

Mona Morgan Depression Childhood and Family 1.

My name is Mona Morgan now. I was born in Winyard, Saskatchewan, in 1913. I was the eldest of seven. In the course of growing up my mother and father adopted three, so we had a very large family.

In the latter years, we didn't have much money 'cause the depression came along and was kinda' tough. My dad's business went belly-up, as they say. So then we had to resort to changing our large house and family into a boarding house. We had teachers and some of the bank boys staying at our house.

I can remember ^{the} terrible dust storms. We'd clean the house and then the dust storms would come along, and you'd have to do it all over again the next day. And then the terrible worry about people having no money-- there were no jobs. For us growing up, I had always assumed that I would go on to university, and of course when I finished school that went right out the window.

In 1933 we packed up, we couldn't sell the house, no way! We sold our furniture and bought a seven passenger Studebaker and came out to the coast. That way, my brothers, at least, were able to go to university when they finished school, although really by their own efforts. All my brothers had good education. But when I came to Vancouver I got a job at housework, cooking and looking after three children, for a couple who both worked. Then I became a cook in one of the large households in Shaughnessy. In the course of those three years I learned to type, and shorthand.

As a cook I wasn't just expected to do the cooking, I had to do the dusting downstairs and the vacuuming, and I was expected to press his clothes and polish his shoes which he left out. I didn't do it, and finally the lady

of the house did the pressing of his suits herself. They could have easily sent them out. They were quite wealthy. He was a corporation lawyer for MacMillan & Bloedel. When I applied as a cook there were dozens and dozens of people who applied for that job. I think it was only because I had my senior matriculation, a little better education, so I probably talked my way into it. That would be 1936.

It was a terrible feeling in those days! Frustration, frustration—because it's like it is today. Where are you going to go? What are you going to do? There were teachers with M.A.'s washing dishes. Unless you were lucky and you knew the right people, and even then, the right people couldn't always get you a job 'cause there weren't that many. Our town was a railroad town (in Saskatchewan) and the engineers and the section people and firemen, their jobs were reasonably secure. But for the others! One reason my father's business went was because he couldn't collect what was owed to him. It's a vicious cycle.

My father became a socialist, so I grew up with socialist ideas right from when I was quite young. I can remember a school inspector who came around calling me a little Red. That didn't perturb me at all—I thought it was kinda funny. Because my father was a Socialist and a businessman, he was considered to be "a ^{little} bit off" in those days. We didn't suffer from that, we found it interesting, because our house was always full of very, very interesting people. My father was later a poet, who also published four books.

Because we were of Icelandic origin, the Icelandic papers used to come to our house. My father would subscribe. After he read them, then my mother would. My father used to write articles in the paper, and then of course

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there'd be big discussions about it. Then he edited the paper, The Winyard Advance. Things were different then on the prairie. You had your dinner in the middle of the day. We'd just be finishing our lunch and dad would read to us from some of the books or papers that he was getting. Somebody once smuggled in a book on Sacco and Vanzetti! This was of course banned, it was not supposed to be in Canada, so this was great! That was a little bit of intrigue--we just loved that.

Communists and ^Socialists and leaders used to come through. If they couldn't have a meeting in the hall, our living room would be the place. They'd have discussions that went [^] till three in the morning. My father was an atheist, but I remember three ministers of ~~the~~ denominations in our living room at the same time, discussing with my father. He played bridge with them too.

Then, Icelandic artists and performers, or people who had been to Iceland, many of them entertained in our house. My mother used to play the piano for a little quarter. Things like that coloured our whole development. ~~There were~~
~~more things like that when we got here.~~

[in Vancouver]

I was able to get a job in B.C. Plywood's office. Office work was considered better work for women. I was earning about double in that job to what I was earning as a cook. It was down on Marine Drive, so we had to go by inter-urban or car. We worked nine to five. We had a very nice lunch room and we'd always go for a little walk on nice days, up to the railway tracks.

The office manager was a ^{very} nice person. I suddenly got sciatica and I was off for two weeks. He said, "You can collect Compensation for that." He saw to it that I did get Compensation. He was replaced by a ^{Mr. Robinson,} who had worked in a bank, so immediately things began to change.

I was on the switchboard. I had to do all the mail, and I did the cheques. Every once in a while you'd look around and here was Mr. Robinson, behind the door, to see if we were talking or if we were doing our work. They expected us to do a good job. The reports had to go to H.R. MacMillan and had to be perfect. When we were typing those reports, we had to make sure that there were no mistakes on them--they had to be done in a bit of a hurry. There was no union in those days. We made a few little remarks about the fact that the girls in the office were the ones that had to make the tea and the coffee.

After asking me which position in the office I'd really like to have, six months later they said, "The Inter-urban leaves in ~~it~~ ten minutes. Here's your cheque and your holiday pay." I said, "Why, Mr. Robinson?" He said, "We're making the staff more flexible." However, they also knew, because they had their labour spies, that I was engaged to Nigel Morgan, who at that time was an organizer for the International Woodworkers of America. (Laughs)

MONA MORGAN Depression Office Work 2. IWA

It was only a month later that Harold Pritchett was deported from the United States, having been elected president of the International Woodworkers: ^{PRINT: 1939} He went to work in the office of the newly-organized ^{UAW} _{CIO} and asked me if I would come work for him. And I did that. In those days, the unions were just barely organized, the pay was very small, and there were long hours. But that didn't matter because it was rewarding work.

Although I had very little experience in the labour movement as such, I had joined the Young Communist League in 1937. I certainly learned ^{very} quickly. Then, when Nigel and I were married, just a little over a year later, I was fired from there--"discharged", shall we say--because the majority of the officers didn't believe in married women working. Of course, they weren't Communists--a couple of them were Liberals. They just said that there's ~~one~~ ^{are} so many people who were not married who should take jobs, and married women shouldn't be working and taking jobs.

Joining the YCL 1930s Depression Mona Morgan 1.

When I worked in Shaugnessey I had Thursday afternoon and every second Sunday afternoon off. I had to have the ~~meals~~^{meals} prepared before I left, so they could serve a cold meal on Sunday night. And you couldn't go out at night without permission. It didn't give you much flexibility! So at that time I had no chance of doing anything.

But, after I went to work in the office I had my evenings free. For those who were able to carry on some sort of activities during the day, they would be more active in organized activities amongst other young people. In the evenings, the ^{YCL} had a social programme. I was able to help with some typing, on a Saturday afternoon.

At the same time was the Youth Congress movement. That was a very broad, influential movement of young people. Two of my brothers were involved, one of them from the Canadian Students' Union at UBC. He was a delegate to the National Convention of the Youth Congress. There were delegates from every organization you want to name--all churches, there were East Indian people and other ethnic groups, young Japanese and there were Chinese. The YCL was affiliated.

I was a delegate at one stage from the Icelandic Club, what we called the Omalan, which was an Icelandic ^{young} women's club.

^{of the Youth Congress}
The goal was to try to influence the unemployment. They dealt with questions like trade union rights--trade unions were affiliated too. I can remember very, very heated debates over the question of India and the role of British imperialism in India and the same thing in Japan. Those were questions related

to peace. Then there was the Spanish War that was also very big on the agenda. Dr. Bethune came, for example. Then there was the whole question of scholarships for students, so that they could have some education. There were also questions related to domestics.^{FINT.}

I was working in the YCL office, at the time of the sitdowns, and people called us to come and help on Sunday.

The IWA was formed in 1937 in Portland. Harold Pritchett from B.C. became its first president. The B.C. District Union Council was chartered and it was the first union chartered under the CIO in B.C. Before that, they'd had the Lumber and Sawmill Workers' Union. The CIO was the beginning of organizing industrial unions, where they were trying to get one union in the industry. And have the strength of the whole woodworking industry, as opposed to the division of the craft unions. The struggle to organize the CIO was extremely difficult as well, because the Red Bogey was used. It was John L. Lewis who swept aside that. He said that you're never going to organize anything if you're going to allow those kinds of divisions. I can remember discussions even amongst some of the people I had grown up with, when we got together socially, and they were saying, "Oh the CIO ^(Committee for Industrial Organizing) that's just a bunch of Reds." So it was really a big struggle to organize the CIO.

When Nigel came into the ^(IWA) District Council he was in Victoria. He was made Secretary-Treasurer. They had under three hundred members. You can imagine what kind of job it was to maintain an office, keep the Lumberworker going, keep the Laur Wayne, which was called the Loggers' Navy, going. ^{FIAT} Most of the people who worked there worked for very little and sometimes there wasn't enough to pay. But they were all so dedicated that they worked to build the union and maintain it.

In those early days, everybody that worked in the union felt like they were part of the organizing process, because the unions were being organized and they weren't looked on as a big outfit that could maintain itself at that point.

Mona Morgan CIO in BC Depression 2.

Organizing was a one-on-one deal often, and when they went out to the camps, they would have to go in the ^{dead} of night sometimes, and get into the bunkhouse when the guys were sleeping. They'd wake ^{up} somebody that they knew in there, try to find out where they were, 'cause if the boss knew they were in the camp, it was out. In order to get guys' names, they'd raffle a bottle of whiskey, to find out who was working there, so that they could go and see them at their homes. People don't realize to day what building the industrial unions was.

When the single unemployed sat down in the post office, the Housewives' League and the Women's Labour League--the women who *remained* of them--and women in the ethnic groups, like the Association of Ukrainians, they got very busy. They made sandwiches, they set up a kitchen in the Ukrainian Hall. They got in touch with all sorts of people to come down and make sandwiches and to prepare other kinds of food that you could take in there. It had to be finger food of some kind. Then on Bloody Sunday they set up a first aid station. Men and women pitched in like anything.

the

Women were part of the Defense Campaign after the arrests. In all of those kinds of struggles you'll find that women are very, very much there.

In the On-to-Ottawa trek, ^{*}women played a leading role in that. Some of them went along and they did the cooking and helped organize meals along the way.

I was

Mona Morgan WWII IWA Moving to Work in IWA Office

One of the girls in one of the ^{Local} IWA offices had to leave, so the secretary asked me if I would come to work there. That was in 1941-1942. Even in those days there wasn't that many that were really wanting to work in offices where there was long hours and poor pay. (Laughs) Sometimes there was no pay, if there was no money. The unions were just barely becoming organized and they had very few members. We all worked long hours, but we didn't mind that because something was developing. When I went to work for Local 71, because everyone would be out in the field, often at nine-o'clock at night I would rush to the union steamships with the mail that had to go to the camps. ~~I was~~ I never thought anything about it ^{it} it was part of the job you did.

I must tell you about John McCush. He was the President and one of the organizers of the Loggers [#] Local, Local 1, 71, and he was a rough-hewn prince of a person. He had been everywhere--he was born in Nova Scotia, he'd been in Hawaii--everywhere he went he was for the working man.

One of the first jobs I had when I went to work for the union was to phone a list of people he gave me, "Now you try and get those characters out of bed to come to the Union meeting. We want everybody

we can get to come." They tried very [#] very hard to get guys out to union meetings.

Naturally, when loggers come to town, after they've been out in the woods for a period, they're bushed. Sometimes the first thing that happens is that they deposit their stuff somewhere--they used to bring a lot of their stuff to the IWA union office. They'd bring their money in there and we had a great big wall safe. It was a whole room practically! Then they would go on a toot--they'd go into the beer parlour and so on... Not all of them, because some of them were married people. But the single ones,

they'd get themselves a hotel room and they would have some fun. Often they'd get rolled if they didn't get to the union office first.

Women came into the industry during the war, like everybody ^{else}. There was even the odd woman faller, but very few. I only actually knew one. I don't think she did it ~~so~~ ^{so} much for the fact that the wages were ^{so} good, as that she just enjoyed registering her independence and wanted to do something that was really different.

1941. { In the mills, like in B.C. Plywood, we had a woman organizer, Gladys Shunaman (Hilland). That was in Local 217, in the Sawmill Local in Vancouver.

IWA MONA MORGAN RACISM WWII 1.

In the early days, particularly on the Island, the ^{companies} used to make Chinese workers and East Indians pay them, for giving them a job. And they collected every month. That was one of the things that the IWA addressed, and won. They took some people to court over that. There was that same division that you find among workers, even to ^{day} ^{na} "Some of these immigrants, they come here, and there aren't enough jobs for everybody. So they shouldn't have them." There was a certain amount of that. It was more of a mill problem. In the Loggers' Local a large number of them were Swedish and Norwegian. They were craftsmen when they came. ^{And} there were a lot of Ukrainians in the woods, and some Germans.

Quite a few of the leadership ^{IWA} ~~were~~ party members. ^(of the IWA) Not all of them though. If proposals are put forward you always have somebody who doesn't accept them. There was complete democracy. They tried very, very hard to get guys out to meetings, because how do you organize if you don't get people out? To day you can't get people out to meetings unless there's some hot issue. But in those days, one of the reasons that some loggers didn't want to come out was they'd be identified as being union members.

The whole question of district-wide negotiations is a progressive policy. If people are interested in organizing a union so that they just have their own little empire to service, then they're not necessarily going to be interested in industry-wide negotiations. They're rather gonna think a little bit more, "How much can I get out of this?" That old craft mentality actually. So this, "In unity there is strength," is a progressive slogan. If a boss can get a union organizer to fight against that, he's gonna win something. The union movement has been riddled with bosses' agents. So it wasn't just the question of the Labour Progressive policies, but the whole question of developing strong unions.

The organizers of the ^{IWA} had all been blasted as Reds. And lies like the Province printed a story about us, ^(Mona + Nigel Morgan) just shortly after we were married. It said we lived in Shaughnessey Heights in a great, big house that was worth thousands--something like nine thousand, which now is nothing, but then it was just ridiculous.

MONA MORGAN IWA AND CPC WWII 2.

Now that doesn't mean to say that the people who were members of the Labour Progressive Party didn't make some mistakes. It's much easier, if you're a member of an organization where you have like-minded people, to bring in policies that you believe in. So it ^{is} possible that they may have taken for granted that because ^(recognize) ~~they~~ ^{is} that all these things are for the good of the people, ~~()~~ everybody will see it ~~their~~ way. That isn't always the case. United front work is a very skillful operation.

They weren't organizing as members of the Labour Progressive Party. The Labour Progressive Party was formed at a great big meeting in the Hotel Georgia Hotel (check if Hotel Van!). It was an open deal, so those people who were there were known. They weren't organizers because they were members of the Labour Progressive Party. They became members of the Labour Progressive Party as a result of their experience in trying to organize. That was true of a whole number of people that I knew who hadn't been particularly political, but who, when they joined the union, gradually began to understand what the working class is up ~~against~~ ^{against}. They began to learn more about politics, and did join. During the War, there was a completely different atmosphere, because we were working in a period of the national front.

Everybody was fighting for the war effort, and the union officers were active in organizing Victory Bonds. The union officers would go out and speak about it because it was an understanding ^{that} you're fighting fascism. One of the problems was bringing home to people that it was possible that the war in Europe could extend. Don't forget that ^(Hitler) was going like dominoes, knocking down the different countries in Europe. When ^{the Nazis} went into Poland, and ^{they} went into Czechoslovakia, and France, it was a very emotional time. Yet there were people who [felt], "The armies were over there. We're gonna

beat

beat them, don't worry." But I think that a great deal of thinking people were very concerned and were part of the National Front that developed at that time. "I was the chairperson of the Air Raid precautions in the West End, and Nigel was on the Men's Division. [unclear] became very

The unions became very involved in that. That may have made it just a little bit easier, as far as organizing was concerned. Although one of the difficult times was when there was a no-strike pledge. That had to be broken in the Queen Charlottes, and there was a strike. And it was won. It was one of those contradictory times where the rule is made to be broken. That was the only strike in that particular period. It was very solid and very short.

* INSERT (1) from pg. 4

The no-strike pledge was adopted in order to put every^{possible} thing into the war effort. They felt that it was very necessary to keep production rolling so that the requirements of the war effort would be met. Most rank-and-file union people supported the war effort. Not all^m like in everything, you always have some people who think you're doing something for some particular reason. Their basic feeling was that we lacked faith, that the armies could overwhelm Hitler [without our help]

Then there were some others who felt, "Well, the Russians are so powerful." They were in all the battles that were being waged. The Sun and the Province used to carry tremendous headlines about the brave and victorious Russians.

When the war began, first there was what we called "the phoney war", when the allies refused to join in a united front with the Soviet Union against Hitler and Mussolini, and it became the Axis with Japan. So they really allowed Hitler free reign. They admitted, Britian for example, that they were giving military aid to Germany:

"We don't ever expect to get it back, but at least it will help to keep back the Russians." While at the same time they were blaming the Soviet Union for everything, including the non-aggressive pact the ~~the~~ Soviet Union made with Hitler in order to be able to stave off what they knew was going to come ultimately. Also, they knew that the Maginoux line was a fake, it wasn't going to do anything. Then, when they invaded on June 21st, 1941, Churchill came out with his famous statement, and they finally realized what was happening. Churchill never gave up the anti-Soviet fight. He's the one who instigated the Cold War, he triggered it by his speech in Missouri.

In 1941 people really swung sharply behind the war effort because they recognized what was happening. Germany went in so quickly and they broke the non-aggression pact.

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* The no-strike pledge made it hard to strike for conditions. If the strike weapon is your ultimate, then in order to be able to get your demands, you have to be able to use other ways, without using that ultimate weapon.

It makes it more difficult to put pressure on the boss, because he knows that unless there is something really tough you're not going to strike. But, strangely enough, the unions were able to get a whole lot of things done. The war didn't end until 1945 and the union grew from less than three hundred to thirty-seven thousand. FTNT.

The Women's Auxiliary grew out of a struggle by the Woodworkers for decent wages and better conditions. In order to be successful, they needed the help of the womenfolk. Most strike struggles require that ~~the~~ the Fraser Mills strike of 1931 led to the formation of the IWA in 1937, and the women were very active in that strike. In those days there was no strike pay. So in most struggles, in Blubber Bay in '38 and Lake Cowichan in 1934, one of the things that had to be done was to organize enough food, which meant going to farmers, or grocers ~~on~~ wherever they could gather things, and then to get a crew together to help make sandwiches or do some cooking. Because there was nothing to keep the families going.

Particularly in the beginning, it was a question of helping--to give coffee to the pickets ~~on~~ the picket line, and to help in other ways, to organize events so that you raised money. You'd have dances, or you'd have socials, or something to draw in other people, and work in every way you possibly could. In those days there weren't that many unions. They had to depend on the people around.

One of the women who joined our auxiliary in 1946, she said, "You know, before this strike I was anti-union, and I learned through the efforts of that strike, what the union meant." And that's what happened! The women pitched in and they did all this kind of work, and in the course of doing, they also learned about the issues ^{was} the union fighting for and why they had to maintain the union.

In the course of it, the employers did everything they could to try to divide

the families, and to win women away from the struggles. Sometimes they even send letters to the women of the family saying, "Don't you realize that if your husband is going to be on strike, in the long run this is only going to be hard on the family and we want you to realize that."

One of the things would be that when you're fighting for one of the slogans like, "Advance Our Pay A Buck A Day", the women would find out that if ~~that is~~ they were successful in winning a dollar a day, that would increase their standard of living. They would be able to do things that they couldn't do before.

One out of every three woodworkers in B.C. in 1947 was either killed or maimed. That's just scandalous. The Auxiliary in Lake Cowichan came into being around the issue of safety. The men had been struggling to have the roads improved from the logging camps to the hospital in Duncan. They had not been successful. So the women decided they're going to have a go at it. So, they did. They organized, and they fought so hard that they finally got those roads improved. Because a lot of the times the men were so badly injured when they got to the hospital, coming over those corduroy roads. They would be just shaken to pieces--lots of times it would be too much, they would be dead by the time they got to hospital. Either that or broken bones so bad they couldn't set them. In those days, there were no ambulances, there was no rescue plane, there was just a So when you have a situation like that you can understand how the women would become very, very concerned and would fight tenaciously in order to get things changed. They did, and they decided that if they could do that, they would do a whole lot of other things.

straight case of getting guys out of the woods.

The high accident rate in the woods and mills meant that there were always a lot of guys in hospitals, ^{So} the women formed hospital visiting *luncheon* committees, and we would go up to the hospitals. We'd take copies of the Lumberworker, some cigarettes, some sweets--we tried to do that regularly.

The other thing was a concern for children. One of the big things they did was to organize the ~~the~~ Children's Jubilee Summer Camp. We had representation on the Foster Day Care Association. One child in ten was in a foster home--in a home other than its natural home. So we used to help do what we could to keep that organization alive.

MONA MORGAN Self-identity and IWA 1. WWII

In those Depression days, I was very, very retiring. I didn't do anything like get up at a meeting and speak. I'd have been caught dead first.

I was just very much of a background person. I would do typing or things like that.

I joined the Auxiliary fairly quickly after we were married. Before very long, I became one of the officers of the District Council. I had to be in a position where you spoke on questions. Then the worst of it was that (Laughs) I went a couple of times with Nigel to the Island, and, "Oh, they'd like me to speak too!" Oh Gosh! That was devastating. But, you had no choice, you had to do something. I guess it was at that time that I came out of myself more.

The very first speech I ever made, at a District Council, I remember how nervous I was. I was asked to speak on the position of women in society. I had dug out a whole pile of stuff. I read a certain amount about it. Then I did it at the Youbou Auxiliary. And then the Mine-Mill asked me to come up to Britannia Beach, and help them organize an auxiliary up there. And so we had discussions on the whole question of the position of women in society, and why they're held back. I

As the union grew, more auxiliaries were organized, because the women took part in the development of the union. By 1946, at the time of the big IWA strike, the B.C. District Council of the IWA Federated Auxiliaries-- that's the official title (laughs)--had sixteen locals with over three hundred members. During the 1946 strike all the auxiliaries participated. We went by chartered boat from the mainland to Victoria, and we were housed in the army barracks in Victoria. Nobody showed undue concern for the less than comfortable accommodation.

When all the contingents had arrived from the woodworkers' areas in the province, the men and women together marched and sang, "Hold the Fort", "Solidarity Forever", and "The Union Maid". Those songs echoed in the corridors of the Legislature as the union spokesmen were meeting with the government. And the poor people of Victoria, they thought the revolution had arrived. It was really funny! But the feeling of solidarity for the cause of the woodworkers and their families--it permeated the entire labour movement. There were thousands of people there.

One of the auxiliary's contributions was a radio broadcast, which presented the issues around which we were fighting, from the women's viewpoint. The auxiliary largely financed these broadcasts. We developed quite a listening audience. We had one woman who wrote in a card, opposing everything, every day. During the 1946 strike, Nigel was away. David was just over a year old and I had a broadcast every day for five minutes: Five Minutes With Mona. That was tough. I did that for six weeks. It was replying to the employers' broadcast. They had one that was five minutes every day. My job was to help to show that it was not the wages of the workers that were increasing prices, and that the union demands were legitimate. You had to have a different angle every day.

It was hard! I was on CJOR, and I had to have it down there by nine o'clock every morning because the lawyer had to go over it to make sure that there wasn't anything libelous.

Then we edited a page for the Lumberworkers. We finally produced a bit of an exchange between the auxiliaries and members, in the column. Another interesting event was a holiday camp for auxiliary members. Twenty women, including most of the executive of the District Council, plus a delegate from most of the locals, spent a week in the Gulf Islands, combining leisure activities with lectures on trade unionism, women's place in society, and current topics. ^{They} had a meeting with the District Council in the course of it.

The Auxiliary District Quarterly meetings and conventions. We used to hold ~~them~~ in the Malaspina Hotel in Nanaimo. The press always came, because they said that they knew that there was always going to be something interesting happening. In addition to the issues of particular current concern to woodworking families, we also had fraternal delegations from other auxiliaries, like the Mine, Mill and Marine Workers. Then there were visitors from other women's groups. We didn't confine our activities to strictly woodworking problems. We realized that the question of prices, housing, health care, were related to our own immediate concerns. So, whenever the District Council met, we would take up these questions.

Just like now, the working people are blamed for the price increases, and they really zoomed after the war. Out of our experiences, we joined with others fighting against high prices, and the Housewives' and Consumers' Association was

formed. Marge Croy, who is now Marge Dalskog, and I were chosen as delegates to Ottawa by a large meeting representing many women's groups. It was held in the Hastings Auditorium on International Women's Day. That was a meeting of delegates from the four Western provinces and it was chaired by Margaret Chun of Winnipeg, who became a school trustee that year. That delegation received nation-wide publicity and it also led to the formation of a National Housewives' and Consumers' Association the following year.

It was the "Buy No Beef" and "Buy No Pork" campaigns that actually did bring down the price of bacon. For a short time, of course. The women across the country, assisted by some trade unions, collected a million signatures to roll back food prices. The ^{io}delegation of five hundred that presented that petition in Ottawa was rebuffed at the doors of Parliament. There are three of our auxiliary members who went. That ~~carried~~ on---we worked very hard on the question of prices.

We presented briefs. I did one at the Public Enquiry of the British Columbia Milk Board, on behalf of the Auxiliary. I'll just use these minutes to tell you more of the things that we did. ^(Reads,) "Price campaigns have been the main political action work of the auxiliaries...The sisters at Lake Cowichan did a big job in helping to elect our District President, Edna Brown, to the School Board. In Campbell River, Sister Helen White was a candidate for Commissioner, and got a very good vote. The number of Auxiliary members who took part in the Labour Lobby was encouraging. The excellent hospital work in most of our communities, including the Alexandra Solarium, the adoption of a little French child, shows that our auxiliaries do fine political ^{action} work in addition to the District projects."

That was January 24 and 25th, 1948. ^{New par.} On education--"Previous recommendations of the IWA Educational Department for education should be taken for joint union and auxiliary classes.

Where this is possible, it should be done. But experience shows that women find it hard to attend the same classes, because of family ties, ~~and~~ In addition, many of the subjects dealt with do not come within the scope of Auxiliary activity. In the main, education for Auxiliary members needs to be different. One suggestion is we undertake a study of the role of women in the history of British Columbia."

Then, on the question of peace, we did a pile of activity on that. On the Civic Franchise: "Resolved ^{that} ~~this~~ Sixth Annual Convention...urges the government to amend the Municipalities Act to make the qualifications for voters similar to those in provincial and federal elections, except for money by-laws." Then we had a resolution on price controls, on political action--"Safety first" ^m we had a big resolution on that, ~~On~~ unemployment insurance: "That we urge the government to amend the Unemployment Insurance Act to include in its provisions benefits to those unemployed through sickness." That was the "further resolve". The first resolve was demanding that, "during periods of forced unemployment, the Unemployment Insurance Commission pay thirty-five dollars a week for married people, and twenty-five dollars a week to single persons, thereby insuring that the unemployed worker and his family will be looked after."

And here's one on foreign policy: "...goes on record favouring a Canadian foreign policy whose main purpose is the preservation of peace and the maintenance of friendship and respect ^{further} of all people. Be it resolved that we urge our government to resume trade relations with all democratic and friendly countries to maintain Canadian industry and agriculture at a high

level of production and help provide employment for our people."

There was a China Aid committee in Victoria. Here we decided to raise a hundred dollars for medical equipment in China.

The bulk of women in the auxiliary were not politically involved. They were wives of the woodworkers who had been involved in the building of the union, or they were in strike struggles. Local 107 was the one in Vancouver. First of all, it would comprise the wives, or sisters, or mothers of the union officers. They were the most natural. Or the shop stewards, and theⁿ anybody who could get involved. Then we put out a little leaflet.

We used to go and speak to union meetings on the importance of involving their womenfolk, to give strength to the things that they were doing. Lots of times the women didn't understand the problems of the union and they would be very resentful that their husbands would be out at union meetings, or sub-local meetings, so it was very important to get the family involved.

We were working for the good of the family and the society as a whole and the community. Nearly all of our auxiliary women were involved in a whole number of things--fraternal lodges, hospital boards and community organizations of PTA's, and also childcare. We had Gordon House in the West End. We were involved in almost everything that had to do with the community. Of course, the more you got organized, the more acceptable unions became, the more other organizations came to look for support among trade unions as well as other places. Those women in Duncan, and Cowichan, and Ladysmith, they must have donated hundreds of dollars to the Alexandra Solarium. They outfit

outfitted ^{a whole} hospital rooms. This grew out of a feeling of the safety conditions.

Here are the list of donations: ^{the} International Fund, the ^{IWA} Federated Auxiliary Board Fund, ^{de}legates to Ottawa protesting high prices, Glace Bay miners' strike, Spanish War veterans, Conquer Cancer Campaign, IONE, Cancer Stamps, Imperial Laundry Workers' strike at Nanaimo, Polio Fund, 'a needy sister and an ^{IWA} brother', the Victoria Boys' Band, the Duncan Dominion Day, and the local Labour ^{Day} Sports ^m adopted ^a child in the solarium ^m, the Unity Hall 'now a reality', and the headquarters of Local 1-30. You can see why ^{Philip} Murray, who was the president of the CIO later, asked all the local unions to organize auxiliaries. In the days following the real big push of development of the ^{CIO} in the States, they became very active in political action. They found that the women were amongst the best organizers of the distribution of leaflets and the campaign activities that were needed, partly because a lot of them were ^{at} home.

I had a book called Why Women Cry, or Wenchies With Wrenches. That was written by a woman organizer of one of the big unions in the States. She wrote this book in a very popularized style. We got other books too, and we recommended reading on our Auxiliary Page. We wrote little columns on women like Sojourner Truth. I got very fascinated when I read her story and so I wrote a little column. Then we had one column that was ^{about} the kitchen, ^{how to?} and get out of it. That was also geared to the position of women and how they're held back and the constraints of the kitchen and the home, the four walls. And usually some aspect of that would be touched on in our District Council meetings, or even our Auxiliaries. We were dealing all the time with questions that related to the home and the child and high prices. The reasons for these things would keep coming up.

And the fight for the vote: I was on a committee to extend the franchise. The women got the civic vote in 1951. One of the women who was on that committee was Judge Helen Gregory McGill. She was in her eighties, at that point.

After the Second World War it was very obvious that women were in the workforce to stay. Many of the Auxiliary women had worked in industry, or an office, during the war. They kept on--we always ^{had} a combination of women who worked and women who didn't work. The Auxiliary didn't specifically get into organizing unorganized women into unions. But, in addition to our members joining the Housewives' and Consumers' Association, which is different from the old Housewives' League, we also participated in the activities of the Congress of Canadian Women, as individuals. There were International Women's Day meetings. I can remember speaking in Nanaimo

I can remember speaking in Nanaimo

on International Women's Day and in Lake Cowichan on May Day, Effie Jones and I. ~~W. Morgan~~ ~~was~~ ~~at~~ ~~the~~ ~~meeting~~ ~~in~~ ~~1945~~. On May Day, we would have been talking about what kind of issues working people should be struggling for, the question of ^{high} prices, the ~~questi~~on of peace.

Quite often if we had an auxiliary meeting at night, then the husband had to stay home if there wasn't a granny. A lot of stuff we did in a jocular way, but it had its kern^el of truth, never the less. There were lots of discussions in relation to childcare, or what women could do, or what they couldn't do, because you're not going to be a slave to your house. If your husband is agreeing to you being in the auxiliary, then he's going to have to help. And the same way--if your husband's going out to a union meeting, then you'll have to cooperate.

There may have been men who were threatened by their wives being active in the Auxiliary, but if that happened, we would only get the story in a discussion in the coffee klatch. There would be lots of instances, as a matter of fact. One of our executive members, he finally beat her, but she left him. But she stayed for him to beat her, because that was the only way in those days that you could get out, and keep your kids. She was advised by the lawyer to do that. He was not a good union man--he resented everything that she did in relation to the Auxiliary.

STRUCTURE OF IWA W.A. Post-War MONA MORGAN 1.

As an auxiliary, we were not a fully independent body. We were an auxiliary of the local union. Therefore, our dominant policies had to dovetail with whatever the union was doing. When we were having a Quarterly Meeting of the Executive in Nanaimo, two or three of us in Vancouver would meet with the union and say, "We're having a District Council meeting, our proposals are so-and-so, what do you propose? Should we do something different, or what ha^{ve} you got coming up that you want us to take up?" And that's what we would do. We might have had the odd time where maybe we got carried away with something in a meeting, but it was never of any cons^equence that it created a problem.

We had a few women, who were wives of what some called the "White Block", who would be quite vociferous, but we never had that same struggle as in the union. Either they realized what was going on and they didn't want to become involved, or their husbands kept them out of the Auxiliary. We didn't have that many who fought us on issues, hard. Often we'd have people who disagreed with different aspects, and we'd talk it out. At all our conventions, we'd have a District Officer who would speak to us and make some proposals, or would just pat us on the back. We always said that meⁿ were welcome at all our meetings. We were also invited to attend all their union meetings with voice.

Now, in the Mine-Mill Auxiliaries, they had voice and vote, but I didn't agree with that. Because people outside direct mem^bership in an organization, particularly a union organization--which is, after all, an organization where you're bound by vote on questions of contract negotiations and so on --I don't see how you can expect someone who doesn't work on the job to have the precise same feelings about the job^s as you do.

You are dealing with questions that affect the family, but they're not the same concern of the women who isn't working on the job as they are of the man who is involved. If women work in an industry they soon find out a whole lot of things that they didn't know, when they were just at home. You could pad a meeting, you could pad a convention, [#]with people who didn't fully understand what it was that their husbands or brothers were negotiating about. If they had the vote, they could out-vote something. I don't think that's a democratic procedure. Mine-Mill is the only auxiliary that had that.

We were affiliated with the International Auxiliaries. We used to send delegates to the International Auxiliary convention, which would be in Portland or Bellingham. We had a big fight with our International Board, not of our Auxiliaries, but of the union. We found it very difficult to organize all our auxiliaries as one unit to a union. And it was in one specific area where we wanted to set ^{up} sub-locals, because the distances were too great for women to come together to one Auxiliary meeting. So what did the IWA International officers do? Lifted the charter! So we had a big fight about that. We finally won, but we had to compromise. We found a way of having those women meet.

The International didn't want the Auxiliary because they didn't like our District anyway, because we were making the biggest strides in contract negotiations and winning demands for woodworkers. So our Auxiliaries did the same thing. We were a strong Auxiliary group, the strongest as far as numbers and actual locals were concerned.

MONA MORGAN IWA POST-WAR LAUREL LAW MURDER 1.

There were some/terrible things that happened in the States, like Laurel Law was murdered, and her baby threatened. Her husband was an officer of the IWA[#] (in Washington State) and He came home from a union meeting one night and found her lying on the chesterfield. She had been stabbed with an icepick^Y thirteen times in her breasts. (Whispers) And he went upstairs where the baby was sleeping in the crib and in her blood was written, "We'll come back for him if you don't leave town." That was just a terrible shock for everybody. They were wonderful people, both of them.

{ Employer goons did it! The tactics that they used will astound you.

MONA MORGAN Post-War Anti-CP Campaign IWA 1.

The IWA officers who succeeded Harold^[Pritchett], they were like goons. One instance, when Nagel was at a convention or a board meeting down south--they kicked one of the guys down a long flight of stairs. You just had to watch yourself. When I think of Carly Larson--he was International President in '46, '47. His house had been burned down at one stage. But, when the UnAmerican Activities Committee was holding its meetings, in about '50, he testified.

When the union divided we said, "We stand by our menfolk." We were present at the meetings, but we voted separately. We had a meeting. I have no doubt, although it wasn't voiced, that there might have been some questioning. There was questioning in the back of my mind, never expressed though. I mean, not publicly. (Laughs)

We kept on with our activities. We had a convention in January. We raffled a cedar chest which had been donated by a member in North Van who had made it. And all the auxiliaries donated articles of sewing, and equipment--there were cups and saucers and goodness knows what. We raised money through raffling that cedar chest and we carried on some activities.

MONA MORGAN Post-War Anti-CP Campaign IWA 2.

We just changed over from the IWA to the WIUC. But, it couldn't last--it was a very difficult time. I worked in the office of Local 1-71 until 1949, and I used all my Unemployment Insurance money, and so had other people. I'm not begrudging it all. By '49, it just simply wasn't possible anymore.

The strike fund was returned--there were lies written about some of that. The strike fund was never used. Never. It was returned intact. Some people wanted to make it much blacker than it was. I mean, an honest mistake is an honest mistake. That's what it was, and partly based on incorrect information.

MONA MORGAN Post-War IWA Childcare 1.

I took six months off when David was born. And when Ernie Dalskog came/and asked me if I would come and work in the District Office, I said, "I don't know if I can do that. I won't do it unless I can make the very best arrangements to have the baby looked after." So we checked around, and we were very fortunate in finding a woman who had not had children of her own--she was married to a man who had grown-up children and didn't want any more. But she loved children and felt frustrated by the fact that she wouldn't have any of her own! It didn't take very long for us to realize that unless we were very badly mistaken, she would be an ideal person. She was! She looked after him during the day. When he became two and a half, we enrolled him in Gordon House, and we took him there in the morning, on the way to work. He would be fed and have a nap in the afternoon, and she'd pick him up at three o'clock. She'd come home and make supper, and then she'd leave as soon as we got home. So that was fine.

We weren't supposed to have any children in that apartment house, but the doctor's wife had a little boy, so that cleared the way for us. We used to take turns watching each other's children. And my mother on occasion looked after him, too.

MONA MORGAN Post-War IWA Childcare 2.

I didn't like to do that too often.

Now, it cost money! I basically worked--I don't think I had very much left over by the time I paid Freda. When we had a District Council meeting, that meant going to Nanaimo on a Friday night and coming home Sunday night. That meant that she would stay there and look after him for Friday night, Saturday[#] and Sunday, and which meant that I would provide the food for her and pay her extra for those days. It cost a lot of money. But, as far as I was concerned, that was important. Simply had to be done. District Council was once every four months. So, it wasn't as if I took every weekend off away from the child. And I tried not to have too many week^{night} meetings. So that when I came home from work, at five-thirty, I could at least be with him until he went to bed. And the both of us, whenever we could. I used to bring a lot of work home with me. Auxiliary work, and I would do it. We always had a typewriter at home. We always had a desk, so we both did a lot of work at home in the evenings, when there weren't meetings.

I never took that position that my job, important as I felt it was, was as important as Nigel's was. His was much more difficult too. And required much more time than mine did. Which doesn't take away from the fact that you have to share responsibility. But there's no such thing as equality, period.

MONA MORGAN Childcare IWA Post-War 3.

It's equality of opportunity, and that means you have to take into consideration what everybody's doing. Nigel was very good about most things like that, where he could be. His time wasn't that great, but he would like to do it if he had the time. If I couldn't do dishes, that was no problem for him, and he liked to cook.

MONA MORGAN IWA Post-War OTEU 1.

At the end of the war, in all the union offices, there was a struggle going on for the Office and Technical Workers' Union. We were members of that, those of us who worked in the IWA.

I think that the Office and Technical Workers Union spent far too much time working on getting some very nice contracts for the women in trade union offices. They should have been organizing the women in outside offices and banks. I don't think there's any reason why those of us who worked in union offices couldn't have worked for a little bit less, rather than fight for the absolute maximum.

That union developed quite a big membership and big contracts because they were in that position where they could put the hammer on the union leadership. And that isn't where you should put it--the banks, insurance companies, hundreds of other offices where women are not getting anything near the same pay--organizing the unorganized women. It's the unorganized women who are at the bottom of the ladder.

CPC on WOMEN MONA MORGAN Post-War 1.
INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

I can remember Effie Jones saying, "~~Heesh~~, International Women's Day, it has to be organized!" Every International Women's Day that I attended had that international flavour. Very often they had women in costumes of their ethnic origin. About '49 would be the first time that I had anything to do with it. I was asked to sit on the International Women's Day Committee from the Auxiliary. They invited all the different women's organizations.

It was '49 I was asked to speak. (Whispers) I almost died. We had it in the Pender Auditorium. Susie Brown, who was a terrific cook, organized a tremendous tea. There was a group of men and woman, they put on a skit. It was v^ery funny--it had to do with the position of women in society. They had been in the West End Community Centre, and they were in the Writers' Group. Dorothy Livesay was one of the people in that group. We had music.

A number of them we had in the Swedish Hall. We always had speakers, cultural activity and a very nice tea, usually International an bake sale. It wasn't to have a bake sale so ybu could have a nice feed. It was always to raise money. In 1951, a couple of our young women were artists, and they made great, big huge sketches of the early strikes that women had been involved in.

1823 was the first strike in Canada that women were involved in-- they made pictures of that.

We had people from all over the country--one time we had Mary Cardash come and speak. She was a Winnipeg school trustee for many years. She spoke on the question of education and the position of women, and how important it was for women to upgrade their education. We had Jeannette Walsh come and speak because we felt that we should have some solidarity with our sisters in French Canada, as well as the rest of the world. There were times when we had women from almost every ethnic group that you can mention--Scottish and Irish and Welsh and Japanese. We tried to always make it as wide as possible. We had a Native woman, who spoke about the problems of the Native women, and we had an East Indian woman. Every year there was something.