shouting at him and his canaries got very disturbed. So he was on my side and when they showed him my photograph, and asked, "Do you know this woman?" he said, "Oh sure, that's the good religious woman who gets up every morning and goes to mass." And they said, "Oh, we must have the wrong one." And he said, "Oh, I know her well," etcetera, etcetera. He came up later and was going to hide me out somewhere. Then all of my daughter's friends got quite interested and said, "Our mother doesn't do anything exciting like getting cops after her!" I actually was a little worried. I was waitressing then and as I recall, I was very tired. I called up our organizer and I said,"Do you suppose they really want to arrest me? You know, I'd like to get a good night's sleep. I don't want to be pulled out in the middle

MAUPIN: of the night." He said, "Look, don't worry, if they want to arrest you they don't just call once in a while, they stay there." So I don't know, I guess they were just checking up again. But they didn't usually do it in uniform.

INTERVIEWER: Did you have friends who were arrested and tried?

MAUPIN: Not at that period, not after the war period. But they had problems with jobs, and nobody could get a passport. At first my daughter was mad at me about that although she had no money to go to Europe.

INTERVIEWER: She was denied a passport as well?

MAUPIN: They denied everybody a passport who had a remote connection with persons on what they considered their top subversive list. We found out there were two hundred organizations on the general subversive list, but there were five that were especially subversive, and the SWP was one of them. So anybody on that list or associated with them--it might be rather remote, some quite conservative cousin, but it was enough--you didn't get a passport.

INTERVIEWER: Is that why you went back to waitressing, were you having trouble getting any other work?

MAUPIN: When I went on television, I was wondering what would happen.

INTERVIEWER: Actually you didn't answer my question, you just shook your head, what did that mean?

MAUPIN: Oh, right, yes, yes I had trouble with jobs, that was part of it.

INTERVIEWER: Because of your political viewpoint?

MAUPIN: Yes. But in the end I didn't have as much trouble as I thought I would. I was working for Israel Airlines when my immediate boss did recognize me on television, although the name was different.

INTERVIEWER: You were on tv because you were running for office again?

MAUPIN: Yes. So I'd always wondered what would happen. One of my friends had almost gotten fired because they knew that she was a close friend of mine, and when they saw me on tv . . . . She insisted it was someone else who looked

MAUPIN: like me. He knew quite well [my boss] that I was the person but he just said, "You looked very nice on tv. I always wondered what I would do in this kind of situation, but nothing happened. I just said, "Thank you." You didn't know because a lot of the people who were supposed to be carrying out some of these regulations didn't really like it. Even out here, that was 1960 and I applied for a job. I remember the application said, "If there's any reason why you think you won't pass an FBI check you'd better forget it." So I had already filled out the application and this was at the end. So I told the prospective employer I'd better forget it I won't pass that FBI test, and he said, "Oh, I'm really very sorry." He didn't report it to the unemployment office which he should have done. That could get you into a bind. If the unemployment office sent you out on a job and you didn't get it, you didn't want to tell them it was because you were a subversive.

INTERVIEWER: Alright Joyce, we're in the middle of talking about your family's economic background. And I was under the impression from what you said before, that you were fairly middle class.

MAUPIN: No, as I said, my father was a farmer, I don't know where farmers rate in this structure. And when they first got married they bought a farm in New Jersey, because he wanted to continue farming. He had also trained as a teacher, however, he went to Eureka College in Illinois. But not the easy way, he worked in canneries the whole time he was in college.

My mother came from a very poor background because my grandmother was a widow in 1880's with two children to support. She worked at jobs that involved very long hours and low pay, and they were really very poor. She had been left, inherited, the house, it was rather a nice house. But she had nothing to maintain it with. She first got a relative in to help take care of the children so she could go out to work. I think she had several types of work starting with sewing. Then she got a job in the mint, which paid much better. But she organized the children very early and trained them to do a great deal of the housework. They got up around 5:00 a.m. and they were marshalled around on all of the tasks before they went to school. I understand when they came home they prepared dinner every night. When she got home, after dinner, she used to sew all their clothes. When they entered high school, she studied their lessons with them because she had never been to high school. Also they used to go to the

MAUPIN: opera. She used to take newspapers to stand on so their feet wouldn't get too cold waiting on the pavement. Then they would go way up to the top, the cheapest seats. My grandmother was also a strong feminist and believed women should be trained to make a living. My mother and her sister were trained to be teachers, teaching was the only job available for women, except for factory work, at that time.

INTERVIEWER: Did her feminism come from her being a widow who had to support her kids?

MAUPIN: I'm not sure because I.... She had about nine uncles and I understand that there might have been some that would have taken her into their house because they had bigger houses in those days. But she wanted very much to be independent and make her own way, no one was going to boss her around. And she was very supportive of women being able to make their own living and stand on their own feet. She never remarried either. She was an extremely pretty woman but she devoted herself to her family and her job.

INTERVIEWER: Do you remember getting a sense of independence from her? Do you remember what she talked about?

MAUPIN: I don't, I probably didn't think about it much because I took all of this for granted, that my mother was independent and working and my grandmother had been too. I remember when I was a teenager, maybe about sixteen, and I was on a date and I was wearing some kind of mesh shoe, a summer shoe, and he said, "Do they make them for men?" and I said, "I don't think so." He said, "Men are superior beings, why don't they make any nice things for us?" I told him that I had never heard that men were superior, what a strange idea! He said it was strange I didn't agree that they were superior. I had always taken it very much for granted that men and women were equal. It wasn't a problem, not in that sense. But there were some problems because I always wanted to join the Merchant Marine and I couldn't. I was a romanticist about the sea and I couldn't go to sea.

INTERVIEWER: Why?

MAUPIN: I don't know, I suppose it's that I wanted to go to strange places. I gather from what I heard of the Merchant Marine from my husband it was not very romantic but I still.... I read a lot of books about the sea when I was a teenager. My favorite novel was Moby Dick, which I was told no girl would like because it was six-hundred pages of whale fishing.

INTERVIEWER: What about your own family, your parents, your economic

INTERVIEWER: background, how would you label that?

MAUPIN: I would say we were really sort of comfortable most of the time. I had clothes and toys, things like that. Then because my mother was working full-time, we had a maid. Of course that wasn't exactly a luxury, she had to take care of me. But we were very insecure. My mother's income was very irregular, maybe she made a lot of money in one month and then nothing at all for several months, and my father was ill so much he usually did not make anything. So we were never sure there would be money for the rent, we were never sure there would be money for groceries. I grew up with the fear of being evicted, of not having enough to eat. But we always scraped through, we did eat.

My mother got into journalism in a strange way. She was a teacher and she taught in the New York City slums. The slum schools had a garden project, they got the kids to clean up vacant lots and make them into vegetable gardens, so they could take home the vegetables and eat a little better. My mother wrote a report about these gardens for the school administration, and without my mother knowing about it, someone sent the report to a magazine. The magazine sent her a check for $40, as much as she made in a month as a teacher. So, she thought, I can write one article and make as much as I do teaching for a month! And she decided to write, she became a newspaper reporter first.

INTERVIEWER: So it was economics that drove her to writing?

MAUPIN: She had never thought of being a writer until this.

INTERVIEWER: Although that was an aspiration she'd had for you?

MAUPIN: Yes, and she always claimed I was a much better writer. I just didn't make any money at it. It was strange, my mother made quite a lot of money writing and sold incredible numbers of articles and some short stories, but she was really not a very good writer, it was quite slapdash and superficial. She didn't think much of it either by the way. She always said that she had to make a living, she had to pay the rent. One time she was interviewing businessmen on how to succeed in business, and I'm sure she didn't take that too seriously either. But what she had was a tremendous vitality and a lot of nerve. So she would get in almost anywhere and everywhere to get her stories, and her writing was lively. Then she went to, I was the one in a way who got her to Russia in 1930. When

MAUPIN: I was getting radical as a teenager, I had a double motive I have to admit, I wanted....

INTERVIEWER: About when was this?

MAUPIN: About 1930. And I had a double motive: I wanted to get rid of her, she was interfering with me too much. And I thought she ought to go there to see what was happening. So she sold the idea to--I think--the Women's Home Companion. I can't remember now, one of those women's magazines which is no longer in existence. I believe she got fifteen hundred dollars an article for her articles on Russia, plus her expenses. Then she persuaded the magazine --I told you she was very aggressive--that she couldn't possibly write about Russia without going to Western Europe. So they gave her another couple of thousand to travel around Western Europe. So she was gone about four months and the articles were called "Meet the Smiths of Russia."

The Smiths of Russia were Ivanoffs, something like that. She described how the ordinary family lived, and her stuff would always be quite vital, about people or what people said. It was not very well written because she rushed it out, she did not polish it or go over it very much. So it wasn't really writing that was her great gift, her gift was for getting around and finding things out, which was even more important, I guess.

INTERVIEWER: Is that something you think you inherited, do you think, in terms of your organizing?

MAUPIN: Well maybe. I hadn't thought of it that way. I was, I didn't do it in writing, and wasn't as much inclined toward journalism as I was toward fiction. But maybe in the organizing. I never feel, I have felt very shy about some things, but I don't about organizing, because of my conviction. I'm really trying to do the best thing, people need this organization. In writing, I would think I need to write the article. But if it's a union I think they need this union and so I can't be bashful about it.

INTERVIEWER: So you find when you do things for other people, you can challenge yourself more and come forward?

MAUPIN: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: Since we're back on unions, it reminds me of something that happened that we really didn't talk about on Sunday. You

INTERVIEWER: went into detail about the Boeing strike, and I know that you eventually got women on the picket line although the union higher ups didn't want that, but we never got how you got women on the line initially.

MAUPIN: Well, I had volunteered for the midnight to morning coffee detail and we went around about fifty miles through airfields and around several plants to take hot coffee to the pickets. It was very cold and rainy at two or three in the morning and I'd always ask them if they didn't want to get some relief. I said they should go down to the union hall and say that they wanted the women to picket. These were men, I figured, who volunteered for that shift. Picketing was not entirely voluntary but you didn't have to take it at that hour. I thought they would probably be the oldest, most stable members of the union and if they recommended it, it would look better. And it did eventually happen. Of course, there was also the pressing need for pickets after a while.

INTERVIEWER: So that seems like a simple practical approach, you saw a need and asked people if they wanted that need met. And yet you were conscious of what you were doing.

MAUPIN: They would raise the demand. It isn't always best to do it yourself if you can find someone else.

INTERVIEWER: Is that why you took the midnight shift duty so you could get in touch with those kinds of men?

MAUPIN: Yes. Also there were the other things I discussed closing of the credit union and packing the district meetings. It was a very good place to propagandize.

INTERVIEWER: To get around, okay. We were talking--another thing that I thought of when I went back over the tape a little bit: at the end of your year in New York before you moved back to San Francisco you were heavily involved in the SUP.

MAUPIN: Yes, I was.

INTERVIEWER: And your daughter was in college by now?

MAUPIN: She went to college at sixteen, that was because she went to an accelerated college after two years of high school.

INTERVIEWER: So you were pretty much on your own.

MAUPIN: Well, she got married at seventeen, too. After one

MAUPIN: year of college.

INTERVIEWER: So I was just curious listening to that, I mean, it sounded as if you were very active between your job and running for mayor and your position in SWP, how did you sustain yourself personally?

MAUPIN: Well I usually had an office job.

INTERVIEWER: Well, I don't mean financially, I mean....

MAUPIN: Oh, physically....

INTERVIEWER: Emotionally?

MAUPIN: Well physically I have never been particularly robust, but I found out later that really a lot of active women are not. But I break down periodically, sort of like this week I guess.

INTERVIEWER: Working yourself too hard?

MAUPIN: But....

INTERVIEWER: Are you pushing yourself too hard?

MAUPIN: Oh, yes, yes, I'm pushing myself. I did push quite hard. Usually. . . eventually it would result in my getting sick for a week or two and I have to rest up, but emotionally it sustained me.

I hated the jobs that I had so I needed the feeling that I had something to do when I went home from work. I did have a rather hard time with my emotional life with men, however, because they didn't take to my activities too well as a rule. That's why I never got remarried, for one thing, and I had rather stormy relationships. I don't think I'm an easy person to get along with.

INTERVIEWER: Did you have a strong support network among other political women?

MAUPIN: No, not really.

INTERVIEWER: Do you see yourself at this period as sort of a loner?

MAUPIN: Well, the way that it developed. . .when I broke up with my husband in Worcester, Massachusetts, that's when I came down to New York, which was the political center. I had had vague feelings of--I wasn't happy

MAUPIN: about the way everything was going at the center. So there I was. I had an opportunity to find out, and that's when I began to get much more active. That was partly just getting a divorce, I didn't have constant interference with what I was doing. So that was when I got very involved. I had been involved previously, doing all the, they called it Jimmy Higgins work, I went around getting subscriptions and selling the paper, but not so much getting into the leadership, which I really didn't set out to do, it just sort of happened. If you keep pressing your ideas, especially if there are disagreements, you eventually have to do something about it. Like organizing a caucus or getting people together and trying to. . . I often tried to demonstrate what I had in mind, like the incident I described about the Black parents when I went to testify, and showing that it would work. Unfortunately, although I showed several times that it would work, it didn't seem to turn everyone around to do that.

INTERVIEWER: Why?

MAUPIN: I guess they just felt that it should be a different type of activity, that is, people who were not basically activists and who were not involved with contacting people. My idea, which is still true, was that I would rather not spend my time just talking to members of Union WAGE or the SWP or whoever. Pam said one day that one of my good points in working in WAGE was that I would work with everybody: for instance, a teenager who thought she was pretty frivolous or an elderly disabled woman. She said, "I think you could even get along with religious people." I said "Sure, that's alright. Yes, if they'll do the work." I have a lot of odd friends who.... One of them I call my reactionary friend. I hate to have my circle, the people that I know, confined as it so frequently is in radical groups.

INTERVIEWER: Did you feel that the SWP at that time was interested in being activist?

MAUPIN: Well, they were active in a sense. Nobody was very active in the trade union movement, that was in the McCarthy period, and it limited activity pretty severely. Most of the radical groups turned inward and started squabbling and there were lots of splits. But the net result of that after a few years in that you have an organization which doesn't turn out at all. Then when it did, they started getting involved in the civil rights

MAUPIN: movement, and then the women's movement.

INTERVIEWER: Moving into the Sixities?

MAUPIN: Yes, but they didn't do it in what I would call an integrated way, which was always a criticism I had, that you can't get into things from the outside, you have to be a part, a functioning part, of them to make any impression on people.

INTERVIEWER: Can you give me an example of what they did or how they could have done it differently?

MAUPIN: Well, I was very critical of all of their positions on the women's movement, which was what I call tailending NOW. They had decided that NOW was the mass organization for women, a lot of the subsequent positions that they took, which I felt were wrong, flowed from their association with NOW. One was...well, when WAGE first took the position of free abortion on demand, their slogan was abolish all abortion laws, which I didn't see too much good in because if you didn't have any money for an abortion.... Free abortion on demand is a more radical slogan, and they considered it destructive. Even on the subject of socialized medicine, they thought that people weren't ready for it. When people are adapting to a more conservative group, they may get more conservative than some of the people, they are adapting to.

They, the SWP, recontacted me in 1971, when Union WAGE was getting started. One of the young women said that she was giving a class on the subject of women, and I wanted to know what text she used. She was using the text of something that I wrote when I was in the SWP called "Women Who Won the Right to Vote" which was subsequently republished in Voices of the New Feminism as "Pioneers of Women's Liberation". They published it as a pamphlet without letting me know. They didn't tell me it went into the book either and they got the honorarium for it. The pamphlet was very popular. It was just a sketch of the early suffragist. I was about fifteen years beyond that, into working women, the SWP didn't seem to have heard of them. I thought it was pretty funny that she was using this text, and I said, "Well, what else are you using for your class?" That's all that she was using, and I thought it was ridiculous, there was no real education going on. This was supposed

MAUPIN: to be a working class organization and they didn't know anything about working women. They didn't because they weren't interested, weren't working with working class women, they were in colleges, primarily.

INTERVIEWER: Recruiting there?

MAUPIN: Yes. So they had a whole lot of college women and they didn't relate much to working class problems.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that comes from their trying to, just after the Fifties or whatever, trying to legitimize themselves?

MAUPIN: They wanted to expand, and I think in the Fifties there was a definite trend towards what I considered being more conservative. But that all depends on the definition. One time I said I didn't know why the Communist Party and the SWP hated each other, because they were getting almost indistinguishable. That's because they were adopting all these attitudes that the CP had years ago, of being nice about everything and toning things down to fit the situation and not really telling the truth about it either.

INTERVIEWER: Are you saying SWP used to be more radical than CP?

MAUPIN: If you had read The Militant in that period, it certainly sounded more like a revolutionary party.

INTERVIEWER: In what period?

MAUPIN: Oh, the Forties.

INTERVIEWER: When did you leave the SWP?

MAUPIN: It was a rather long process because by the time I came out here, which was in 1960, I had become rather inactive. I had to make a decision at one point about.... I had to take the whole struggle to the convention or else give up.

INTERVIEWER: What struggle?

MAUPIN: That I was involved with in New York, in the New York branch. The caucus was falling apart and it didn't seem to me that it was worth the effort. It was a major effort to have another convention fight.

INTERVIEWER: What was the purpose of the caucus, what were the issues?

MAUPIN: About candidates who were running for election and what issues they should tackle, working class issues or issues directed mainly to other leftists.

INTERVIEWER: So your caucus was pushing for a working class focus?

MAUPIN: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: Did you take this fight to the convention?

MAUPIN: No I didn't, I was not well and the caucus was fizzling and it just didn't seem as if anything.... I was getting very tired by that time.

INTERVIEWER: What year was it?

MAUPIN: I got out here beginning of 1960. Then it turned out there was a whole new opposition forming on the west coast, which was the majority of the west coast members of the SWP. They came around to see me saying that they had read my old internal bulletins and articles and that they were taking up all these issues now and I really should get involved. I did in a minor way but, it wasn't really a.... It was a big opposition, but it was not united. It was politically unprincipled, because the main thing that they had in common was they didn't like the SWP leadership, but for a lot of different reasons. I thought it wasn't going to hold together, and it didn't. I decided they were probably all going to get expelled. What happened is some of them became the Sparticists, and then there was the Wohlforth group, that was New York, but he had connections out here too. They split into a whole series of groups which seemed sort of inevitable. It wasn't worthwhile to make a major effort to go back to the convention; we'd turn around and we wouldn't have anything to work with.

But what was involved in all of this in my mind was an abandonment of many of their positions. I wasn't even sure whether that was right or wrong, except they weren't saying so. That was one of the big problems; somebody told me that maybe there has to be a certain amount of political duplicity and he mentioned that recently there was a trade union caucus on Africa which was really organized by the CP* but nobody said so. I said, "Yes, but did the CP'ers know who was organizing it?" In the SWP they weren't telling the members what was happening, and they would try not to tell me. They'd even do things as blatant as one time when I was sick all week they said

* Communist Party, USA

MAUPIN: that they had been trying and trying to call me to come to this meeting. They couldn't have been trying because I was right there in bed.

INTERVIEWER: So it was clearly not any sort of democratic organization, it was very heavy-handed, the leadership?

MAUPIN: Very heavy. I was even accused of swimming with enemies of the Party, meaning a woman in the Marcy group which had left in that period.

INTERVIEWER: This is still the same period, the early Sixties?

MAUPIN: Well no, that would be earlier, late Fifties.

INTERVIEWER: Did you ever officially decertify?

MAUPIN: Leave?

INTERVIEWER: Yes.

MAUPIN: Yes, the way it happened was that I decided not to go all the way with this new opposition out here and then I wrote in a formal resignation. I guess the maddest people were the new opposition, which I understand in a way.

INTERVIEWER: What made you finally do that, make an official statement?

MAUPIN: Because people would not stop bugging me to do various things. I was considered rather popular because of my articles and as a speaker and they always wanted me on their side if possible, but not for very good reasons.

INTERVIEWER: It was really the only way to free yourself?

MAUPIN: Yes, and I just felt: I don't want to do this anymore.

INTERVIEWER: What year was that?

MAUPIN: It was early 1962, because I was still writing some articles for the paper and that was my....

INTERVIEWER: Did you feel, I mean was there a sense of, now what?

MAUPIN: Yes, it was a very complicated decision that changes your whole life. And other things were happening. I was not in good health in that period and my parents had come out here and they were both getting very old and sick and had lots of problems and my daughter was

MAUPIN: breaking up with her husband and she had two kids, and she had problems. I didn't seem to have much time or energy left. I went into trying to write, fiction for a change.

INTERVIEWER: So you did no politics?

MAUPIN: For a period. What I got into next was union work.

INTERVIEWER: Well, we won't go into that. What were you doing for a job or anything?

MAUPIN: The first job I had when I came out here was really horrible, I didn't know any better because I'd never heard of the man. But I became secretary of Charles Harney, he's the man who built Candlestick Park. He was a notorious millionaire, and a real racist. It was the first time I had a daily confrontation with a fascist, in and out for a year. In retrospect I guess it's interesting, but it wasn't when it happened. It was demoralizing. I had a lot of health problems and I thought I might have a hysterectomy and I was under a good health plan and I didn't want to quit and look for a job because I would lose the health coverage.

He had a way of really crushing people. I tried very hard to write a story about it, I must have written six or eight versions of that one. I got enlightenment when I read Bettleheim about what happened in the concentration camps. At one point I went to a psychiatrist and said working for Harney was like being in a concentration camp. He thought I was crazy. He told me years later that he found out this man Harney was really a fascist, as I said, not an imaginary monster. Harney was one of the most powerful men in the city, and he was really vicious. He fought with people and then he would pursue them all their lives so that they couldn't get jobs. He had a construction firm and there were so many accident cases there because he would rather let people sue him than take safety measures. He said that he came out ahead financially in the end. He was also a very devout Catholic. When I did have the hysterectomy, I was not well afterwards. I had complications, I started doing temporary work and that's when I got....

INTERVIEWER: Did you quit your job?

MAUPIN: Yes, I was sick, I just didn't go back.

INTERVIEWER: You did what kind of temporary work?

MAUPIN: That's when I got into the longshore union. One of the temporary jobs I got was in Local 34, which was nice, nice people and I got along fine. So I thought, "Gee, working for the longshore union is just the most wonderful thing."

INTERVIEWER: Were you doing office work?

MAUPIN: Yes. So Local 34 recommended me to Local 10, which turned out to be absolutely miserable. They had a strange situation there. That's where we had the strike. At one point the longshore leadership wanted a Black president in Local 10 and they didn't really investigate him much. He was a gangster and his idea of working with the office workers was to get them all to bed and then fire them. That was just one of his many disagreeable qualities. There was also a miserable office manager. Just a terrible place to work: speedup, everything. The total opposite of thirty four. Then I got into The Dispatcher.

INTERVIEWER: Of the longshore union?

MAUPIN: Yes, that's their newspaper.

INTERVIEWER: Why were you looking for temporary work?

MAUPIN: I didn't like to work and I wasn't feeling very well, and I was just....

INTERVIEWER: You'd work, save some money, quit, and work some more?

MAUPIN: Sort of; I had a series of unemployment insurance claims at this time. But I didn't, I really didn't want permanent work, although I eventually got it in the longshore union. The newspaper office was pretty interesting, I liked it. I got along well with the people there.

INTERVIEWER: Did you write for them at all?

MAUPIN: No. Then I went down to the International office during the convention period, typing resolutions. Then they needed somebody in the Benefit Funds. I never had known why nobody wanted to work there. I had not planned to be laid off just then; I said I would work for some months and I figured I'd have enough money for a while. So I thought, it can't kill me to work in the Benefit Funds office. Well, in the first place it was in a very miserable basement below the main building. Later

MAUPIN: on it got certified as unfit for human habitation when we called in inspectors. It was a very oppressive staff situation too. It got even worse, but it was bad enough then. It really was a miserable place to work, especially the ventilation. By mid-afternoon you were groggy because there was no proper ventilation. I kept working because we started organizing the place. It was organized, it was union, but Local 29 was not yet the militant union that it later became. They weren't so happy about our early activities.

INTERVIEWER: What do you mean?

MAUPIN: We got together in the Benefit Funds office. Originally most of the employees were wives and sisters of longshoremen or people they knew. They felt very devoted to the longshore leadership. But a lot of young people had come into the Benefit Funds because they were expanding rapidly. They didn't give a damn about the longshore leadership and wanted some ventilation. That was how I first got involved with the Industrial Welfare Commission which I have come to know so well in Union WAGE. One day I looked up at the big sheet on the wall which posted working conditions and I found about twelve violations right away. The office was too hot in summer, too cold in winter. There weren't enough toilets, there were no proper fire exits, a whole series of violations.

So a group of us got together and we started filing complaints every half hour. There were about thirty people involved in this. The first inspector who came was somebody who had been in the longshore union and was quite shocked because we filed all these complaints against the union. We really kept it going. We had people in there with miners' lamps, measuring the oxygen. We had a series of actions. One thing that we used to do.... The Benefit Funds were jointly run by the union and the Pacific Maritime Association, the employer. Pacific Maritime let the union run the office but we found out that they had authority, too. So if things got too oppressive we'd call up the Pacific Maritime Association and ask them to close the office because the conditions were bad. They found that hilarious--union workers complaining to the employer about the union. That was considered not exactly kosher by some radicals.

Then we had a sick-out we'd all leave at the same time. We had this silly woman in charge who would come by when everybody had left--except me because I was the

MAUPIN: steward and I was checking things out. She'd say, "I declare this office closed." Which it obviously was because nobody was left there.

INTERVIEWER: You were the steward and yet you initiated anti-union activities?

MAUPIN: This wasn't anti-union, this was anti-employer. It wasn't my union, I wasn't in the longshore union, I was in Local 29, and the longshore union was my employer.

INTERVIEWER: And Local 29 was....

MAUPIN: Local 29 was not very militant then, sometimes they....

INTERVIEWER: Local 29 was what?

MAUPIN: Office and Professional Employees.

INTERVIEWER: I see.

MAUPIN: At one time the longshore union had had a quarrel with Local 3 of Office and Professional Employees and had gone across the bay and got a contract with 29. They thought it was less radical but they were very sorry eventually. At that time Local 29 hadn't given them much trouble, but it did from there on. We eventually got an Industrial Welfare Commission decision that we had to move out of that building, because it was not fit for habitation.

What had happened, it started with just a few workers, but they kept getting more and more people into this restricted space. There was even a whole group of insurance employees who were not employed by Pacific Maritime or longshore, but the insurance company which did insurance claims for them. They were back of us, in a sort of sub-basement, in back of all of us. They didn't have a union so they couldn't agitate about it, although they did move out with us when we moved. It was at that time that our first strike occurred. There were two strikes against the longshore leadership by OPEU 29, the second one was after I had left. The first one was because a shop steward was fired.

She was fired on technical ground that she made a typo, that was after seven years. Actually she was the shop steward and she wasn't going to bed with Smitty. She was also trying to be a pretty militant steward.

MAUPIN: So what we called for was a stop-work meeting of all offices. There were five, or six longshore offices. One in San Jose, a couple in Oakland, there were Locals 29,and 34, and 10 and the Benefit Funds and the International office, about sixty women employed. We only called for a stop-work but Smitty, who was a bastard, said, when the five women in Local 10 left for the stop-work, he said, "You might as well throw away your keys, I'm having the locks changed, don't come back."

So when we got to the meeting there was a big argument about what to do next. They said that they were never going back, and we said, "Oh, we don't think he'll be that crazy, having fired one person and using bad judgment, he is not going to fire five more." So we were arguing quite a while and finally somebody said, "Well, let's find out, it's lunch time. Send them back, while we have lunch." So we were sitting at a bar when all five came back and they had indeed been locked out. So we decided as of then we were all on strike, that was about one in the afternoon. We weren't prepared for a strike, we sat up half the night painting picket signs. We did get down at six in the morning when the longshoremen went in, it was what was called an informational picket line, we weren't trying to stop the longshoremen from working. Somebody said maybe we should have.... The strike only lasted three days, but it got a tremendous amount of publicity as you can imagine. And....

INTERVIEWER: Because it was one union against another?

MAUPIN: Yes, and the longshore union is pretty famous out here, and so they, I have a lot of press clippings on it. "Longshore Girls on Strike," and "Office Girls Challenge Longshore Bosses." We were on television, the picket line and everything. They offered us what they said would be immediate arbitration. It took a year. They used everything in the books to delay it. Aurora did finally get reinstated with full back pay. Then we moved to our new offices but things did not get any better. One of the tougher fights with the longshore union was on issues like seniority. They would not upgrade people who had been there years and years. Because they had fixed ideas on who was capable and who wasn't.

That's the thing I mentioned when I was at Boeing. I would get my chance at the job, which I told the longshore bosses about. I said, "You know, Boeing bosses

MAUPIN: were better than you are in giving somebody a chance at another job." We had big battles and we'd win somebody a trial on the job then they'd just follow her around and disqualify her minute by minute. They were not going to let that person get a promotion.

INTERVIEWER: Why?

MAUPIN: Either she. . . they didn't think she was capable or they didn't like her for some reason. Or she had been involved with.... Anyone who had been involved with the strike. In causing it, everyone went on strike. Bridges' secretary wasn't going to go and he sort of shoved her out the door, because it would have looked....

INTERVIEWER: Who?

MAUPIN: Harry Bridges.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, okay.

MAUPIN: It would have looked funny to have somebody scabbing in the longshore office. Although Smitty tried to hire scabs, somebody came down from an employment agency and when she found out that there was a picket line, she asked for a dime to phone back that she wouldn't cross it. But they didn't blame everybody for going on strike, they blamed certain people they felt had instigated it, among them me.

INTERVIEWER: So it was just these people then, that they didn't want to give promotions?

MAUPIN: I got promoted, I can't understand that. It was largely a matter of personal whim. They had a terrible man in charge of the Benefit Fund. They hired him through an ad in the Wall Street Journal, that's how the longshore union found its administrator for their funds. And he was sort of sadistic, and silly, and a lot of other things. And he knew nothing about unions. So he always questioned my authority as a steward and the authority of the union. He felt that what a shop steward was supposed to do was to make people toe the line, he'd tell me they were taking too long coffee breaks, and I said, "That's an administrative problem." Of course I warned the people whom he mentioned that they were taking long breaks, but I told him, "I'm not supposed to police them."

INTERVIEWER: This was the first time you were a steward?

MAUPIN: Yes. I worked my way up gradually.

INTERVIEWER: What made you become a steward?

MAUPIN: Well, nobody wanted to run for steward, somebody talked me into it. And in the same way somebody talked me into the negotiating committee.

INTERVIEWER: Is that where you went next?

MAUPIN: We had a rank-and-file negotiating committee, and I had quite a time on that, too. In the first place I only ran as alternate and I was very casual about it. Oh, I thought an alternate doesn't really have to do much. So the next thing I know is somebody says, "Marianne's sick and the negotiations are on." Even so I didn't get too alarmed. I said, "Well, we have a business representative and that's what they're for, isn't it? He'll come through even if I don't...." I knew what we were proposing but I was very casual. So I got into those negotiations with Lou Goldblatt.

INTERVIEWER: Was this the same strike or was this something else?

MAUPIN: No, this was our contract, after the first strike. And Lou Goldblatt, I have been told, is one of the. . . cleverest negotiators in the country. (tape ends)

INTERVIEWER: Was the negotiator for the union, the longshore union?

MAUPIN: He was the secretary, yes, secretary treasurer of the longshore union, then all of the other locals usually sent in negotiators. Local 6 sent one, Local 10 sent one, we usually had a whole crew, five or six men there on one side of the table and five or six women on the other side. The first negotiating session was an absolute shambles. Because our business rep [rep: representative] it turned out, was not prepared.

INTERVIEWER: Was your business rep a man or a woman?

MAUPIN: A man. At that time Local 29 had only men business reps. Now they have mostly women. He was sort of a nice guy, everybody liked him, but he was certainly not prepared to negotiate with Lou Goldblatt, and he didn't have any information really, no statistics. So we all looked pretty ridiculous, which upset me. I got back and got the committee together in the Benefit Funds, which I knew would be the one militant group.

MAUPIN: We had to find out what this was all about. So we went down to both the federal and the state labor offices. Mainly we relied on the State of California Industrial Relations--we found a good friend there who was very much amused that we were negotiating with the longshore union. She ran things through computers for us and gave us statistics and she got sample contracts from all over the state, and we got all prepared. I remember what happened when I finally went in showing that I had some information. Lou said at the end of the session, "What you had to say is interesting and even relevant, but we made up our minds before you came here," which was really an insult. So afterwards somebody said, "You did great." And I said, "What do you mean 'I did great,' we weren't offered anything." And she said, "Yes, but you made him look like the phony that he is." There was gossip as there is in all offices and he had been led to think that we were trying to provoke another strike.

. . .

But we were not planning to strike at that time; we didn't really feel strong enough for it. Besides the situation did not as yet call for it--it did later but then we still didn't think we'd make it. At some point he said that he had never been so insulted in his life and he broke off all negotiations. Now I don't know what the insult was to this day, but apparently we were acting like a negotiating committee and in past years everybody had said, "Yes, Mr. Goldblatt, thank you." Negotiations broke down for months. We finally got into a session with another of the locals so that Lou would not lose face and through this, very painfully, we got back negotiating again.

The final session was something that I'll never forget. The two proposals that were particularly unsatisfactory were the seniority clause and the layoff clause, especially the layoff clause, and I anticipated that there was going to be a layoff. We had worked out a whole program on retraining and transfers, and they would not go for it--not with any teeth. So there was a five-hour session after work. He always called negotiating sessions at crazy hours: Sunday morning, Thanksgiving evening, Christmas Eve. I think because he figured we wouldn't show up and then he could say we weren't bargaining in good faith. This one started at about five in the afternoon and lasted until ten at night with no break of any kind. It just went straight

MAUPIN: through, and he said at the beginning, "If anyone questions anything that I've said, it's all off." And he said, "I'll tell you what to take back to your commitee." So somewhere about ten o'clock, everybody was getting pretty tired. I said, "I don't understand, I don't know what that means." So he said, "Alright, we quit." And he stomped out of the negotiations. But he was followed by a couple of officers from the other locals who eventually pulled him back. The agreement reached, because the negotiating committee did not agree with his proposals, was that we would take it back to the members. The trouble is that he wanted us to take it back to the members with a recommendation to accept it and we finally sort of indicated that we would, but we didn't.

The only way to get out of that session was to lie a bit. The members did vote for the offer, about two to one, because they didn't feel that strongly about layoffs and seniority. A couple years later when half the people were laid off it turned out that our objections were well taken. Finally I had to negotiate the layoff itself, which came during the strike of the longshoremen, and was a very ticklish business.

By that time I was pretty unhappy anyway. Over the six years there was a great buildup of tension about everything there. The layoff problem was.... In the first place they laid off most of the office help, leaving about six people, but none of the administrators, and you wound up with about three administrators per one office staff, which of course was deeply resented. Especially as the administrators were doing the office work. Then we wanted, we came in with a proposal on layoffs that we would be willing to consider waiving the contract. The contract was strict seniority, but we wanted to give preference to people who had families to support, even though they didn't have top seniority. Immediatly our employers got very righteous and said, "We wouldn't think of breaking your contract." Then there was a lot of discussion about everybody going on half days. But because they wouldn't accept the suggestion of neediest cases which was the first one that we proposed.... Well, we never actually offered half days, there was a lot of discussion about it, but there was never a firm offer. So we voted to stay with the contract as written, and it was a rather practical decision because we didn't have anything else, no offer. This was very important because later on they said that we did have an offer. So prac-

MAUPIN: tically everybody was laid off and they were not recalled. That was why we went into arbitration. In the arbitration they claimed we had voted against a part-time week, which we hadn't, because we hadn't been offered a part-time week. It was complicated arbitration, and we lost it. I didn't want to go back anyway, I was trying to get the other people back who wanted to. By that time I was pretty disgusted.

INTERVIEWER: With the union, or....

MAUPIN: With the union and some of the office staff who had made personal agreements behind our backs without telling us. That was when I started getting active in Union WAGE.

INTERVIEWER: What were your feelings at the time about, when you say you were disgusted, do you feel that the union administration wasn't backing you enough?

MAUPIN: 29 was beginning to change at this point. But it was only the start of the 29 change. This was 1971. In 1970 I had gone in for our usual shop steward dinner which was a little reward they gave us every year, and it was very different that year. That's because Jean Maddox had just become president. But I didn't know that for seven years Jean Maddox had slowly been building a caucus in the East Bay. We were on the other side of the Bay and she didn't know there was this small militant group in San Francisco because we couldn't communicate with the 29 leadership, we found them very stuffy. She had been working very carefully.

INTERVIEWER: What was Jean's position at this point? Was she a steward?

MAUPIN: Well, she couldn't have been anything more than a steward, but what happened was that the opening wedge--that much I did understand-- [was] to get rid of Kinnick, who later came back as a trustee. He was the president and senior business rep, the two most powerful jobs. Their first move was rewrite the constitution in order to separate these two jobs. Once they were separated he had to choose and he chose senior rep because that was paid and president was an unpaid job. That was when Jean was elected president to fill out the remaining part of [the] term. She was reelected the following year in her own right. I had no experience with Jean as president until that night and they....

INTERVIEWER: Night of the dinner?

MAUPIN: Yes. We were on strike against Lucky stores, the women in 29, for equal pay for equal work. She called on all the stewards to go out and picket all night because the Teamsters had promised that they would not go through if we had pickets. That was my introduction. So I volunteered and it was very difficult because they had about ninety-nine stores and they really didn't have the people. Some of the women went by themselves, if they had a car, and we locked ourselves in the car with our picket sign and stuck it out the window if anyone appeared.

INTERVIEWER: Were you scared of being attacked? Why?

MAUPIN: Well it was lonely, all night long, and they didn't know what might happen. I wasn't especially scared but I was taking their advice.

INTERVIEWER: Were you fearing violence from the management?

MAUPIN: Possibly, or just random violence. Nobody quite knew. Right after this I was the one who volunteered to shut down the Lucky stores in San Francisco. They had shut down the East Bay and there were only two stores in San Francisco.

INTERVIEWER: Over what?

MAUPIN: The same issue, I mean, spreading the strike, it was because of the equal pay issue. All the men had gotten a good raise on all their jobs, but when it got to the office workers they didn't want to give it to them. Jean was going to the women's movement for support which was something new. We had flyers addressed to the women shopping at Lucky's, [explaining] why the women were on strike. Jean went to the women's organizations and asked for support.

INTERVIEWER: And this was in 1971?

MAUPIN: 1970. This was something new in the labor movement for me. So I got quite excited, and that was why I volunteered to shut down Lucky's here. That was supposed to happen at four in the morning and at two in the morning I got a call that they'd settled. (laughter) They just didn't think that we would ever do what we did, that women would go out picketing all night. It was very exciting.

INTERVIEWER: How did you feel?

MAUPIN: Tremendous!

INTERVIEWER: Excited?

MAUPIN: We won the strike and there was a new kind of union now, because immediately after we started doing a lot of things like endorsing....

INTERVIEWER: Why did you feel that way?

MAUPIN: It was fighting! I hadn't seen unions doing that much fighting for a long time.

INTERVIEWER: Was it different too, did you feel different because of Jean's energy? Because she was a woman president?

MAUPIN: Well, she had raised a lot of issues. The first issue, one of the first, was to get an affirmative action program in the union itself so that they would not hire any men as business rep until the women reps represented the number of women in the membership. Which happened, so that's why there are mostly women business reps now. It took quite a few years because they didn't want to dump everybody--they wanted to do it by attrition. But it passed. And one of the funny things. . . several of the men, all except one, were on our side right away. There was one who was a real so and so. They came out in their negotiations--they had a little business rep's union that negotiated with our union--for having maternity leave. Everybody laughed because they were all men, but the maternity program has since been effective. So the union was really headed in the right direction. The following March Union WAGE was founded by Jean Maddox and Ann Draper.

INTERVIEWER: March of 1971.

MAUPIN: So there was a very direct connection in all of these things.

INTERVIEWER: Before we quite get to that, right before you met up with Jean and were disgusted with the union had you ever thought of running for anything higher than a steward position to start changing things? Or did you not feel that would be an effective strategy?

MAUPIN: No, I hadn't. It seemed to be all set, Kinnick had been president for ever and ever, and it was a very

MAUPIN: stodgy kind of union, very conservative. I really didn't know until the division of jobs.... That was sort of a signal, the splitting of the senior business rep and president was the signal for them to really move. I got that signal, I hadn't understood it before. It was--so much power had been in the hands of one man with him in the two top jobs of the union. So somebody was concerned enough to get the jobs split.

A lot of my struggle had been with the longshore union. I was acting as representative of 29, but I didn't think much of 29 either, although I liked some of the people. One of the troubles was that our good business rep was on vacation during the layoff negotiations and the bad one was on, and he did a very poor job. We probably would have had a half-time week if we'd had better representation, and the whole arbitration dispute wouldn't have occurred. I was not opposed to it, the half-week, it seemed to be in the best interests of the majority, although I wasn't eager to work there anymore. But I was trying to judge what would be best for most people, and I think the half-day week would have been. At one point, I said "You haven't offered anything, three days, two days, a half-day." And they said, "Well what is the difference?" I said, "Well, three days or half-days would be maintenance of benefits, but two days wouldn't." So there was a tremendous difference. So we weren't sure, and we might say yes, we'll take part time, and then we would get two days, and nobody wanted that.

INTERVIEWER: Now, I was conscious while you were telling this all about your various problems with the union that it doesn't sound like you were working temporarily any more.

MAUPIN: No, no, I worked . . . see I started with longshore on temporary with Local 34 and Local 10, then The Dispatcher, their newspaper, then the International Office. But I wound up permanently with the Benefit Funds, for over six years.

INTERVIEWER: What made you decide to start working permanently in the...?

MAUPIN: I didn't decide, it just kept going on, and I was temporary there for a year at which time I put in for a vacation. They said, "Well, temporary workers don't get a vacation." I read the contract to them. I was getting a little up on contracts. The contract said that after so

MAUPIN: many months of service you got two weeks vacation. I said, "It doesn't say temporary or permanent in that clause." They finally gave it to me. I think--that thing of making a steady income which I hadn't been doing for a long time--it was real nice. That's why I went to Europe a couple of times. I never had any yearning for clothes, I wasn't accustomed to that. But I loved to travel and I took. . . the last two years, once in 1969 and once in early 1971, I took charter flights to Europe.

INTERVIEWER: So it was just the economic....?

MAUPIN: No, in the beginning I liked the job, especially when I became a claims examiner. We worked with the men. Then they started computerizing it and we weren't working with the men anymore. The claims examiners were actually very eager to provide the benefits under the contract for the longshoremen and to do everything possible for them. We got along fine with them. But then when we began to get more and more divorced from the longshoremen and the machines took over the work, it wasn't so satisfying any more. It still wouldn't have been a bad job if there hadn't been all that tension with the administrator's office, and the longshore union, and with Local 29. It got so that there was a hassle all the time.

INTERVIEWER: Well I was just wondering if you continued to work due to your involvement with the union?

MAUPIN: Yes, at times....

INTERVIEWER: It became exciting?

MAUPIN: Yes, it got more exciting. But several people who had been militant left which sort of decimated our militant group. I felt obligated to stay on for a while at least. That always kept being a little longer. After the layoff I didn't care anymore.

INTERVIEWER: Did your involvement at this stage, activity and involvement with the union, did that coincide with your leaving the SWP?

MAUPIN: It followed it. I had a period of writing fiction in between. I was already working temporarily in the longshore union office off and on. But I had more free time and I was trying to write. I was always a little involved in some kind of protest, but not much.

MAUPIN: The union involvement developed gradually.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think if you'd stayed with the SWP the union thing wouldn't have developed?

MAUPIN: Probably not, because they kept me busy with other things. That's interesting. . .there is a sort of a correlation between.... I wasn't considered much of an outstanding unionist. I was a writer, a speaker, I gave classes, things like that.

INTERVIEWER: What classes did you give?

MAUPIN: Usually history, which was just one step away from women's history which came up next. (laughter)

INTERVIEWER: Were you conscious when you did the union stuff? I mean were you doing it just because you were a worker and you were trying to improve your rights, or was it a conscious effort, like watching someone struggle to achieve equality or whatever?

MAUPIN: At the beginning I don't believe I thought too much about it except in a very practical way. After my political endeavors it seemed rather satisfying that you could work at certain little things and actually get them done sometimes, (laughter) win small battles once in a while. It was very concrete and you could see the results in people. Then as the troubles with the longshore union grew deeper it was a kind of a symbol of what was wrong with the union movement.

INTERVIEWER: Why was it a symbol?

MAUPIN: The longshore union had been a very radical union in this city but it was getting very conservative in its attitudes. In many ways it is still superior to some of the others.

INTERVIEWER: Why was that?

MAUPIN: In the usual ways, in the positions it took.

INTERVIEWER: But why?

MAUPIN: Oh, why. Well the items changed, there are not any radical unions around at the present time. In the Fifties the radical unions either got kicked out, or radical leadership of the unions got kicked out, in most of the unions. I don't think they have ever been

MAUPIN: the same since the McCarthy period. No new leadership has grown up nationally, it may have locally in some areas. So the longshore leadership was the old leadership. It was interesting to me that when this young organizer spoke to Bank of America workers--he was from Warehouse Local 6--one of his points in favor of choosing Local 6 was that the old leadership had just retired.

INTERVIEWER: Now, are we talking about present day?

MAUPIN: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: The Bank of America?

MAUPIN: Yes, in other words, they didn't have to worry about Lou Goldblatt or Bridges. . . they had retired and a younger leadership was coming to the fore that was more with it. He said it in a nice way. He said they had done great things in their time, but there was an implication that they hadn't done great things recently. Now,he said, we are planning on making some changes.

You were asking about if I consciously got into it, or if it just grew on me, as Union WAGE grew on me.

INTERVIEWER: When you left the SWP did you go through a period of never wanting to be in a political situation again?

MAUPIN: Yes, but I defined it rather narrowly. I still feel that way. I don't want to get into another political party.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, but you're very involved in a number of political things.

MAUPIN: It isn't quite the same as a political party.

INTERVIEWER: How is it different?

MAUPIN: Well. (pause) At least in my experience of them it doesn't have the rigidity of political parties, it's a much more informal situation although there are internal--it's growing and there are some internal problems coming up now but not to the extent.... The SWP was really a pretty heavy-handed outfit and so were most of the major radical parties, this isn't anything unusual. In fact one time....

INTERVIEWER: Is that because at that time they were trying to sustain an organization?

MAUPIN: I think it's one of the reasons, yes.

INTERVIEWER: What's the other one?

MAUPIN: Well, it's a certain--I don't know--I've decided that all organizations are self-perpetuating whether it's useful to self-perpetuate it or not. If it's something you have put a lot of your life into, you have to believe it's valid and sort of keep working for it even when the reasons, the original reasons, don't exist anymore, at least not in the same way. I've seen this a great deal. I have noticed that some people commented at the Union WAGE general membership meeting--we prepared sort of a funny questionnaire. One question was, what is the important thing to do? Several people said build the organization. I think that's absolutely erroneous. What you want to do is build the struggle of working women and when you see the organization as a substitute for it, or as an equivalent, it's wrong.

INTERVIEWER: You think then that the organization should be just a catalyst, a spark to that movement?

MAUPIN: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: It's natural to return back to Union WAGE after I took you off the track for a few minutes. You met Jean Maddox in your work with longshore in 1970 and 1971. How did you get into Union WAGE?

MAUPIN: Somewhat accidentally. I got a phone call from a friend who said that--you have to know her, know why she introduced the subject in this way--"Something has happened that is historically very important." What she meant was "I want a ride to a meeting." (laughter)

INTERVIEWER: And what meeting was this?

MAUPIN: It was the second meeting of Union WAGE or the first independent meeting.

INTERVIEWER: Did you go to the first meeting?

MAUPIN: No, that was at the NOW Conference where they met and they decided to set up a panel.

INTERVIEWER: How did this come about?

MAUPIN: Ann Draper and Jean Maddox while they were waiting in the line in the ladies' room said, "There is nothing on this program about working women," so they went back and protested. As a result a panel was set up. About fifteen women on that panel decided to hold a meeting the next week, and the next week was when I got there.

INTERVIEWER: Was this a totally spontaneous action of Ann's and Jean's, or had they been thinking about the meeting?

MAUPIN: I don't know, Jean may have been thinking about it, but I believe it was fairly spontaneous. There was a group in the East Bay then, connected with the International Socialists, working on protective legislation. A lot of them joined Union WAGE. I didn't know about that, I knew about the IWC [Industrial Welfare Commission] through my experiences in the longshore union. Ann Draper was the IWC expert, the one from whom I learned most of what I know about it.

INTERVIEWER: Then you went to the second meeting which was the following week?

MAUPIN: Yes, the name Union WAGE was adopted at the time.

INTERVIEWER: How did that come about?

MAUPIN: What happened was that they decided to--I remember still, this was about the 15th of March--to hold a mass picket line at the Industrial Welfare Commission at their March 31st hearings on the minimum wage, and to testify. I looked around at the fifteen people and thought, "Well there is no harm in it." I figured that I could testify, because I had done a lot of public speaking and....

INTERVIEWER: Why was the IWC picked?

MAUPIN: Ann Draper had been very involved with it, she made a seven-year fight to get the farm workers covered under it. Also, in connection with the Equal Rights Amendment, she was very disturbed about the danger to protective legislation. At this picket line and in testifying there, for the first time, the slogan Extend Protective Laws to Men was raised. The press didn't know what on earth to make of it. I still have some clippings that say, "women ask for men's rights." I didn't understand it

MAUPIN: all that well at the time either. It was sort of a new subject to me. I knew about protective legislation because I had spoken on it in the SWP, and at that time they were very keen on it. They dumped it later.

INTERVIEWER: Why though, out of all the things you could have picked in the women's trade unions, was this a trade union women's organization?

MAUPIN: At that time it was considered to be a trade union women's organization, it was a little while later, two or three months, that people who were not union said that they would like to join, and we shouldn't be exclusive as men always were. We decided not to make it strictly a trade unions women's organization although it was conceived of as such.

INTERVIEWER: Before I ask a question I think I should briefly... why did you, what did you come together for, what was your purpose in forming the Union WAGE?

MAUPIN: Women's rights as workers and in the unions. As I said, just the year before Jean had started going to the women's movement with the union struggles and to raise women's issues within the union: having women as business reps and officers, maternity leave, child care. She went back to the convention, the National Convention of Office and Professional Employees, raising the whole issue, within the union, of women's rights as well as job issues.

INTERVIEWER: It sounds like what you were consciously doing was creating a merger between the trade unions and the women's movement. Is that true?

MAUPIN: I think it was really; I've always defined it more as a pressure group.

INTERVIEWER: To pressure local unions or women's organizations?

MAUPIN: Try to make them work together on some issues.

INTERVIEWER: Was the feeling that the trade unions were not meeting women's needs?

MAUPIN: That's correct, but the women's movement was not meeting working women's needs. So there were problems on both sides.

INTERVIEWER: And so WAGE was formed to pressure both sides?

MAUPIN: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, then so why.... There were fifteen of you who were all in different unions, what then made you pick the IWC?

MAUPIN: First, the minimum wage issue, which I had been quite keen about when I was in the SWP and was angry with them for not taking it up. I wrote some, I think, pretty funny articles for The Militant about Minnie. Minnie was the woman on the minimum wage; they were always writing about her budget and how she could live on it. I wrote these articles pulling it apart which Ann Draper said, not knowing me at the time, she had clipped because nobody was writing about the minimum wage. I don't know if Jean had that in mind but I was really angry when neither the women's movement nor the unions paid any attention to what was so basic.

INTERVIEWER: You're still talking about wages?

MAUPIN: Yes, it was then $1.65 an hour.

INTERVIEWER: And you were trying to get it raised to what?

MAUPIN: I think we modestly started with three [dollars per hour], we are up to five now.

INTERVIEWER: Minimum wage?!

MAUPIN: Well, no, I meant our demands.

INTERVIEWER: I see. (laughter)

MAUPIN: Well we sat down and figured out a budget of what somebody need to live on.

INTERVIEWER: So you went to the IWC then?

MAUPIN: First we picketed with all sorts of signs like "My mommy can't support me on $1.65 an hour." Then we had gotten hold of their budget which I now seem to have lost. It was on just how the woman was supposed to live on $1.65. It was a big fancy booklet that they handed out, one-hundred pages telling you she could get two boxes of kleenex a year, one newspaper every two weeks and one-third of a television set if she shared it with two others. It was incredible budgeting, which showed a woman that never went out, never went

MAUPIN: to the movies, never had a vacation, never did anything, worked six days a week to attain this miserable budget. A lot of us studied it and tore apart different sections of it in the testimony. One of them said you could buy a brassiere for $1.19. So somebody went down and bought one at Woolworth's and we washed it three times and it was all falling apart already.

INTERVIEWER: Did you bring this to the meeting?

MAUPIN: Yes. So no one had ever done anything like this. It was a stunt. It was something new.

INTERVIEWER: Where did these ideas come from?

MAUPIN: All of these women had been active in unions and most of them were radicals and they had been in a lot of demonstrations at different times. They had ideas that they had always wanted to put into action. The trade union movement is not the best place to do some of these things, they want to be very severe and proper, it's too hard to get approval. So we all had a few ideas about what we would like to do. We caused quite a sensation. Of course the press began to hear about it; then the employers began to hear about it and they began to come down to testify. They said they hadn't been properly notified of the meeting.

INTERVIEWER: Was it a public meeting?

MAUPIN: Yes. Of course they got as much notice as we did. We were there.

INTERVIEWER: You just decided to show?

MAUPIN: There was a system that you go down and take a speaker's card and it's numbered. You are supposed to speak when your number comes up. I had gone quite early because I was taking time off work--then I was still employed. I wanted to get through in the morning. All of these employers came in and said they had something important to do and so they wanted a number ahead of mine and they all got it. So, by the time I got on I was very angry and I made quite a speech, saying that I too had something important to do, I had to make a living and I had already lost one-half day's pay. So this also got in the papers. For a first action we got more publicity on that....

INTERVIEWER: When was the action?

MAUPIN: March 30th or 31st.

INTERVIEWER: So this was just a week and ten days after....

MAUPIN: No. We had two or three weeks to organize and we had one hundred pickets too.

INTERVIEWER: Where did you get all these people from?

MAUPIN: Everybody phoned up their friends. (laughter) I mean the idea just caught on. There was this committee on protective legislation. Then we also raised. . . the IWC was not only concerned with the minimum wage, it determined overtime pay, rest periods, lunch periods. But they covered women only, so did the minimum wage at that time, but now it covers men. We raised the slogan of extending all these things to men. That was the first time I know of that it was raised.

INTERVIEWER: Why did you do that?

MAUPIN: It was Ann Draper's idea. She thought that so-called equality was going to result in the dumping of many protective laws,and in fact, had already resulted in setting aside things like weight-lifting limitations and hours limitations by court order. The IWC said they didn't have the authority, but later they got it, the authority. They could extend these benefits to men and if they were extended to men there would be no argument about taking them away from women in the name of equality.

INTERVIEWER: Which had been, as I recall, one of the problems with the ERA was that a lot of people were feeling that if the ERA passed that a lot of women would lose their rights under protective legislation.

MAUPIN: Union women wouldn't lose it, that was part of the confusion, the non-union women would lose it because the legal protection was all that they had. I didn't understand the issue that clearly at the time either. Benefits were being taken away from women systematically for several years. We wound up with the biggest demonstration we ever had at Bank of America where they were taking away the taxies from women at night, women who had to go home between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m. They took the taxies away, the demonstration didn't stop it.

INTERVIEWER: When was that?

MAUPIN: The beginning of 1973. We had about three hundred people picketing at the Bank of America. We had the San Francisco Mime Troupe with their band and the taxi drivers were honking horns, it was a big event.

INTERVIEWER: What I was trying to get in retrospect is the connection between your efforts and the ERA.

MAUPIN: We raised the slogan of conditional support to the Equal Rights Amendment, at the same time extending protective laws to all workers. We wanted, before ERA passed Congress, to amend it, saying "This shall not be construed to do away with existing labor standards." It got through Congress anyway, no amendment, and then we just went on with the protective laws campaign. Our position caused a great deal of hostility from the women's movement, they felt it was destructive to the ERA. At that time, it looked as if the ERA was about to go through any moment. It didn't happen. We were anxious to get the protective laws issue out front, before the whole issue was lost. The only other group that was working on this quite actively was in the state of Washington. They had a committee on protective laws, too. While we, here, have gotten protective laws extended, the Washington committee seems to be stalled.

INTERVIEWER: What came out of these hearings?

MAUPIN: Mainly publicity.

INTERVIEWER: Did that help you increase your membership?

MAUPIN: Yes. We started growing fairly fast and one of the first things we did when we met again, in April, we set up a membership organization. We also said we needed some money. I forget who said,"Well let's get out a newsletter, we'll sell subscriptions for a dollar." Someone said, "How can we sell subscriptions if we don't have a newsletter?" We said, "Just tell people, pay a dollar and see what you get." So we all took out our personal address books and got a mailing list of about one hundred and got subscriptions. We started putting out a mimeographed newsletter, which I never thought would become a sixteen page printed paper.

INTERVIEWER: What was the union's reaction to WAGE?

MAUPIN: Cool, I don't think they had any idea what we were

MAUPIN: doing to begin with. They didn't know much about protective laws.

INTERVIEWER: Did you get any kind of support from them?

MAUPIN: Not support, but sometimes they did agree to do things with us, like Henning, he's the head of the State Federation [AFL-CIO], went up to Sacramento to talk about the protective laws at one time. Other people endorsed our position; we got names.

INTERVIEWER: Did any of you have any trouble in your unions because you were forming WAGE and involved in that?

MAUPIN: I don't think that the unions were that conscious of it, but a number of people were quite successful in getting certain measures passed in the unions. That was one of our big ways of changing the unions. First to get protective legislation passed, but also maternity leave and affirmative action within the union as well as on the job. Our union members were then and still are pretty good at getting action within their unions. They sometimes met with hostility, depending on the leadership.

INTERVIEWER: When you first started WAGE, did you see yourself as a national organization?

MAUPIN: No, but we started getting memberships from other areas. That was probably because, when the newspaper was first printed, people sent it to their friends and then their friends would send in a subscription or a membership. When memberships started coming in from all sorts of odd places we didn't know what to do about it. In 1973, the chapter controversy arose and that's probably the most serious one we ever had.

INTERVIEWER: What was that about?

MAUPIN: Whether or not we should have chapters and whether the organization should think in terms of growth. A number of people opposed it.

INTERVIEWER: Why?

MAUPIN: For a variety of reasons, the then president was Ann Lipow and she was opposed to it and she.... They had an idea of having a perfect little model organization in Berkeley which the world could come and admire but

MAUPIN: they didn't think they wanted to take it all over. Ann Lipow thought very much in terms of control. She always used the word control; "How will you control it?" She had come out of the I.S. [International Socialists] and was then in something called the Independent Socialist Committee, which Drapers were in, rather a small group, I don't know if it still exists. They worried a lot about the potential politics of WAGE. We might wind up with a C.P. chapter and a Maoist Chapter and a SWP chapter and heaven knows what. What would you ever do to control them? As a matter of fact,with the growth of WAGE many of those problems have come up. I say the answer is you don't control them.

INTERVIEWER: You let them be?

MAUPIN: Well, the constitution states that the chapter must act in conformance to the purpose and goals of Union WAGE. If you think they are violating the purpose and goals of Union WAGE then you can charge them with something. Otherwise it doesn't matter what political party they belong to.

INTERVIEWER: Speaking of the goals and purposes of Union WAGE, there are about seven points or something?

MAUPIN: There are eleven now; we finally had to give up the even ten because we kept adding so many things.

INTERVIEWER: Where did they come from?

MAUPIN: We drew them up for the first newsletter, which went out on May 1st I think, around there, in 1971.

INTERVIEWER: Are they in the constitution as well?

MAUPIN: Yes, but they have changed over the years, there have been several revisions.

INTERVIEWER: Do you want to comment on them?

MAUPIN: Mainly additions.... Phrasing on the Equal Rights Amendment has changed several times.

INTERVIEWER: What are the goals of WAGE?

MAUPIN: One way of adding to the present goals is to make them all longer. The first ones were easier to remember

MAUPIN: because they were short.

Equal pay for equal work and equal opportunities. Now it says, jobs for all who want them, improved working conditions for all, and greater worker control over the workplace. The last one was added at the last convention, greater worker control over the workplace.

Organizing working women into unions and caucuses and encouraging women unionists to take greater responsibility in leadership roles to end male domination in unions, and to promote class conscious trade unionism.

Interpretation of the Equal Rights Amendment to guarantee the extension of labor standards covering women to men, and national protective legislation including health and safety standards reflecting the needs of workers not employers.

Fighting racism, this was an addition in 1975, recognizing the needs of minority women who are doubly oppressed to take leadership in unions and in Union WAGE, supporting the struggle of all minority sisters and brothers.

Fifth: raising special demands for women workers, e.g. paid parental leave without loss of seniority, maternity, medical leave without restrictions, and childcare facilities, employer and government supported, parent/staff controlled.

Sixth: ending sex and age discrimination in health and welfare and pension plans, pension portability for all workers--that's new or relatively new.

Seventh: the minimum wage of $4.00; now we've made it $5.00, escalated in proportion to the rate of inflation, guaranteed to all workers without exception, work-week of 30 hours or less at 40 hours pay, and voluntary overtime at triple pay. (laughter)

Free national comprehensive health care, free abortion on demand--that was not in the first ten points but was adopted shortly afterwards--free contraceptives of choice, no forced sterilization, and social security benefits with an inflation escalator for every adult and child. We have a claims examiner in social security who says this is meaningless and I've been telling her to rewrite it.

MAUPIN: Eleventh: an end to economic and social discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, and that came in about 1975.

So, as I said, it's much longer than the original Purpose and Goals. We keep thinking of things we haven't covered, certain clauses such as raising special demands for women workers is sort of an umbrella. But people want us to spell things out. In the introduction to the ten points, there's been some change and that's generally to extend the definition of working women . . . an organization of working women including housewives or those unemployed, retired and on welfare. The housewives were added last.

INTERVIEWER: Was that added because you didn't want to be an exclusive organization?

MAUPIN: Yes, but people kept saying that we did not quite meet the nonexclusive definition. However, I think some people have a narrow definition of working women. So they like our newspaper when we focus on workplace organizing but become relatively cool to prisons or women's reproductive rights. I think that kind of division of interest still exists in our organization. Although the reproductive rights issue was popular.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that's very bad? There's another way of looking at it, that you have a very broad based membership.

MAUPIN: That's okay, but at times they object to.... There was objection to the prison issue in particular for several reasons. Some of them just because they didn't want to have six or seven pages on prisons. They didn't think they had too much to do with them.

INTERVIEWER: Them, who?

MAUPIN: Well, the people who were reading the paper didn't see how prisons related to them. So that's a kind of narrow point of view but....

INTERVIEWER: Who decides what goes into the paper?

MAUPIN: That's what everybody has been asking lately. In the long run, if there is a real dispute it's the executive board, which is what happened last time. We used to have a system, there wasn't a publications committee;

MAUPIN: we now have a very good functioning publications committee, about our only good, functioning, industrious committee.

The committee draws up the plans. Before this the plans had to be submitted to the executive and then go to publications. But the two committees overlap to some extent, some of the same people on both. It hasn't been necessary, as a rule, to go over all the detailed plans with the executive committee anymore, only if something special comes up. One chapter did not want to print the prison stuff, so they came to the publications committee and demanded that we not carry it. There were reasons....

INTERVIEWER: How'd they know what you were printing?

MAUPIN: A couple of them were working on it. I had been corresponding with Sarah Jane Moore, the one who took a shot at Ford.

INTERVIEWER: Yes.

MAUPIN: It happened quite by accident. She was editor of the prison newsletter and wanted to reprint a couple of my articles. She wrote very interesting things about prisons which got me into the whole subject. Some people found out about this . . . she was once an informer, which she told me in one of her letters. I didn't think it related much to what she was writing about prisons, which was factual, I checked it out from other sources. But they said we should never publish an article by such a person. Then one of them, quite a shock to me, brought in an article by Emily Harris, who was mixed up with Patty Hearst. I didn't quite see why one of them was okay and the other wasn't, I guess it's all in your politics. We decided we could use some of the material but not with the names or everybody would buy the paper because it was sensational. The Emily Harris article was good, it was about a fire in the prison, but the people, the pro-Emily Harris people didn't want to carry it without her name. They didn't want to carry anything by Sarah Jane Moore, although the article quoted from prison letters and I verified the information from several sources. There was another section about work in prisons which was almost entirely from her letters, but anonymous. That is what went to the executive board, and the executive board voted unanimously to run it. But the chapters weren't happy.

MAUPIN: So, we will discuss it again in our interchapter newsletter.

INTERVIEWER: You have a chapter newsletter?

MAUPIN: Yes, we only run off about 100 copies because it is for chapter activists. We don't mail them individually, we mail a bunch to the chapter so whoever gets to the chapter meeting gets one. We started this . . . we decided to do it at the last convention. We've had three issues so far and it does seem to fulfill a need, taking up issues which are rather hard to discuss in the paper, which is now read by a couple of thousand people, who don't know much about what the organization is doing.

INTERVIEWER: I noticed that going through the papers, the paper had really changed from an in-house communication to a national focus, which may not have to do with WAGE. I assume that was a very conscious decision?

MAUPIN: As our readership got more national we decided we should.

INTERVIEWER: Do you also see the paper as an organizing tool?

MAUPIN: Yes, it's very effective that way. The best example perhaps--we turned out a special issue on the electronics industry and gave the union 2,000 copies of it to distribute at plants. When the Bank of America workers feel they are ready, we can do a special issue around their drive, about banks and unions. People in New York have ordered up to 500 copies of a particular issue because there's an article about something they are doing there. We can do this very easily if people give us enough advance notice. At the last minute it is a little hard to cope with but we try very hard.

INTERVIEWER: Is the paper a major focus of WAGE, it seems like it would take a lot of your energy?

MAUPIN: It does, especially the pamphlets. We haven't done so much on pamphlets recently but we are about to get out another. It does take a lot of energy and that again is one of the differences. Some people think it takes too much energy. The San Francisco chapter has been kind of stripped of people, not just by the paper, but the paper and the executive board, because we had great difficulty in getting the East Bay to run for the Board. I had to retire from the chapter when I

MAUPIN: became President of WAGE, I can't function on too many levels. When the last president didn't retire from her chapter she tended to intervene in chapter events and things got rather sticky. The result is that the San Francisco chapter, although it has a large paper membership, is having difficulty, not having enough activists.

INTERVIEWER: There's controversy over whether or not the paper is draining energy from the organization, what would people prefer to have the organization do?

MAUPIN: We didn't start out thinking we were going to be concentrating on publications. WAGE was conceived of as an activist organization and I think that some people feel that our activity has been hurt. It's not that simple. The people who enjoy working on the paper will not necessarily leaflet Bank of America or go down to Zim's for a coffee-in. One of our problems is how to activate people on different levels. We've never made any particular demands on members. If you pay your dues and never show up you're still a member. Some people resent that because they say people can just show up once a year and outvote other very active people. How come they all march in like this at the last minute and tell us how to do our work? (laughter) Which is a natural reaction. But they have the same right as anybody else, because we never insisted on any level of activity. That's different from most political parties, very little pressure.

Our first fund appeal to our membership. . . everything was moved into my house after Jean's death. I had been crowded before but then it was very crowded and I couldn't cope with it so I said we had to get an office. We sent out a fund appeal which got a really beautiful response. But here we were, we started in 1971, that was 1976 and we had never appealed to our members for money. We're now starting to do so and that's one of the problems of growth, you suddenly need more. There is a lot more happening, you need more work, you need....

INTERVIEWER: How does the organization support itself currently?

MAUPIN: Currently is a good question. We're running into a crisis. Last year we had a budget of a little over $18,000, of which about $5,000 came from grants, and the balance came from memberships, pamphlets, and newspaper

MAUPIN: sales and individual donations. Now we have a yearly fund appeal and the pamphlet sales have been way beyond anything we anticipated, running to three or four thousand all over the country and some other countries. So there is a feeling that all we do is run around writing things and selling them. Somebody made a remark, are we in the newspaper business? But you reach so many more people that way. Besides, I don't think you rule out one thing as against the other although there may be problems in combining them.

INTERVIEWER: Let's jump back for a minute--what is the organizational structure of WAGE?

MAUPIN: Good question.... It started out very simple before the chapter structure, which was introduced in 1974, and it's been complicated ever since because we haven't really worked out that chapter structure very well. We elect five officers by a mail ballot, and this goes out to everyone in the entire country. They don't all send it back but we send it out to them. That's the president, vice-president and secretary-treasurer and editor. For some reason we elect our editor, which is rather unusual. I think we're going to rename it head of publications. Then each chapter elects a chapter representative who is also a member of the board.

INTERVIEWER: What kinds of decisions does the executive committee board make? Who makes policy decisions?

MAUPIN: The executive board does, between conventions. That would be alright if the executive board represented anybody but the Bay Area, but it doesn't.

INTERVIEWER: There's a convention each year?

MAUPIN: We had one in 1974 then we didn't have one until 1976, then we had another in 1977. We didn't need a convention when everybody was in one chapter. So people did start last year talking about a delegated convention. It is needed partly to educate people in the Bay Area, who think they're the only people in the organization. They say, "This article . . . we should have something more timely." We have to point out that something that's more timely in the Bay Area might not be in New York.

INTERVIEWER: How large is your membership?

MAUPIN: Several hundred, I haven't made an exact count. The subscribers are about 1200 and then another 500 go out in bundle orders. So, probably about two thousand readers.

INTERVIEWER: What kinds of issues are determined by the convention?

MAUPIN: It depends on what issues people raise. I think this may be a decisive year. There are resolutions at the end of the constitution which represent actions of convention--statements of policy rather than structural questions.

INTERVIEWER: When a group trying to organize at their workplace comes to WAGE for support does the organization or chapter have to vote on whether or not you'll support this particular group seeking your aid?

MAUPIN: No, if they want to organize a union that's what we're in business for.

INTERVIEWER: Do you seek groups to organize?

MAUPIN: No, because we can't organize a union, which is one point of confusion. We're not a union so we can't organize one, workers have to organize the union, we can do things to help.

INTERVIEWER: What you are is a support organization?

MAUPIN: Yes, and....

INTERVIEWER: Is that why the paper is so important?

MAUPIN: Yes, it's a tool for support work and in strikes. Not all our strike work has been as effective as it might have been. In principle it can be very effective to get more publicity, to get more people involved. Some strikes we did quite a bit in and others we had problems relating to the whole situation. Now the ideal way for all this to happen is the way it's been happening in Bank of America; it doesn't always go like that. I was sitting quietly in the office one day and a young woman came in. I said,"Can I help you?" "Yes, I want to organize the Bank of America." (laughs) It doesn't happen every day! So a meeting was called at our office, an initial meeting, at which they elected a committee and then decided to get out a flyer. The next two meetings were held at somebody's home and then they

MAUPIN: wanted to know, one: where could they get legal help, and we referred them to a couple of people. They asked if there were any other unions that they could go to because they didn't want SEIU [Service Employees International Union] due to an earlier bad experience. So we managed to dig up a total of four and they actually met with three of them, the other was so bad on the phone that they didn't want a meeting. Then [they] made a selection. In the course of this, they decided that they wanted to get out a flyer to hold a bigger meeting to enlarge the group and so we produced a flyer with Carroll. Then we distributed the flyer. We got a whole crew to distribute at 6:30 in the morning, 5:30 at night and 11:30 p.m. distributions. Each time there's been about a dozen people. This time we didn't have to do the flyer because they have a union, but they still felt that they needed the protection of having us distribute because they are not well established yet. If they get into it more, there are other things that can be done. But this proceded like a model case. It doesn't always happen so easily and smoothly, which doesn't mean, of course, that they will necessarily get a union, because Bank of America is very tough. At least things have gone very well so far.

INTERVIEWER: How does it usually happen?

MAUPIN: There isn't any usual but sometimes people wander in or call and say they have got a whole group of people together. But it seems to vanish when you get down to it and so you may put quite a bit of work in and not necessarily see anything come out of it. It doesn't mean that nothing is going on, it means that at the point of actually getting out to that meeting people are hesitant, scared, confused. Two years later you may hear from some of the same people in the same place who are still thinking about a union. So that it is not all that negative. Sometimes disagreements arise. It just seemed as if this was especially easy in the sense that it all worked out, that we got the people and we got the flyer, and we got the union that they feel happy with.

INTERVIEWER: Are you still taking on any broader issues as you did with IWC?

MAUPIN: Yes, we're just about into one which we didn't think would happen until next year. The first step we took this year which we had done in the last hearings too, was to recommend members for the boards which make rec-

MAUPIN: ommendations to the commission. They set up wage boards in 15 different industries consisting of half employees and half employers. In my opinion, the wage boards don't have much power but it's kind of an interesting experience anyway. These boards meet and come up with recommendations. Then the Industrial Welfare Commission considers their recommendations and calls public hearings and then people testify at these hearings. That's the process.

So step one was to nominate WAGE members, which we just did and the appointments will be made in September. Then we got a letter two days ago that the employer is challenging, essentially, the right of the IWC to regulate industries: entertainment and recreation and transportation. They have been fighting a lot of the regulations in court anyway, especially the daily overtime. Daily overtime means you get it after eight hours whether you work another day in the week or not.

The big employers ask, why should California workers have this when they don't have it nationally? I think nationally workers should have it. It has been a big fight to extend that to men--women did have it but they lost it for a while and we fought for it to get it back. Many industries did not object. The way they [the employers] are doing it is to say that no evidence exists that any regulation of these industries is needed.

So the letter I got from the Industrial Welfare Commission, the secretary there--who is somebody that we recommended for the job by the way--essentially her letter said that they have a lot of statistical material about the industry but that they would be interested in personal experiences and they may be submitted in writing a week before the appointments are made in September, or else people can come down to the hearing.

So yesterday, one of our associate members volunteered to be helpful; he's a Teamster so I feel it's right in his line of work. He belongs to Teamsters for a Democratic Union and he could get all his contacts there.

INTERVIEWER: What is the average age of members?

MAUPIN: Thirties and forties. Last year Pam, who is in her early thirties, was the youngest person on the executive

MAUPIN: board. Now there are quite a few in their twenties. that's one of the things that struck everybody about Union WAGE, that the membership is by and large older than most women's organizations. We have some real old-timers like me and Elaine Yoneda, who is in her Seventies, and a few others who are still quite active.

INTERVIEWER: Is there a conflict between older and younger members?

MAUPIN: We haven't noticed it very much. We have one person who does have a rather difficult disposition. She has a lot of talent, but is hard to get along with. One day she said, "I don't think I get along with anybody under fifty. She is about fifty. Since I was the only person over fifty around and she wasn't getting along with me I wasn't quite sure what that proved. I wouldn't, I don't think there is too much conflict, I haven't noticed it.

INTERVIEWER: Average income?

MAUPIN: It varies quite a bit, because you have some quite well paid union members. The difference between organized jobs and unorganized jobs is tremendous and some people, like our last president, Monja Argue.... She really came up the hard way, she was a welfare mother. She got a so-called male job in the telephone company. She is now up to seventeen thousand a year and will get a raise. She says what hurts her is that when she was raising her children she didn't have that money, they lived on practically nothing, and now that she is alone she has all the money [and no children]. That would be the upper income bracket for our group. Mostly women in our organization are in women's jobs, which don't pay very well. Some are on disability, welfare or social security, but they are a minority.

INTERVIEWER: Do you have any professional women join WAGE?

MAUPIN: We have a couple of attorneys but they are radical attorneys and I think one doctor, that's about it. No, they are not attracted unless they are very much oriented towards working women's problems as someone like Mandy is. She is one of our radical attorneys. But professionals don't have to fight for coffee breaks and rest periods and how long you have to stand on your feet. It's a whole other world.

INTERVIEWER: Are there any women from leftist sects?

MAUPIN: There are currently; they tend to leave after a while. I would say the majority of the membership is more or less leftist. But the sect type, they usually come in all steamed up with fire; they are going to convert us all, they are going to explain that it's a class struggle, they are going to tell us about Marx. They don't do very well because a WAGE woman has a lot of experience and usually remains quite calm.

INTERVIEWER: Have they disrupted or tried to disrupt WAGE meetings?

MAUPIN: We are very democratic and we had really a rough time with something like this last year and it hasn't been solved yet. It's been solved for this area but.... Two people came out from New York who joined. They belong to some sort of sect, I've never figured which one because they say the one we identified them with doesn't exist anymore. Some of our members in New York want another chapter, not associated with these sectarians. You can have two chapters in one city, especially a big city like New York, but I don't know how they will get along if this happens. The problems they pose, this one woman out here is fairly easygoing but the other one is a real hot sectarian. I was not on the executive board then, I am happy to say, because every single exec board meeting was a battle, and it was a battle of everybody else against her.

INTERVIEWER: She was on your executive board?

MAUPIN: Yes, she got in at the last minute because someone couldn't run and she leapt forward and said she would run! That seemed very nice of her. As a result they [the exec] had a bad year. We kept saying, "I don't know why she goes on and on, she hasn't made a single recruit in a year." It would be demoralizing I would think. One night she called me up; she wanted us to become a mass organization and organize fifty million poor women, very grandiose, using all the old sectarian terminology like the proletariat. We didn't think it was the way to organize women. She would call in the middle of dinner and talk and talk and talk. I would scream at her, "I don't know why you keep going on; it's quite obvious I don't agree and I'm not about to. I just didn't arrive at my ideas yesterday." She would say, "But this is my job, I must change Union WAGE." She left the job and went back to New York and we haven't heard from her.

MAUPIN: The really bad thing that came up was that we found out this group was or is in the IWP, the International Workers Party, which at some point around 1973, was in and out of the NCLC [National Committe of Labor Caucuses]. Some people thought they were still in, we have no evidence of that. As far as I know they are not. They said they weren't.

So word got out that Union WAGE was mixed up with the IWP and the NCLC. It was published on the East Coast in a magazine called The Public Eye. We wrote to them and said it was untrue, and we got a very strange communication from them asking when we had dumped these two [women], but we hadn't dumped them. We had't dumped the New York chapter. We didn't actually see any particular organizational justification for dumping them although they were awfully noisy and difficult. We wrote back and said we hadn't dumped anyone and we wished that they would kindly retract their statement that we were a front for the IWP. If that was the case we wouldn't be dumping our own group. We got back this funny letter from them saying, "Actually we'd never heard of Union WAGE before but it sort of filled a vacancy in our West Coast research...."

INTERVIEWER: What's the racial mixture of your membership?

MAUPIN: There are hardly any minorities, which is not what we want but seems to be a very big problem with all women's groups. In this area, which is the only one where we have that body of experience, we have sometimes recruited them but they do not stay and they don't stay because it's too white, I am sure. There are a number of Third World women's organizations here, there's Third World Women's Alliance for one, and another called Uniteo Filipinos for Equal Employment. There is a Latino Affirmative Action and a couple of Chinese groups so that they don't need to join another organizations unless they are convinced that there is a good reason. We can work with them, we can form alliances, and over the years a certain amount of trust can be built up. I got very involved with the household workers and was on the household workers' Wage Board. But they don't want to be in our organization and I don't think there's much to do about it now. Every once in a while somebody gets up and makes a big speech, we should go out and recruit Third World women, but that is not the way it happens.

INTERVIEWER: Are there groups that you affiliate with or coalesce

INTERVIEWER: with at different times?

MAUPIN: As much as possible.

INTERVIEWER: What are some of the ones?

MAUPIN: In the case of the IWC, forty groups were in our coalition. We started by calling it the Coalition for Workers' Rights. These groups were sort of equally divided between women's groups, unions of the more progressive kind, usually local unions, and community groups. The San Francisco Women's Center is a friendly group, Pam has worked a lot with the Third World Women's Alliance. Some groups fell apart, several socialist feminist groups here didn't survive. The Berkeley-Oakland Women's Union and the San Francisco Women's Union, which together with WAGE organized the 1975 Working Women's Conference, was attended by 500 women. It was very successful; it really started us getting more chapters together because people came to it and got inspired.

INTERVIEWER: A minute ago you were talking about some of the left sects and what their thoughts were and you said that's not the way to go about organizing women. How do you see, what is the most effective way to organize women?

MAUPIN: Well, there isn't any one way to do anything. What we were criticizing was first the attitude that you have to convert them to a complete change, to world socialism, before you can organize a union, which is not very practical. The whole idea of Union WAGE is to approach the job issues. These are the immediate issues that are affecting women in their daily lives, and they will respond to a newspaper about them. They read the paper, people don't always read all of it when they pick it up but they go through and find out what articles they like written in an easygoing, simple way, not too confusing or too rhetorical.

INTERVIEWER: In the early issues of the paper there was a, almost a kind of history column, you know, on foremothers.

MAUPIN: That was "Labor Heroines."

INTERVIEWER: Yes.

MAUPIN: Which became a pamphlet later.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, why did you focus on that for so long? Was there

INTERVIEWER: a purpose behind that or was that just your own personal ....?

MAUPIN: Well, at that time in the unions we were getting a lot of flack that women had never been any good in unions. They didn't know anything about it, they weren't good organizers.

I remember a typical story. One woman was thinking of being a teacher organizer and when she applied for the job they told her, "You would hate it. Organizers have an awful life, they live in hotels and eat out at bad restaurants," and then she heard them talking up the job to a man, "You'd love it; you stay at all the good hotels; you'll have a union car, eat in good restaurants." (laughs)

I wanted to establish, for one thing as a sort of morale factor, that women had indeed been active in unions and show leadership abilities and we also wanted to get a little away from the standard paper which has only current things.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think it's helpful for women organizing now to know the past history of women organizers?

MAUPIN: I certainly do, I am the one who works so much on it. The women that I've recently been writing about had problems that were very closely related to what we're doing today. Not exactly the same but, I got quite fascinated by Carmen Lucia's problems with the different unions which employed her as organizer because she didn't always get along with them too well. (laughs) That's true of organizers today, especially women organizers, and why should we get along with them?

INTERVIEWER: In some ways one could look at your organization and think very superficially that it seems a lot like CLUW. How do you see yourself?

MAUPIN: We had a big division over that when CLUW [Coalition of Labor Union Women] was founded. Most of the very active WAGE members went back to the founding convention and the differences....

INTERVIEWER: The founding convention of....?

MAUPIN: CLUW.

INTERVIEWER: You want to tell me what the story was?

MAUPIN: It was in Chicago. It was obvious from the very beginning that they didn't seem particularly eager to have Union WAGE members coming. I think that grows out of the fact that a little earlier. . . Olga Madar had come out, in 1972, and she had talked about setting up a network, a women's network, and got together with Ann Draper and Union WAGE. But Union WAGE and Olga didn't get along very well, particularly on protective legislation, and.... She demanded that either you change your position on protective legislation or she'd pull out of the network.

When CLUW started up she already considered us a difficult group. So the original announcements didn't seem to come our way at all and California was the one area in which there was no pre-conference. We'd had a big conference the year before, the AFL-CIO Women's Conference, in which we played quite a part.

INTERVIEWER: When was that?

MAUPIN: We'd gone down to the AFL-CIO state convention and we overturned the chair, for the first time in forty years, on the issue of the women's conference. But they weren't doing anything about it and you'd call up the AFL-CIO state office and they'd say, "women's conference? Really?" We had learned that it would be held at the Jack Tar*but that was it. About a month before it was scheduled, we got desperate and sent thousands of leaflets up and down California telling all the women that the AFL-CIO was holding a conference and they should go to it. I got calls day and night, "I want to come, but my union doesn't believe there's a conference." (laughs) In the end we got 500 women there. WAGE was still quite small, but we decided to rent a suite at the Jack Tar so that we could have our banner flying from the balcony, right in front of the conference. The Jack Tar was expensive and most of the delegates didn't have much money, so we served meals in our suite, for $2, and put people up; they slept on the floor. We set up a literature table and got about twenty-five new members right off.

The next AFL-CIO women's conference was very restricted. A whole lot of unions were not considered eligible at all because they hadn't paid dues to the State Federation. Also it cost quite a bit to attend. You had to be delegated to get in; they weren't going to let us take

*Jack Tar hotel in San Francisco

MAUPIN: over again! What we did in 1973 was simply move into a vacuum. Nobody else was doing anything about the conference. I guess she, Olga Madar, heard about this and didn't want anything like that happening at the CLUW convention. In the end we found that it was easier for a member to get in if she didn't mention a connection with Union WAGE. I wound up in a little, dinky room with two other people with whom I immediately had disagreements. So I moved out. Kay Eisenhower, who said she represented the Labor Council in Alameda, had a beautiful room. (laughs) That's the one I moved into. The differences were with Ann Lipow, the WAGE president who didn't want us to expand, didn't want chapters. She took an anti-farmworker position at the CLUW convention, much to our horror. The rest of us were all on the other side--with those who finally overthrew point fourteen on the proposed CLUW platform which would have made it impossible to support the farmworkers. But she was so convinced that CLUW was the wave of the future....

INTERVIEWER: She being Ann or Olga?

MAUPIN: Ann Lipow. She took the floor on the shorter work week and we thought, at least she's for the shorter work week, but it turned out she wasn't sure it was necessary to raise it at this time. That was March and she only remained president of WAGE until April 18th and then she went into CLUW and I do not know what's happened to her since.

But several other people, there were several divisions of opinion on it. Some people maintained dual membership for quite a while; a few may still do it just out of habit, and others felt that Union WAGE should join CLUW. In fact, Ann Lipow, I understand, had promised them four chapters already. Some felt that CLUW was so important--at that time about one third of our membership was not in unions--we should just dump them which was the most important issue to us. We weren't about to drop a third of our members just to get into CLUW which wasn't so easy to get into anyway, I found out.

I probably had the most negative position on CLUW of anybody; there was a whole spectrum from enthusiasm to being quite negative, which I was. My theory was that it had been set up to control the working women's movement (laughs) and was very close to the bureaucracy and was not going to develop into something better

MAUPIN: because it wouldn't have a chance. Some people thought, well, if we get in then it will develop more in the direction of working women's interests,but I didn't see that. That convention was very controlled, that whole CLUW convention. Everytime we got in to any real discussion it was time to sing a song or (laughs) do something else.

INTERVIEWER: What do you see as the major difference between CLUW and Union WAGE, aside from your own personal feelings?

MAUPIN: The most obvious one is the membership requirement of their all being. . .

INTERVIEWER: Trade union women?

MAUPIN: The other one is that I think they are rather close to the labor bureaucracy, and we are rather critical. The CLUW chapters here tend to be dominated by women who have minor trade union posts, plus a whole bunch of politicals who are warring with each other. I did attend some meetings occasionally; I've even spoken at CLUW meetings, which caused a bit of controversy, but I didn't see any reason for working with those people. The ones who have small trade union posts don't want to rock the boat. They tend to be conservative and the radicals are fighting each other (laughs). I don't know what the other chapters are like but I've had some very negative reports. The group in Boston which might or might not eventually affiliate with WAGE were formerly in CLUW so they are mostly trade unionists.

INTERVIEWER: What do you currently see as the major problem facing WAGE?

MAUPIN: We don't really know how to be a national organization. We're working at it; a lot of it seems to be happening. Many people didn't think that it would move very far out of this area. Having members in San Jose is a little different say, than in Georgia or Texas. I think some people don't like that idea too well; it's a little overwhelming. I am more overwhelmed by how to do it, obviously a lot of our organizational methods have grown out of what we have done and are not suited to all of the situations that we run into now. We haven't any hard or fast ideas of what must or must not be done.

INTERVIEWER: Are there any other models you can look at?

MAUPIN: I am not sure. When we first got started a lot of people compared us with the Women's Trade Union League and there are points of similarity as well as differences.

INTERVIEWER: Such as. . .

MAUPIN: Their objectives were rather similar on organizing women and improving their working conditions and they did have a group of working women involved, but they also had a group of rich women involved, which is where the differences come in. They did a lot of support work. We got a long document from a young woman in New England who did her college thesis on the Women's Trade Union League, a couple hundred pages, very interesting. She analyzed their problems and the support work, on how they did it well or didn't do it well. That is one of the things that relates to us.

The other was a little confusion among the members of the Women's Trade Union League, as there is among members of Union WAGE, about whether they were feminists, trade unionists, or both. In WAGE, in response to our questionnaire when we asked, "What do you dislike about Union WAGE?" some members said, "It is not a feminist organization." We are a mixture. Some women in WAGE are more feminist than others, and others pretty much concentrate on job issues. I don't think that is a complete negation of feminism but....

INTERVIEWER: What would you list as WAGE's strengths and weaknesses?

MAUPIN: Obviously publications have been a very strong point, being able to turn out the newspaper all the time at a fairly consistent level, and the pamphlets. Our educational work has been somewhat spotty, but fairly good when it happened, setting up workshops and classes. Because we do have a lot that we can help people with. One of the things....

INTERVIEWER: Tell me about it.

MAUPIN: One of the things around the Industrial Welfare Commission is to set up public speaking classes so that people will know how to testify. When they didn't want to come to our meeting we went to their meeting and set it up there. We learned how to turn out fairly good looking things: flyers and newspapers. We'd help groups with getting their flyers together or even critiquing their newsletters and how they could improve

MAUPIN: them. We offered our facilities to the extent that we had them.

INTERVIEWER: The nuts and bolts of organizing.

MAUPIN: Yes, parliamentary procedure is something that we have been trying to get across to people; it's not easy. At times we've had a series of classes, study groups, and we haven't always been able to hold them together. We had three examples of how not to speak in public, which were hilarious, and then we had people pull subjects out of a hat and have to speak on them and that turned out to be entertaining as well as educational. There were examples of how you approach a subject when you don't really know a great deal about it, which you may have to do in public situations. For instance, when you are testifying at the IWC and you are limited to five minutes. The commissioners are not [limited to five minutes] and they can suddenly throw a bunch of questions at you.

All of this is not easy to learn, and I realized it one time I was at a hearing on the minimum wage. It was a dark and stormy night, the worst night of the year. But it was fairly well-attended and afterwards Pam said, "I promise you the next time I'll testify." She had seemed so together and everything, it never occurred to me that she was too bashful to testify. But it is frightening. You don't speak to an audience; you speak to these commissioners way up on a platform and you have a little mike and your real audience is at your rear so you can't see your friends. You can freeze in this kind of situation. One woman got up and just said, "I think Union WAGE is right; it should be $4.00 an hour," and then sat down (laughs). She couldn't think of another thing to say.

People have commended us for learning how to use these government hearings as a platform and as a thing to organize and agitate around. We've done it. We had demonstrations at some of the OSHA [Occupational Safety and Health Administration] hearings raising a slogan Get The Lead Out. We have learned pretty well how to get this together and communicate it to the people.

INTERVIEWER: Are these some of the things that you covered in your organizing conference?

MAUPIN: Yes, that was part of it. It was a very exciting con-

MAUPIN: ference except that it had some faults and one of the faults was we got 29 organizations present at it and they all spoke. (laughs) Not only that but sometimes two or three members from one organizetion spoke. We were trying to limit it; it got rather endless. In the future we should pick out who the main speakers are if we have a conference of that type again, which nobody has been able to think about since. It's a tremendous undertaking. There were thirty children there aged from two weeks to four or five years being taken care of, and we had a movie with 900 people attending. So much work for people who are not being paid but are doing it after their regular jobs. What was exciting was we had particularly geared it to the possibility of independent organizing. We had invited a number of independent unions: one from Canada, actually two from Canada, and....The pulp and paper workers here who had broken away from their national union. Then there were a number of smaller groups. Also what we call progressive unions were represented, UE [United Electrical, Radio, and Machine Workers] being one of them. We were raising questions as to whether or not it would be possible to organize independently in times like the present. We didn't come to any firm conclusion. It was finally voted on at the last convention, the argument went on for a couple of years and the conclusion was you have to do the best you can in any situation.

INTERVIEWER: What are some of WAGE's weaknesses?

MAUPIN: Except on the publications committee, I don't think we have learned to get the best out of our members. Publications: Pam has done a good job on that, she said today if somebody wants two hours work a month or two days, or whatever, she always can get it in, but otherwise I think that a lot of people join expecting something exciting to happen and sort of wander around wondering what to do. We're rather bad at outreach. Everybody sees this bunch of busy women and you would think that we would be very excited that a couple of people just joined; we don't even notice! (laughs)

INTERVIEWER: Have you ever thought of having a, quote, "organizer," on the staff to deal with some of these things and who could help with internal organizational problems?

MAUPIN: Yes, but we, the crisis that we're in, in a way it is only intensified by the fact that we have to move and

MAUPIN: that we just got some stuff ripped off, but we need .... First we need somebody stable in that office because now I am doing most of the office work, or at least having to check and see if it gets done or not, and it's getting wearing. Not that any one person would do it all, but we need somebody who knows what the work is to oversee it and make sure that it is getting done and not falling into a corner somewhere. Recently because of a break-up of Pam's marriage and her child care problems, she said that she either had to get some pay or she couldn't stay as editor. If she has to get a full-time job with a three-year-old boy she doesn't think she could do all that much editing. So we are now paying our editor for 24 hours a week. She also does the bookkeeping, which is not working out. I was saying today that we need an accountant, somebody who comes in at least once a month. We have a principle, since we are demanding $5.00 an hour as the minimum wage we always pay what we have said the minimum wage should be. But it is still not much of a salary, of course, for 24 hours. We want, if possible, to get a part-time office person--I don't really know where all that money is coming from--and then we would also like to have an organizer.

We really have done very little fund-raising. Most organizations spend a lot of time on it I discovered, but with us it's only when our money is running out somebody gets it together and tries to get out a proposal, it's usually me. I can see the money getting lower and I am more conscious of the overall expenses.

INTERVIEWER: The reason I asked about the organizer. . . it seems to make sense that sometimes an organization takes a stand not to hire an organizer.

MAUPIN: Well, there was a lot of argument about whether Pam getting paid would alter power relationships. I am not quite sure how it would do that (laughs) but that's why they would rather call her head of publications. It's bothering people a little but she is now trying to train two other people to take over that job, one on production. We did have a very good production woman who is not around right now. She didn't quit WAGE but she quit a job here and is on the East Coast. Then she's training somebody on editing and we have a good team now, good editing team. Because she--we do have a thing in the constitution, you can't be in a job more than two years--and her two years are running out. (laughs)

INTERVIEWER: What would you characterize as the major problems involved in organizing women currently?

MAUPIN: The unions, (laughs) it's very, one of our hardest jobs here when women are interested in unionizing, to find a union that either, one, will work with them or two,can do it, I mean, do it in the way that is not going to get them really uptight or offend them.

INTERVIEWER: What are some of these things they need to do but don't do?

MAUPIN: First they have to be willing to try to organize. We get "no's." "No, we don't want to organize a bank, no we don't want to organize an office of that size," implying some other size might be better, or they don't want to organize that particular office even if it is the right size.

INTERVIEWER: Why?

MAUPIN: I can only guess. With 29 it's no longer the case. 29 wants to organize. Local 3 of Office and Professional Workers organized Blue Shield in 1972 as the result of which a very young militant caucus came in to the union and demanded half the leadership, just like that, and has been giving them trouble ever since. They decided I guess, if they organize one of the big offices they won't have any leadership left. But they have shown a big disinclination to organize anybody much since then and when they do, it's very slipshod.

One of our members might go on strike any moment and she is in Local 3. She said, "It's terrible, the work force is not very united. We have sort of been pushed into a strike position; the union is terrible and the employer is terrible and all we've got going for us is that the rest of the university is unionized and they will close it down if we go out." She wants me to tell her what to do in that situation, but I am not sure. It is difficult. The union is so lukewarm and, like when the ITU [International Typographical Union] and the Newspaper Guild organized the Bay Guardian they did organize it, but they didn't back up the strike at all so....

INTERVIEWER: Do you think any of this is left over from old myths

INTERVIEWER: that women can't be organized?

MAUPIN: Oh yes, that still persists and most of the old-time male leadership has not learned anything new. Now some younger ones coming along.... That is why Kathleen was upset when workers met with her union, which is the Retail Clerks, and she thinks it is a pretty good union, and doing a lot of organizing. But instead of just having the organizer there they called in the top brass including the regional vice-president. The organizer was okay although she said women were not his best point, but he's a real live organizer. But the regional vice-president was both sexist and racist in some of his remarks and that was it. They got one vote. I don't know how it will be in the Culinary Union, now it has just overthrown the old leadership and I understand the new people are having a rather rough time; it's a rough union.

INTERVIEWER: If you had a sort of magic wand to obtain all the resources you need to organize with, what would you want?

MAUPIN: In this case I do have to get back to building and organization, (laughter) but I don't think it's our primary objective. I would send out organizers, not cold, I mean we have enough leads that an organizer could keep quite busy or several of them could. People say, "We're trying," but in many cases it is independent or they haven't contacted the union and, "we would like to organize a union and we don't know how, we would like to talk to somebody." And somebody ought to go there and usually I've tried to tie them up if I can with some existing union, but it hasn't worked half the time.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, one thing seems contradictory to me. We say we need to organize unions and yet unions are the biggest force inhibiting unionization of women.

MAUPIN: One reason is that they're not doing much organizing; it is picking up a little but not very much. Then the fact that they don't do it very well. Also the unions ought to listen to us but that's a,(laughter) I think some of them are learning some things and the fact that this ILWU organizer came in with his kid, and a woman Chicano organizer, shows that he's been listening, probably. People usually don't do things quite by accident when they're organizing. They plan how they're going to function. Most of organizers still take a

MAUPIN: very superior, talk down attitude to the women who come in. Like they call me, "Now Joyce, honey, I'll tell you what you can do about...." In fact, I went to one union where they invited me to lunch at the press club, and this is the union that wanted us to recommend them, but they made a very negative impression by this sort of patronizing attitude. Women today, that's one thing they're not going to be--patronized or talked down to by anybody. In my generation a lot of them put up with it, but I really don't think they are now.

INTERVIEWER: What about a national women's union; is it possible?

MAUPIN: It's not legal under Taft-Hartley.

I was always asking--I didn't know what the Canadian laws were and SORWUC [Service, Office and Retail Workers Union of Canada] in Canada describes itself as a working women's union--so I asked if it was exclusively and they said no, it had some male members. But it was predominantly female. They are also working on banks. Here there are quite a few men in clerical occupations, I don't know how many there are in Canada.

INTERVIEWER: It's growing.

MAUPIN: Yes, especially minority men.

INTERVIEWER: What are some other pitfalls you've seen in women's organizations?

MAUPIN: Well, their survival rate is very poor and so sometimes I wonder how come we're still around. (laughter) And those that do survive, I don't know too much about how NOW got founded; it's the biggest women's organization around but I can't speak knowledgeably about it. CLUW is leaning fairly heavily on the unions and is not really a very independent organization, and other women's organizations--it's hard to think of any of any size. Last year they set up WREE, which is Women for Racial and Economic Equality, which is a peripheral CP (Communist Party, USA) organization. So unless they are getting some sort of support from a larger organization it is a very rocky existence, both in terms of holding people together, finances, everything. It's a struggle. But people getting along with people is probably always the key and that's not easy either because everybody is under lots of pressure in society and they don't

MAUPIN: have perfect dispositions. It's always hard. I think that most of the small women's groups tend to get ingrown and tear each other apart eventually, which we're trying to avoid.

INTERVIEWER: Is there a reason why that happens?

MAUPIN: Well, it's very reassuring, although not very constructive in my opinion, to just meet with the people who agree with you, but you get very ingrown and I've known at least one chapter here has that kind of tendency, which bothers me. I haven't quite figured what to do about it. I mean, not personally, the one thing that we do is that we're pretty open about all this. There has been some definite evidence of people being discouraged from activity in that chapter because people thought they didn't fit in, and we're going to bring that out for discussion: how are you doing in your chapter, anyway? Driving people away? And it's up to them to explain or justify or work it out in some way. In my political experience, there was a tendency to hide differences under the rug and make it look like everybody was agreeing with everybody and everything was fine and it wasn't. I don't think that does any good. I don't think because you have disagreements it is necessarily harmful. Even if somebody is making a mistake it isn't that horrible, I mean, mistakes can be corrected, but not if you don't mention them and go around as if everything is happening the way it ought to happen.

INTERVIEWER: Is that why you put out that sort of provocative questionnaire at WAGE's last membership meeting?

MAUPIN: Yes, I didn't do most of the provocative questions, somebody I know is good at that. I sort of gave her an idea of ones that I thought would be nice to include in it. Also there's a lot of levity in it was just intended to make people laugh. Most people did laugh but a few got a little uptight. It was too frivolous.

INTERVIEWER: What areas of industry are most likely to be organized in the next few years?

MAUPIN: Clerical will be a big one. In this area, hopefully, electronics.

INTERVIEWER: Is that because it's become an industry solely of women?

MAUPIN: Yes, and it's a large industry here and a women's industry and it's very badly paid and almost totally unorganized and UE has been working there for years, and they almost won one election. It is very hard for a number of reasons, but it's an important thing in terms of improving working conditions to get such a large industry organized. There are not too many really large industries in this area, right around the Bay Area.

INTERVIEWER: How does WAGE meet your own personal and political needs?

MAUPIN: What it did was sort of combine my interest in women with my interest in politics and labor unions. That worked out pretty well. In general I like it better than most political groups because it is fairly easy going. The requirements are not so rigid--all members must do that and must be together and must think that. Once in a while we get people around who think that way but they have never predominated yet. There are times when it gets to be a bit much.

I don't like being president. I don't know whether I was cajoled, persuaded, or what. We are having a very difficult time in Union WAGE to get people to run for office. Kind of different from many organizations, partly I suppose because it takes a lot of time and energy. Most of the women are very busy and don't see how they can do it or don't want to do it. One of the reactions on the questionnaire to the question, "Have you ever run for office in WAGE and if not, why not?" was written, "Yes, once but never again, too much shit." (laughs) Which is sort of true, I find I get blamed, I'm responsible for just about everything that happens. Some things I never heard about, of course. If I hadn't heard about them, why hadn't I heard about them? I suppose that's normal, always looking for somebody to blame things on. I don't always enjoy being that person but it was like that being a shop steward. The steward got blamed by the employer, the union, and the shop, so everybody was always unhappy with me.

INTERVIEWER: So being steward has been good training for being president of WAGE?

MAUPIN: I guess so.

INTERVIEWER: Are there other things you think have been good training for being president?

MAUPIN: I don't really know about being president. But, there is a problem to some extent with the overall organizational view which is hard for many people to have. There are other people in the organization who have energy to put into one thing, and not to get going in six directions at once. People have a lot of difficulty with that apparently. Most difficult problem in the office is to say, "Don't do that now, that can wait, something else over here is actually quite urgent. If it doesn't get done today it's not going to get done." To sort of look it all over without missing anything.

People miss things that are sitting in front of them for six weeks. So take the cards on your right, "Oh, I never saw those cards were there." (laughs) They weren't using them so they didn't see them. If you are nosey by disposition you go poking around to see where everything is, then you can sort of put [things] in place in terms of what is urgent and that is something you need in an administrative post, I guess. And it's not so easily come by.

INTERVIEWER: But what about looking, not just the day-to-day office stuff?

MAUPIN: It isn't just office stuff. Questions like, is the speaking engagement in Texas more important than getting to a conference in Iowa and if so, why?

INTERVIEWER: How do you, why do you think people in WAGE, or just people generally in organizations or women in organizations, have trouble making these kinds of strategic decisions?

MAUPIN: I don't know. [That's] one of the things I'm trying to work out, because people need to learn it.

INTERVIEWER: Is it a question of experience?

MAUPIN: Not entirely, because Pam took over that big conference in 1975. It was a really hard job--twenty-nine organizations--getting their speakers, their endorsements, their programs, and she had never done it. But it came out pretty well.

INTERVIEWER: Do you try and do any training sessions for the members on strategy and organizational....

MAUPIN: Yes, but some of them we don't know. I wouldn't know how to tell you how to run a conference. But I do know that one of the things involved is what I call this overview. To try to keep all the various things that are moving into motion and not get one thing going real good here while something else gets stalled.

INTERVIEWER: How do you do that? What do you cover? What do you think people need to know?

MAUPIN: Again, it's something that's been bothering me lately. I don't know why people have so much trouble with it, but they do.

INTERVIEWER: This might sound real silly, but do you think that sometimes the people aren't aware of what their sort of general goals or objectives are of the organization?

MAUPIN: I think maybe the goals . . . the overall view, they don't all see in the same way. That came out in the questionnaire. It was hard trying to pull people out, to see what they're irritated about because it was obvious that quite a bit of irritation was going on. Part of it is a total lack of understanding.

INTERVIEWER: Can you give me an example?

MAUPIN: Well, one question was, "What part of the program do you think is most important?" And the answer was, "I don't know what the program is." (laughs) Which seems strange but....

INTERVIEWER: Some people claim that sort of thing is more prevalent in women's organizations.

MAUPIN: We had some questions thrown in as a joke. For example, "Do you think the structure would be workable for a national organization?" One of the answers was, "What structure?" (laughs) So back to the drawing board. We also had a lot of questions about the newspaper. One of them was, "What newspaper?"

INTERVIEWER: Some of these are said in levity,but it seems as if there's a good deal of seriousness behind them.

MAUPIN: And we were really trying to draw out certain attitudes

MAUPIN: and find out,if we could, what to do about them.

INTERVIEWER: What are you going to do? Where do you go now?

MAUPIN: First we have to compile it a little better, it's fairly long. Then there's a lot of multiple choice that you have to kind of interpret. We're particularly interested in two questions: one, that members are magicians and disappear when there is work to be done, and the other, that members are magicians, they appear when there is work to be done and the irony was that some checked both--they both disappear and appear when there is work.

INTERVIEWER: As President or even as member of the executive board, what do you see as the role of membership in WAGE?

MAUPIN: Our first problem is that we are not trying to build an organization so much as we are trying to change people. At least that's my concept of it, and so the people who learn things, and many have, can go back into their unions or to their workplaces, and they will know how to do a lot of things there that they didn't know before. That has certainly been true of a number of people. Even one who was criticizing us saying she didn't know what we were doing now. She has learned a lot of things that she has gone back into her union and done--which is the point. To the extent that somebody follows what many of us conceived of as our goals we may lose her activity in the WAGE organization.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that might be then why you have trouble getting people to run for leadership? Because you are doing such a good job, people are coming and learning those skills and then putting them back in their other organizations?

MAUPIN: I'm not sure that's it. I don't know that everybody is exactly conscious that that's what they did. They started to speak and discuss and maybe related things and make speeches, then later a situation arose in which they found all those skills came in handy. When our new coordinator first worked in the office, she had been here a very short time when we had an invitation to speak at Stanford on blue-collar workers, which she was.

We shared the speech because I've done what I call the other kind of blue collar work, such as service and factory work, while she had worked in a "non-traditional"

MAUPIN: job. When I told her they would pay us $150 she got completely disconcerted because she didn't think she was qualified. "Why am I going to get paid?" she kept asking. I said, "Stanford has plenty of money--don't worry about it." (laughter)

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that is a quote, "female attitude?"

MAUPIN: Partly, yes. Why did she think that she wasn't worth it? We had to take a trip to Stanford, which took practically the whole day by the time we met the people before, had lunch with the administrator....

INTERVIEWER: So you think that some dynamic is involved in people's decisions about running for leadership?

MAUPIN: I don't know, I think there is a general feeling which is unfortunately correct: there is a lot of shit. You have a lot of responsibility and decision-making and you get a lot of blame for what decisions are made.

INTERVIEWER: But that's true in all organizations.

MAUPIN: Then people like it in some organizations?

INTERVIEWER: I don't know, well, you started by telling me that unlike other organizations....

MAUPIN: Say, take the SWP people. They were very ambitious and fought over posts, even minor ones, and they'd be bitter about it, if they didn't make it. They'd resent the person who had. We're always thankful that somebody will take it on this year.

INTERVIEWER: What's the difference?

MAUPIN: Doesn't seem that we are so ambitious. One of the questions in that questionnaire was, "Are you politically ambitious or politically unconscious?" (laughter)

INTERVIEWER: I started this by asking you what the role of membership was. I would like to know what you think the role of good leadership is?

MAUPIN: We ought to be able to help direct, give a direction, which is part of the time lacking. One thing that interferes with that seems to be getting bogged down in endless detail. I don't know how to avoid it because

MAUPIN: we have to be sure that everybody knows about everything. Then you get into a whole lot of trivia. They're thinking about trivia instead of getting down to the fact that there are real serious problems around. We think, some of us, that this year may be the most serious because it's a transition period from being a local group to not being a local group. We're not a national group, but we're not local anymore, we're hybrid and it's a little confusing.

INTERVIEWER: Do you see any need to have a special meeting about that?

MAUPIN: The general membership meeting was supposed to be a kind of "think" meeting, but it immediately got bogged down in details because people wanted to make announcements. They wanted to discuss them. In the end I had to cut it off or we wouldn't have had any "thinking". We didn't answer questions, what we tried to do was pose them. The heaviest criticism was of our decision-making.

INTERVIEWER: What was that criticism?

MAUPIN: Well, nobody knows how decisions are made. Are they made by the membership, or the executive board? We knew there was a lot of dissatisfaction around decision making, and one of the reasons is, I think, that the constitution is confusing. Also that the membership doesn't have enough input. I agree about that, but....

INTERVIEWER: You mean membership input?

MAUPIN: Membership and chapter input.

INTERVIEWER: Into decision making?

MAUPIN: Yes, now I don't know all the ways to do that. At the end, I asked for volunteers for a constitutional committee and didn't get any. The people who were most critical did not see the constitution as relating to their problems, and it does. Because there are certain things you can't do under it, there are certain other things you must do, and as a President you have to try to carry out the constitution as it stands, you can't say, "Oh I don't like this so we're not going to do it." Some people have done just that and certain things in the constitution have never happened, and should be eliminated. People pick it up and read it and say,

MAUPIN: "What about this? We never did it that way. What's it doing here?"

INTERVIEWER: Can you give me an example?

MAUPIN: One clause says the chapters may draw up their own constitutions, which they have never done. The first inquiry I got from Massachusetts was could we see some chapter constitutions? It seems funny to write back, there aren't any. The best policy is to be out front and admit we have a crazy constitution, but we are still grappling with it.

INTERVIEWER: Is that something you'd strike then, that every chapter ....

MAUPIN: I certainly would and I'd strike all committees that don't exist. If it says that the treasurer should be head of the finance committee and there isn't one, I think it is better to say that there's never [been one]. There's another clause that says standing committees or temporary committees can be created as needed.

INTERVIEWER: How did you come about writing the constitution? Did you have something to use as a model?

MAUPIN: The original one was done by Manja and was very short and simple. There were no chapters, it was like a very simple trade union constitution, without most of the difficult clauses. When we decided to go to chapters, a committee was set up and I don't know what that committee thought it was doing. I was not on it. Jean was on it which surprises me because she was good. She was organizationally good, but she probably felt she didn't want to push these young women around too much. So they came up with at least ten or eleven single space legal size pages. It looked as if we thought we were governing the whole country with it. [There were] all kinds of really difficult provisions on what the chapters should and shouldn't do and have. But we didn't have any [chapters], it was totally theory.

Then Manja Argue came in with a revision--at the next convention--which was supposed to help and it turned out it didn't. Her plan called the two-tiered executive.... The chapter reps were to be the second tier and they were to have regular executive meetings monthly and enlarged exec meetings periodically, at which the chapter reps would vote. The only thing it did effec-

MAUPIN: tively was disenfranchize the chapter reps who were present. I didn't think it was going to work but I said okay, try it, we'll see what happens. I had proposed area conferences with input to the center which hasn't happened, either. The closest thing we have to an area conference is the general membership meeting. Although I think that my proposal was maybe premature, we didn't have enough people in other areas to have an area conference. Maybe we do now.

INTERVIEWER: Were you and Ann and some older members of the organization frustrated by watching some of the less experienced members make the same mistakes?

MAUPIN: Yes, it's especially hard since the organization expanded to so many different kinds of women. When it was mostly trade union you had a common experience. One of the complaints in response to the questionnaire was that, "Only the trade union women think they know anything." Of course we do know one thing they don't know, that's about unions! So when we are talking about unions they feel very frustrated. That's one of the reasons for this new pamphlet Talking Union. We use all this terminology, which is hard not to use if you're in unions.

One of our members who's now not active, she's president of a local union, thought we were getting too far away from the unions. She came to speak at one of our meetings, and afterwards, about six people asked her what she meant because she was using all this union terminology. She said that she was totally unaccustomed to talking to an audience like that, she just assumed a certain level of understanding. I never assume it because after I got into WACE I did so much public speaking. I speak a lot at colleges because they pay money, we discovered. Not all of them, but some, and that was very helpful. I assumed that college students have a certain level of experience and education but it turned out they didn't. I didn't go to college so it was theoretical--my assumption that they must know something. One time I answered a question by saying, well, that's the difference between an industrial and a craft union, and it didn't mean anything to them. So I've tried to learn, as I speak, to define what I am talking about.

INTERVIEWER: Basically you meant college students didn't know anything about general union issues?

MAUPIN: Other areas too. I had what I felt would be a very frightening experience. I was getting paid $50.00 to speak at the University of San Francisco on the women's movement in the 19th century and there was another speaker--they have endless classes there--who had a Ph.D. in history, and he was speaking on the psychosexual dimensions of the women's movement. I had no idea what it meant, but I was scared. I thought, here is this very educated guy and I'm going to look very foolish. I took someone along with me for moral support. The teacher was very friendly and she put him first, which is always helpful--so I know what he says. His idea about the women's movement was that women had become suffragists to avoid intercourse with their husbands. (laughs) Besides which, he started his talk: "In the 19th century when men were working in the factory and the women were staying home," I asked myself, "He's got a Ph.D. in history?" (laughs) It was very disillusioning. If he went to college all those years, he should know something. I felt better about speaking after that. But I also found the students didn't know much about it. At the end we were getting into protective legislation and again he said: "Naturally they took the male as the model and so if men didn't have the benefits they took them away from women." I said, "That's not why they did it; the employers saved money by taking benefits away from women." He said, "It never would have occurred to me!" (laughs) I am still wondering what it is they learn in college.

INTERVIEWER: I'm afraid I can't help you on that one!

MAUPIN: My daughter said sometimes you learn all about butterflies. That is if you are majoring in butterflies. (laughs) Not about a lot of other things obviously. So, both in my writing and speaking I consciously try very hard not to say things that are not explained, although I'm sure when we get into those hot, heavy discussions I don't explain because I'm used to the terminology, too.

INTERVIEWER: So then what you are saying is some of the publications which you write are for your own internal education?

MAUPIN: We found that Organize! which was written partly for our members who were not in unions, turned out to be helpful for our members in unions because they never did all this stuff in unions. I was, especially in Local 29, in a pretty democratic union. So I got an

MAUPIN: education. I was in a rank and file negotiating committee and I learned about contracts and labor law, which many union members don't know about.

INTERVIEWER: Whether they're male or female?

MAUPIN: Yes, that's right. As a matter of fact, both Organize! and Talking Union would be just as good for the men as the women but we liked to call them women's handbooks because women can identify more with it.

INTERVIEWER: When you started WAGE in 1971 did you realize how much of WAGE's work would have to be educational?

MAUPIN: No.

INTERVIEWER: That sort of developed.

MAUPIN: Especially, as I said, with the broadening of the membership, although it also applied to many union members. We don't do it as well as we should. Someone was saying to me last night that one of our new members, a member who may be on strike any minute, has no idea what to do about it. She came to us for help and we haven't done anything about it. I said, "Well, it's only a week ago. She isn't on strike yet." She should get that support from her chapter where there are some experienced people.

INTERVIEWER: In the WAGE chapter?

MAUPIN: Yes. She turned to me at the end of the meeting and said, "I think I'll need your help." Well, there was chaos; we were trying to count money and pack up the literature; I couldn't discuss it at that moment. I haven't called her back because with this cold I lost my voice. Sometimes nobody does follow up on it, that's the trouble. Somebody goes wandering around saying, "I need help," and everybody sort of nods and nothing happens. We never have been good at what's called outreach.

INTERVIEWER: Why?

MAUPIN: Again, I'm not sure. At the end of a meeting it is always busy, lots of things to finish up or things we forgot to go through before. When somebody came up and asked Pam a question, she said, "I'm busy, ask Joyce." "I didn't want Joyce's answer," she said, "I

MAUPIN: want your answer; you just stop being busy a minute and answer me." Most people are not quite that aggressive, unfortunately, and we've just got to stop being so preoccupied with what has to get done and listen. That is a complaint, that people don't listen very well around here. I know it's because it's hard with working women, they've got families, and jobs, and unions, and Union WAGE, and they are busy and preoccupied with a whole lot of things and it's hard to suddenly drop it. Again, I'm trying to train myself as much as I can because I get a lot of the outside inquiries.

INTERVIEWER: Because you're President?

MAUPIN: No, I've had it over the years. It develops slowly. I don't mind writing letters, I rather like it. We get an awful lot of what I would call difficult inquiries, people with really terrible problems, you don't know what to do about them. They are usually more or less job-related problems, although a lot of other things may mix in with them. I get them all to answer. I sometimes really don't know what to do with them. There is one....

We had a long letter published in the last issue of the paper about a medical technologist and her very bad working conditions. I have another letter which I got when I went to the office briefly, Saturday, which says you didn't print an answer to that medical technologist. I'm in the same conditions and I want to know the answer. Medical technology is a difficult field because they work in a lot of little individual offices like doctor's secretaries. It's very hard to organize.

INTERVIEWER: Why is it that they are hard to organize?

MAUPIN: Because you have a doctor's building and you'll have fifty doctors with fifty secretaries and maybe a technician. Each office will only have five or six employees and it's very hard to organize small offices.

INTERVIEWER: Because conditions vary, or a lot of oppression?

MAUPIN: The unions are not much interested because it doesn't pay, which they have said very candidly to many groups and....

INTERVIEWER: Have you yourself heard this?

MAUPIN: Yes. . . sometimes when you send a group in the union will say that it costs them so and so much to have an organizer in the field; "We recruit somebody,we only get a little back in dues, some of it goes to the International organizing--only twenty people pay then." So the people go away very disgusted. Are unions in some kind of business where they have to show "x" amount of profit?

Edy Withington who is president of 29 said, actually they cannot do it, they don't have enough organizers, they don't have enough money, and they have so many demands on their staff in larger units that they simply can't spread themselves around. I told her that's when I feel it must be self-organizing. Edy said, "We'll do what we can. If a group of secretaries sixty miles away say they want to organize, and there are just five of them, we send them a sample contract. "But,"she said, "they won't know what to do with it." This is where I differ with Edy a little. I think they can figure out what to do about it.

INTERVIEWER: The women in the office?

MAUPIN: I think they can, the women can get training and that's where a support group comes in. They can learn to read that contract. It's not a totally mysterious thing. You don't have to start with a UAW industry-wide contract. You can start with a little office contract.

INTERVIEWER: So what you are suggesting is a group of women trying to organize could come to WAGE.

MAUPIN: They do sometimes, to read contracts or ask for information. One woman came in, they had organized a small independent union [of] about fifteen people in an alternate food store, but they were coming up for their second contract and they wanted to revise it and didn't know what to do. They gave me this amazing contract, it was about eighty, ninety pages. They could've done it with eight or nine with the job situation they had. I said, "How did you ever get this?" And she said, "The only contract we could find was Safeway [large grocery chain store] (laughs). But they <u>had</u> organized themselves and the reason they had come for help was they thought they might organize a couple of other stores.

INTERVIEWER: Have you published anything on contracts?

MAUPIN: Yes. . . sometimes when you send a group in the union will say that it costs them so and so much to have an organizer in the field; "We recruit somebody,we only get a little back in dues, some of it goes to the International --organizing only twenty people just wouldn't pay." So the people go away very disgusted. Are unions in some kind of business where they have to show "x" amount of profit?

Edy Withington who is president of 29 said, actually they cannot do it, they don't have enough organizers, they don't have enough money, and they have so many demands on their staff in larger units that they simply can't spread themselves around. I told her that's when I feel it must be self-organizing. Edy said, "We'll do what we can. If a group of secretaries sixty miles away say they want to organize, and there are just five of them, we send them a sample contract. "But,"she said, "they won't know what to do with it." This is where I differ with Edy a little. I think they can figure out what to do about it.

INTERVIEWER: The women in the office?

MAUPIN: I think they can, the women can get training and that's where a support group comes in. They can learn to read that contract. It's not a totally mysterious thing. You don't have to start with a UAW industry-wide contract. You can start with a little office contract.

INTERVIEWER: So what you are suggesting is a group of women trying to organize could come to WAGE.

MAUPIN: They do sometimes, to read contracts or ask for information. One woman came in, they had organized a small independent union [of] about fifteen people in an alternate food store, but they were coming up for their second contract and they wanted to revise it and didn't know what to do. They gave me this amazing contract, it was about eighty, ninety pages. They could've done it with eight or nine with the job situation they had. I said, "How did you ever get this?" And she said, "The only contract we could find was Safeway [large grocery chain store] (laughs). But they <u>had</u> organized themselves and the reason they had come for help was they thought they might organize a couple of other stores.

INTERVIEWER: Have you published anything on contracts?

MAUPIN: We've just collected them. In our pamphlet Organize! we have an article, "How to Negotiate a Union Contract," as well as two on how to get women's issues into your contract and how to put health and safety clauses into your contract.

INTERVIEWER: What about more basic things?

MAUPIN: There is also a basic sample contract.

INTERVIEWER: What do you think is the most pressing problem for women trying to organize?

MAUPIN: We can't find a union that wants to organize. A few years ago SEIU Local 250 tried to organize banks and it was really bad. The organizing drive did badly; the organizer was bad; the whole situation was bad. It left such a disgruntled feeling with the workers that they certainly don't want to try SEIU again, even though it might be a different local or there may have been changes in the union. They just don't want to hear about it. Office and Professional Employees Local 3 is no bargain either. It is sort of lethargic and not very democratic in its organizing procedures. So where are you? That's why in 1975 we got to the idea of an independent union and it has actually worked in a number of cases, usually small groups which couldn't fit into the larger picture very well. Or there have been somewhat larger groups that have originally organized into an association which eventually affiliated. I feel that in many cases if they are able to do it--and it takes a group with a certain amount of cohesion to do this--but if they can organize independently and they do affiliate later, they affiliate on a stronger basis because they can negotiate terms. Okay, you think we should join you? What are you going to give us? They may get more local autonomy that way. One union here, an independent association, won a strike, which is unusual.

INTERVIEWER: What group?

MAUPIN: Contra Costa Clerical Employees. They got the Labor Council to support them which, considering they were independent, was amazing. Also considering that four years before, they were crossing picket lines. It was women clericals, they were doing it because nobody would organize them; they were mad. They ran a tremendous strike; they did things like. . . the first day

MAUPIN: they got out a strike bulletin, and every day after that. They contacted every member. They really had it organized the way you don't see much anymore.

INTERVIEWER: Why don't you see it much anymore?

MAUPIN: They think it can all be done from on top. Even some of that was evident in the Blue Cross strike, which I'm glad to say they won. All I could say is, "Jean Maddox wouldn't have done it the way it was done." She would have had much more community involvement, much more rank and file involvement. When a criticism was made in the membership that there was not sufficient community involvement somebody in the leadership said, "But I don't have time to do that." It wasn't her job; there were other people who could have done it, but she felt that she'd lose control of the strike somehow. I'm guessing at how she felt but....

I think strikes are very hard to win these days. Office worker strikes, any strike, employers are getting very, very tough. They are not conceding much. Frequently, groups must strike in order to try to get a first contract, and they don't always get it. They need as much support as they can get right at the start and they need to be very organized about it.

INTERVIEWER: Outside community support?

MAUPIN: Both a strong rank and file participation and a strong information network about what's going on everyday, a strike bulletin. It's important to know all the weaknesses of the strike. Newspapers distort the strike and you need information from your union to reassure you.

INTERVIEWER: Talking about general strike morale.

MAUPIN: You need to know what's happening. You get all these letters from the company. We got a series of them saying everybody will be fired if they don't go back Monday. Then you get another letter, "Well, most of the people did go back Monday." Here you are still out, and probably out on a limb, and nobody knows who did or didn't go back or what happened or anything. The newspapers say, "Oh yes, almost everybody went back," but it's not true. Unless you are giving everybody a lot of information and getting them involved so they don't have to ask what's happening--then they know what's happening.

MAUPIN: In the Bay Guardian strike these two women were in charge of advertising and subscription lists and the union let them go out on strike without indicating that it might be a good idea to take those lists out with them. One of them went back and scabbed a couple of days to get her list. (laughter) The union just didn't give them any preparation and they'd never been on a strike.

INTERVIEWER: What union was it?

MAUPIN: The Newspaper Guild and the Typographical Union for different sections of the paper. They thought they'd win it hands down, there'd be no problem.

INTERVIEWER: So if I was a group of clericals coming to you, to WAGE, wanting to strike given the situation you've described, of management becoming more hard lined, what would you advise us to do?

MAUPIN: The first thing is to try to get your union more active on it, and you can. One WAGE member was involved in a strike in Alameda County, a very difficult one. They prepared, they started even before negotiations with strike preparation. This was to let the employer know that they were quite ready.

INTERVIEWER: [What exactly did they do?]

MAUPIN: They set up a strike organizing committee and began to put out bulletins on how to be prepared and what information to have and what you need to know. The idea was to say,"Here we are, if that's what it's going to come to, we're ready." You don't always do that but they felt they were in a situation that called for it.

INTERVIEWER: What kind of preparation do you need?

MAUPIN: You need a headquarters and a phone. You need first-aid supplies. You need lawyers. When the United Legal Workers went on strike the first thing they asked WAGE was, could we get them a phone? The National Lawyers Guild donated a phone. The legal workers didn't have any money, but they raised a $10,000 strike fund which, for a group of sixty women, is pretty good. We sent out several mailings appealing for funds and they said that brought in quite a bit. Also, we did things like a telephone campaign to the administrators asking them to resume negotiations. It looked very bad for a while because they are only a small group, and they are scat-

MAUPIN: tered in offices from Sacramento to the Mexican border. They did get Farm Workers support because the legal workers in this union are predominantly Chicano. That was really exciting. Their head office is down in the financial district and they were picketing there and they had rallies. There were all these Chicano women singing songs in Spanish! They came out of it with a pretty good contract but it was a tough strike.

INTERVIEWER: Talking about strikes leads to organizing. What do you think are the most important elements in organizing or the traits of a good organizer? What makes a good organizer?

MAUPIN: So many things. Energy! I was going to say experience but it all depends, there are different kinds of experience. Listening. And, as I said, this ability to pull everything together, to have an overview, to know where everything is at and what has to be done at a certain time. Thoroughness in preparing what you're working with, knowing what you are doing, not just slapdash. There are certain people who just have a talent. I remember one woman who really knew how to organize and I couldn't say what all her qualities were. She had a certain personal thing, she projected. She was an exciting speaker and she got people excited when she was working with them. I don't know how to tell anyone how to do that. Certain people are able to transfer the feeling of enthusiasm and urgency.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think there are differences between women and men organizers?

MAUPIN: Yes, there would have to be. Women organizers cope with all of women's ordinary problems for one thing, They may not, of course, cope with children, although some do have children. Women don't have things done for them like men do.

INTERVIEWER: You mean household things?

MAUPIN: Yes. Or if they don't have it done by a wife they send it out somewhere. I don't know hardly any women including organizers, who would feel that they could just send out their laundry, they wouldn't do it. And yet if they're really busy they need to do that; it's a back-breaking job to organize. In periods when I was very busy I used to eat out; I had the money then, I didn't cook. Why should I cook? I have to cook now, because I can't

MAUPIN: afford to eat out. There is so much energy that goes into it. On the other hand, you understand why women are torn. I remember a woman who--she was in our caucus at the plant--would be tired in the morning because she'd been up to 2:00 a.m. waxing the kitchen floor. This was during a strike! You can just let the floor get dirty if necessary, but some women can't. In the middle of the strike meeting one woman said she had to get home because she had to get her husband's lunch; he didn't know how to get it. (laughs) I know it is ridiculous but it happens every day and then most men won't tolerate women who are completely absorbed in their jobs.

INTERVIEWER: You mean like being an organizer?

MAUPIN: Yes. Elizabeth Gurley Flynn is a good example of that--how she took off in the middle of Christmas dinner and everything. Women, however, will tolerate men who are pretty absorbed in their jobs--that's what they have to do. I think that goes with the responsibility for making making a living for the family, and if the woman is an organizer and married she may not be responsible for supporting the family. She brings in money but he is bringing it in too. So he feels, "Why is it necessary for her to work day and night in that job?--just because she likes it?" That means she doesn't like him as much as her work.

INTERVIEWER: Is it a harder and lonelier life for a woman organizer?

MAUPIN: I think so. I remember a young woman who was an organizer on the Farah Strike Committee here. She was quite young--new at it--and she had just gotten married too. She said that the first five weeks of her married life she'd been home two nights. I said, "How does your husband like it?" And she said, "Oh he admires me because I'm such an activist." Maxine was sitting there and she said, "That's the first stage."

INTERVIEWER: Do you have any regrets about having led this kind of life?

MAUPIN: No, I think I have many qualities of being a loner. Although I did make efforts at living with someone I wasn't very good at it. I do feel lonely at times but I guess that's part of it. If I were married I would feel oppressed because I wouldn't have any space. That's true of almost every marriage I know, even the ones that are pretty good. Space means you can go off by yourself and not be disturbed. I think my daughter has that now after her children left home and she made the

MAUPIN: bedroom over as a study so they [the children] can't even come home now unless they sleep on the back porch. She wasn't feeling very hospitable I guess. And he travels a lot in his work; he's a sound technician; he goes to London and Hong Kong and other places to record things. She works pretty independently, I don't know how much they see of each other but it's evidently adequate and he will let her alone. But hardly any men will. If you say, "I have an article to finish in the next five days, I'll see you six days from now," they'll get very offended in most cases.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think women are more able to deal with that?

MAUPIN: They are more used to it, I guess. I am sure they don't like it either, I probably wouldn't like it, but I would understand it because I know it's hard to do certain types of work.

INTERVIEWER: Are there any pieces of your life that if you had to live over again, you would want to omit?

MAUPIN: Well, I don't think my life was all that ideal. I had great trouble always in my personal relationships with people, especially men and now I think I might know how to do better. But then that's just from being old. I think one thing that comes from being older is more understanding, more compassion, less impatience with people. One of the things that I said about somebody in WAGE recently was that you have to try to forgive people including so and so who was so unforgiving, who will not tolerate people's faults. There is nobody faultless around but I believe it's being young that makes it hard to tolerate anybody's faults, including your own. You are so impatient.

INTERVIEWER: Would you still pick the same sort of political life for yourself?

MAUPIN: I guess so, since I never stayed with the writing very long, it must have been that was what was decisive because I think in the end you do what you want to do most.

INTERVIEWER: Do you have any regrets about things you didn't do that you'd like to have done?

MAUPIN: I would have liked to do more writing and I might have arranged that if I had arranged my life a little better.

MAUPIN: I wasn't very good at it. Of course I also had a lot of problems, especially making a living, which I wasn't particularly good at either, and that drained a lot of energy, although I still think it's very educational to have to make a living. People who come from well-to-do classes into the radical or labor movement and don't have to do it think and feel differently about many things. They can get out; they have options. They could get out now, I mean, I know several who are working in WAGE and they have parents who would put them through college or do other things for them if they took that option.

INTERVIEWER: How does that make their perspective different?

MAUPIN: They are not tied to having to make a living the hard way the rest of their lives. They could get out and make it a much easier way.

INTERVIEWER: So are they less militant on the issues or....?

MAUPIN: I don't think it's translated quite that simply but I think many times they are not as responsible.

INTERVIEWER: In what way?

MAUPIN: In feeling that they must carry things out they've undertaken. I may be a little prejudiced. I sometimes have the hardest time coping with people who have not had any heavy demands laid on them and so they don't take it very seriously. So if they tell somebody I'll be there to do a certain job at 2 o'clock, they come at 4 o'clock and they think it doesn't matter; it's only two hours right--but it's two hours of somebody's time, who is waiting for them or getting mad and leaving and they don't seem to relate to that as much as people who have been under a lot of pressure. It's really very hard when you're sort of holding up one end and no one holds up the other.

INTERVIEWER: You've been active for quite....

MAUPIN: It's a long time.

INTERVIEWER: Yes, well have you seen any changes in working women during that time?

MAUPIN: Certainly, they are more articulate now, and I do think a lot of that has come from the women's movement. Things

MAUPIN: don't happen directly; they don't think they are in the women's liberation movement necessarily, but these ideas have been circulating around for quite a while now. They've been in the media in one form or another, maybe in sort of silly forms sometimes, and you even see it reflected in television. They now have Black women on a lot of shows and they have women who are doing different so-called masculine jobs, appearing in all sorts of unexpected roles because television has to fit in with the times. So it begins to sink through slowly. A woman thinks, "I might do something else, I might ask for something else." I think this was reflected in making more demands on the unions which women have been doing to some extent in recent years. Even CLUW is an effort in that direction, although I don't think it was too successful. They should have made a lot more demands; they might have even got some of them.

INTERVIEWER: CLUW?

MAUPIN: Yes, it doesn't seem to me they asked for very much.

INTERVIEWER: Why do you think they didn't?

MAUPIN: I don't know too much about the top leadership in CLUW. Maybe I'm wrong, I just have the impression they might have gotten a lot more if they put up a struggle for it.

INTERVIEWER: Has your goal which first drew you into politics altered?

MAUPIN: I don't think it has basically. My attitudes are different.

INTERVIEWER: Can you tell me what your goals were?

MAUPIN: I mentioned the Sacco Vanzetti case before. That and, of course, the experience in Germany, were probably the two decisive things in my political life. The Sacco Vanzetti case started me thinking about what kind of society we were living in, what it was like, and what was wrong with it, and why.

I wrote a few poems about them, I remember, and I thought of it in the terms of self-dedication. I would make up somehow for these things happening, but I also think because I was a kind of, rather lonely and more of a misfit person where I was, that I needed something. It wasn't, not just being so brave and self-sacrificing, but I had a lot of need for something to relate to which

MAUPIN: I didn't have in my life. But it wasn't that easy to find either, which was a problem. It wasn't easy to find partly because I got critical. It's very nice for people who are not critical just to take things as they are. How can anybody manage, for instance, to have stayed in the Communist Party for forty or fifty years with its innumerable changes and switches of position, some of them quite drastic? I saw a few taking place; the so-called Third Period to the collaboration period in the Thirties was an incredible switch. Of course, all along the line some people could not adapt to it and left. They feel in many cases--not the bureaucrats who have some sort of vested interest in hanging on, but the rank and file people--feel it shows that they didn't change and they were dedicated all of their lives. When you're dedicated to some organization and something has happened, if it isn't the same thing anymore, you have to question it.

INTERVIEWER: Is that what you did?

MAUPIN: Yes, I began questioning why I was in the SWP. It was a little tough because I had that investment of time and everything in it, and the question, where would I go from there? It's easier to do that when you're young. I wasn't all that young anymore and that's why, I imagine, a majority of people who drop out don't go into other political groups. They're middle-aged people dropping out of politics, maybe they get a better job or find a hobby or something (laughs) but....

INTERVIEWER: It's too hard to start over?

MAUPIN: Yes, and they don't have much faith in it anymore either, too many bad experiences.

INTERVIEWER: Shattered dreams?

MAUPIN: Sort of, how do you put the pieces together in some way that makes sense? Suppose Union WAGE fell apart, then what would I do?

INTERVIEWER: I don't know, what would you do?

MAUPIN: I don't know, because I'm getting even much older now. It is almost a full-time occupation and I couldn't just stay home and not do anything. So it is always a problem because again, there is never any guarantee that an organization is going to survive. I don't know any that

MAUPIN: do permanently. The Catholic Church has done a pretty good job of it over the years. (laughs) It is adaptable too.

INTERVIEWER: What would you still like to accomplish politically? What sorts of changes would you like to see in your lifetime?

MAUPIN: I would like to see a lot of things. I don't know if there is enough time left for that, but I think that there is a start in the direction of working women changing and getting together. I would like to see it go a lot further. I have the feeling and I think Jean Maddox had it too, that it is happening. It's not happening in such monumental fashion that it's overwhelming anyone at the moment. But I don't know if we're being optimistic, just seeing things. Usually my instincts are pretty good, but when it's something I want very much, then I don't know.

INTERVIEWER: Is your work in the working women's movement the most satisfying of all your political work?

MAUPIN: I think so. I was very interested for a while when I was doing all that candidate stuff. Somebody said it must get boring,and it would I'm sure,if you did it year after year. But I didn't, fortunately, do that. Part of what I do in Union WAGE is getting out to the public, going all these places and speaking at colleges and going on tv and meeting all kinds of groups of people. It gets you out of what I call a rut, which you often get into in organizations. I haven't done as much of it lately just because of the physical problems, so much traveling is wearing. But it's part of the satisfaction, getting out to a much broader audience than you would in some types of political activity.

INTERVIEWER: Have you had any role models?

MAUPIN: I don't think so.

INTERVIEWER: Was that a problem?

MAUPIN: I guess it was. I never quite knew where I was going. I didn't have any sort of plan.

INTERVIEWER: Did you wish to be with somebody else you could look to and question?

MAUPIN: I tried many times. I had good friends and consulted with them a lot. But it was never a question of somebody I was taking as a model because sometimes they had worse problems than I have. Pam starts the Jean Maddox pamphlet by saying Jean was the model she hadn't had. I only knew Jean in the last few years of her life. But she was that--she was a very mixed person, too. People are so different. She was so great at strategy, you should see her Sturgis which--I have it in the office--we use [Sturgis] as our guide in parliamentary procedure, and so did she. Her copy is all marked up and annotated. She planned out each meeting and she planned and built the caucus and she actually managed to overthrow a local leadership. . . takes a lot of doing. Yet she was not intellectual at all, she was political; she had been in the CP at one time. Mostly her reading, aside from the newspapers and things she had to read to do her work, consisted of mysteries, there were large boxes of them around her apartment. She had a strange mixture of many qualities. She had such strength, everybody said that about her, even during her final illness. I was leaning on it; it was crazy, she was the one who was sick and dying. But she had that, everybody felt that about her and she was the kind of, it's hard to describe. She was not exactly a gentle person, she frequently sort of barked at people, and yet people came to love her. It's some quality like that woman who was an organizer who could pass things on. Jean could pass on something a little different--it was stamina.

INTERVIEWER: What do you think you pass on to people?

MAUPIN: I don't know, I sometimes wonder.

INTERVIEWER: Do you have sense at all of what it is you give to younger members?

MAUPIN: The young ones I seem to get along with very well, some of the others I don't. I think they feel that I am maybe telling them too much or trying to. . . I don't mean to. Somebody about 20 doesn't mind it if I tell old stories. (laughter)

INTERVIEWER: Your daughter took a real different life and career than you did. Was there ever any time that you wanted her to have followed more in your footsteps? Or were you conscious that you didn't want her to lead a similar lifestyle?

MAUPIN: I didn't want to push her around because I felt that

MAUPIN: my mother had always pushed me around in what she wanted me to do and one of the reasons that I haven't done a lot of things was simply because she was trying to make me do them, which is kind of stupid, but I was extremely contrary. If she got a big push on about something I was sure to do something else. In fact, at one time she said she thought she'd have to tell me to do what she didn't want me to do so I might move in a better direction. I didn't want Irene to feel so pushed that she would feel that she would have to go in any particular direction and anyway she didn't.

But I think that she in turn repeated my mother's fault with her younger daughter. Irene at one point had been very interested in ballet. It hadn't turned out; she didn't have early training to begin with and she didn't have the right build for it either or anything, but somehow Emily did, and Emily got interested very early.

Irene pushed her very hard into it. I think to some extent she neglected her older daughter, who is quite brilliant and was very difficult. Feeling Emily was so talented and beautiful, Sarah rather resented this.

Then there was a real tragedy when Emily was twelve or thirteen and they discovered that she had an incurable bone disease, a curvature of the spine which would increase as she got older so she would never be a dancer. It wouldn't have been as bad a trauma if she hadn't been so totally concentrated on ballet. Nothing else had ever entered Emily's life. She just turned to the wall and didn't speak to anybody for four or five months and also she refused to wear a brace which is one kind of treatment. Irene didn't know what to do. Actually they didn't know much about the treatment of it and it's questionable how much the braces help people. Anyway she didn't wear it. She refused and Irene said, short of giving her chloroform, she didn't know how she would get it on her anyway.

She's now twenty and you wouldn't notice any deformity and it hasn't gotten worse although it might at anytime; that's the thing they all said. She now has gotten rearranged and is interested in photography.

But not only Emily, Irene went through a terrible crisis on that. With Irene feeling very bitter with herself that she had wanted so much for Emily to be a dancer. For anybody else it would have been bad, but it wouldn't have been that bad.

MAUPIN: Of course Emily did want to dance, as Irene wanted her to, but it didn't work out, and that's the danger. Plans don't always work. If you get disappointed it could be so big a trauma that you don't get over it, especially at the age that Emily was. It was a very bad age.

INTERVIEWER: Do your daughter and granddaughter understand your political life?

MAUPIN: Oh, I think Sarah and Irene do. I don't think Emily does any too much.

INTERVIEWER: Are they proud of you?

MAUPIN: I think in general I would say yes. Sometimes I sort of puzzle them.

INTERVIEWER: Have they ever mentioned that they were either attracted or repelled by your kind of life/work?

MAUPIN: Originally my daughter wanted to be a nice little housewife, which she felt I was not. That didn't last very long, though. She married very young and had two children and she was going to cook and sew clothes and everything but within about three years of that she was fed up. I didn't think it was going to work but again I wasn't going to say too much about it. I just couldn't imagine it working, her interests are quite diverse and she is much too lively and intelligent. Most women don't settle down very well to being just a little housewife. So she wasn't likely to. She did turn out to be an excellent cook though. I don't know how much of it she does anymore, but she likes to entertain and cook fancy things and stuff which I never did.

INTERVIEWER: What about career-wise?

MAUPIN: Apparently she likes what she's doing.

INTERVIEWER: Does she ever consider your work?

MAUPIN: I think only when she was very young. She hung around my political activities; sometimes she adapted them to her situation. When a ballet came out here with extremely high prices she formed a picket line with signs, Is ballet only for the rich? (laughs) She got in,too.

INTERVIEWER: So there is a little of you in her?

MAUPIN: Oh yes. She introduced the theater vouchers and testified for theater tickets for the poor. She has always worked on trying to make art accessible, which is, of course, related to an overall social feeling about it.

INTERVIEWER: Have your granddaughters picked up on that sort of attitude?

MAUPIN: I don't know where Sarah is at the moment. She is majoring in literature, and she'd gotten so highbrow you hardly know where she's at. But she's a very brilliant young woman. I've always thought so, since she was a child. She's really got. . . she's sort of amazing. She was an amazing child, that was her problem. She was so far ahead of everybody, it was a little hard for both of us to take. She, at a certain age took up typing. She was young, you know, about 11 or 12, and turned out to be a very good typist which is very handy in college. She has part-time jobs. We said at one time that she was practicing her typing because she found us all so boring. (laughter)

INTERVIEWER: Oh, one last question. . . I guess not, I guess I am done with my questions. Is there anything you feel that we didn't cover that you would like to cover?

MAUPIN: Well this seems like a very extensive coverage! (laughter)

INTERVIEWER: Are there pieces of your life that we missed?

MAUPIN: I think it is about as thorough as I like to be. I will have to tell Pam. She, for years has been telling me that I should sit down and write my life and I tell her that I don't have time. (laughter)

INTERVIEWER: And now you can have this transcript of it.

MAUPIN: Any other interviews I have are relatively short. Pam said that she was always finding out something new but I didn't think there was that much to find out but....

INTERVIEWER: You've been at it a long time.

MAUPIN: Yes, that's true. When my granddaughters were little I used to tell them stories about my life and they would say, "Grandma come and tell us about your adventures!"

INTERVIEWER: What kind of things would you tell them?

MAUPIN: Oh, my travels, stories about strikes. . . I also have a series which I told Irene--my mother was horrified. I called it "When I was a Bad Little Girl Stories." One time, I don't remember why I had reproached Irene, but she was crying and she said, "Oh I am such a bad little girl, I must be the baddest little girl that ever lived." I said, "Oh no, I was a very bad little girl, too." "You were? Tell me about it!" So out of this developed the stories about when I was a bad little girl. One time my mother came in and said, "What are you doing to her? Giving her this bad image of her mother!"

INTERVIEWER: What stories did you tell, what pieces of your life?

MAUPIN: Well, the things I got punished for. When I ran away and when I was four there was a big crisis because I threw things down the horses' well. That was when we were on a farm and it polluted the well or something. My father had to clean it out. . . the only time in my life he ever spanked me. I was very indignant because he hadn't told me not to throw things down the well--it hadn't occurred to him I would do that! I thought it was very unfair.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think the working women's movement will continue to develop independently, or in a few years it can merge with trade unions?

MAUPIN: They have quite a way to go.

INTERVIEWER: You have to give me years. How long would you say?

MAUPIN: I don't know because nothing much happened, you know, for 25 years and something is happening now but not very rapidly. But in periods like the Thirties things did happen rapidly.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think male trade unionists are beginning to take this working women's movement seriously?

MAUPIN: Somewhat. . . yes. You'd be surprised how many are subscribing to our paper. For the first time, last year, I decided I would try some promotional work. I have never done it.

INTERVIEWER: What work?

MAUPIN: Promotion. What it consisted of was very elementary.

MAUPIN: We had a form letter and a little brochure; four pamphlets for $4.50 and a sub to the paper, $4. We mailed it out at various lists. The first lists we got were from Radical America and Dollars and Sense. We got a very good response even though these lists were two-thirds men. When we tried a Ms. list it was terrible. We found that radical men are more responsive than Ms. readers. (laughter) Somebody told me that the average Ms. reader has a Ph.D., something crazy, so maybe that's it. They just don't identify with this problem. Now we'll have to be careful what lists we use because it makes an enormous difference. We did this on a very cheap level. We didn't spend a lot of money and we got good response, but so many men! We got associate memberships. They ordered literature; they took stuff to their classes.

INTERVIEWER: Do you have any men who are interested in becoming members of WAGE?

MAUPIN: We have associate membership, but they don't have a vote--a voice but no vote. A few are fairly active.

INTERVIEWER: Have you ever been concerned about WAGE being infiltrated by men or....?

MAUPIN: The reason for men not having a vote is to make sure that they can never take over anything. Not that they have threatened to do so, but women wanted a kind of guarantee. That was the majority feeling. Because there were three points of view: don't have associate members, have them with a vote, or have them without the vote. Some of them objected bitterly to not having a vote. Then, let's see, we have had infiltration of sectarian leftists which has been irritating but not threatening. They seem so at times because they make so much noise, but most of them don't seem to have the staying power that it takes in a democratic organization. They weren't used to having all this open discussion and going on and on until everybody arrived at a decision. They were used to more autocratic thinking and they didn't adapt any too well. Lately we've had a lot of gay women coming into the organization. I am not sure how they will relate to straight men who are associate members.

INTERVIEWER: Will issues be any different because of your gay membership?

MAUPIN: We put gay issues into our program about four years ago,

MAUPIN: and we had a few gay women then. There was a group in the East Bay, the Berkeley-Oakland Women's Union, which had many gay members. When that dissolved, a number of them joined WAGE and many of their friends joined.

We always took up issues like the Briggs Initiative or anti-gay persecution. Now it's funny because we get calls . . . I had one call that wanted us to demonstrate as "straights for gay rights." I said, "We can't do that; it would make many of our members indignant." (laughter)

INTERVIEWER: Does that somehow--I mean you really have a lot of different groups, interest groups.

MAUPIN: Yes. The only problem would be if they get a little exclusive. We need to sort of watch that one group doesn't act like it's a little in-group. That could be, for instance, it could be tradeswomen who say they have the know-how on the subject, or it could be a group of gay women who feel that their issue is the most important. But it is interesting to have a lot of different groups. I don't like uniformity. I ran into a little trouble with that when we had this dispute about the prison issue. I said, "But we aren't--because we publish this doesn't mean we agree with everything; we just think it's sufficiently interesting to publish and we will publish opposite opinions. We used to print that in every issue. We got some of the most God-awful opposite opinions and we didn't want to publish all of them. But if anybody wants to send in another point of view, that's fine." Several members immediately said, "I wouldn't want the opposite of such-and-such to come in." And I said, "Well, not if it's contrary to our purpose and goals." We wouldn't print stuff that was anti-gay, but we might take up all kinds of intermediate issues, and some people don't like that too well. I think that needs some discussion. Some people don't want disputes in the paper; they want it to be harmonious. I do want disputes in the paper; the issues that create disputes are our best issues.

INTERVIEWER: In addition to them being your best issues, what do you think dispute does?

MAUPIN: It stimulates people, they read about it and if they don't agree they'll . . . maybe they will study it and come up with another opinion and sometimes the opinion that we published is not particularly well thought out. We don't claim that all the articles are. We do like to get a lot of representative articles from working women.

MAUPIN: We should try to think about all the problems that affect working women and prisons too. Mainly working women are in prison and mainly for reasons relating to their economic problems, things like theft and forgery and shoplifting.

INTERVIEWER: So they're basically committing these crimes to survive?

MAUPIN: Or they find the survival so unpleasant, but mostly they are in very hard economic conditions, which aren't going to get any better once they get out. Most so-called prison rehabilitation is nonsense. Our first response to the prison issue came from black women.

INTERVIEWER: In terms of....

MAUPIN: Liking the paper, it was a good paper. They wanted some more articles like that. Some had been in prison or had friends who were there.

INTERVIEWER: Well, I think that we are done.

MAUPIN: I should think so!

INTERVIEWER: Thank you very much.

JOYCE MAUPIN INTERVIEW INDEX

MAUPIN INDEX 2

MAUPIN INDEX 3