

83/168

^c

v. 1

The Bancroft Library

University of California • Berkeley





Regional Oral History Office
The Bancroft Library

University of California
Berkeley, California

Women in Politics Oral History Project

Ann Eliaser

FROM GRASSROOTS POLITICS TO THE TOP DOLLAR:
FUNDRAISING FOR CANDIDATES AND NON-PROFIT AGENCIES

With an Introduction by
Elizabeth Gatov

An Interview Conducted by
Malca Chall
1976-1977

Underwritten by a research grant from the
Research Collection Program of the
National Endowment for the Humanities

All uses of this manuscript are covered by a legal agreement between the Regents of the University of California and Ann Eliaser dated September 13, 1981. The manuscript is thereby made available for research purposes. All literary rights in the manuscript, including the right to publish, are reserved to The Bancroft Library of the University of California Berkeley. No part of the manuscript may be quoted for publication without the written permission of the Director of The Bancroft Library of the University of California at Berkeley.

Requests for permission to quote for publication should be addressed to the Regional Oral History Office, 486 Library, and should include identification of the specific passages to be quoted, anticipated use of the passages, and identification of the user. The legal agreement with Ann Eliaser requires that she be notified of the request and allowed thirty days in which to respond.

It is recommended that this oral history be cited as follows:

Ann Eliaser, "From Grassroots Politics to the Top Dollar: Fundraising for Candidates and Non-Profit Agencies," an oral history conducted 1976-1977 by Malca Chall, Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 1983.

Copy No. 1



ANN ELIASER

TABLE OF CONTENTS -- Ann Eliaser

PREFACE	i
INTRODUCTION by Elizabeth Gatov	vi
INTERVIEW HISTORY	viii
BRIEF BIOGRAPHY	xi
I FAMILY BACKGROUND AND EDUCATION	1
Parents and Grandparents	1
Early Intellectual Stirrings	9
Dalton High School, New York City	14
Marriage and the Return to San Francisco	20
II YOUNG SAN FRANCISCO HOUSEWIFE, 1945-1956	22
Establishing a Home, a Family, and an Income	22
Coping with Husband's Ill Health	27
The Bookstore: Sales and Television	30
III PLUNGING INTO THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY MAELSTROM, 1956-1965	42
The Adlai Stevenson Campaign, 1956	42
Moving Into Democratic Party Headquarters, 1958	48
Women's Activities for the Western States Democratic Conference	50
Persona non Grata to the San Francisco County Democratic Central Committee	52
Dollars for Democrats and Other Fund-Raising Ventures	57
Finance Cochairman, California Democratic Council	61
The Bookfair	64
Organizing the Golden Gate Democratic Club and the Stanley Mosk Campaign, 1958	67
Raising Money: Personal Consequences and Commitment	69
Working in the California Democratic Council: Leadership Styles	73
Women in the Democratic Party	77
The Role of Women in the California Democratic Council	77
The Role of Women in the Democratic State Central Committee	79
Democratic Women of the Bay Area, 1963-1965	90
Responsibilities as Chairman of the Women's Division, 1962-1965	94
Women's Division Leaders of the Democratic National Committee	97
California Democratic Council Endorsing Convention, 1958	101
The Democratic National Convention, 1964	102
The Alan Cranston Senate Primary, 1964	109

The Democratic National Convention, 1960	111
Nomination Maneuvers	114
The Campaign, 1960	118
Reelection of Elizabeth Gatov as National Committeewoman, 1964	121
An Era Passes, 1965	123
Election of Ann Alanson Eliaser as National Committeewoman	123
Election of Robert Coate as State Chairman	129
IV DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL COMMITTEEWOMAN FOR CALIFORNIA, 1965-1968	134
Learning Voice Control	134
First Experiences in Washington, D.C.	135
Getting to Know Southern California	138
White House Connections	141
The State Dinner	143
The National Committee and the Vietnam War	148
The California Democratic Council and the Vietnam War	150
The Party Debt, the Vietnam War, and Other Concerns	153
Edmund Brown, Sr. Reelection Campaign, 1966	155
The Contest for Party Chairman, 1966	160
The Unforgettable Year: 1968	165
Eugene McCarthy in the Bay Area, 1967	166
Delegate Selection for the Democratic National Convention	168
Pre-Convention Preparations	175
Resignation as National Committeewoman	177
Commitment to Eugene McCarthy: The Primary	180
Robert Kennedy is Assassinated	192
The Television Debate	195
Campaign Supporters and Traveling Companions	197
National Coordinator: Women for McCarthy	200
The Democratic National Convention	201
Preparing the California Delegation	201
The Rules Committee and the Minority Report	204
Voting for the Candidates	208
Action Outside the Hotels	211
The Alan Cranston Senate Campaign	214
V POLITICAL ACTIVITY, STATE AND LOCAL, 1968-1976	217
The Democratic State Central Committee Meeting, 1971	219
Campaigning for State Party Chairman, Northern Division	219
The Importance of Money	219
Losing the Election in a Bitter Struggle	223
Charles Manatt Elected State Party Chairman	230
Campaign Costs and Organization	233
Presidential Aspirants, Pickets, and Other Memories	234
San Francisco Politics and the Appointment to the Board of	
Permit Appeals, 1971-1973	236
State Appointment: The Tahoe Regional Planning Agency,	
1975-1976	240
Setting up the Campaign Management Office: Compass Associates	247

VI ORGANIZATION TECHNIQUES: POLITICAL PARTY AND CAMPAIGN FUNCTIONS	250
Some Examples of Difficulties	250
Early Jimmy Carter Campaign Preparations, 1975	253
Late Frank Church Campaign Preparations, 1976	261
Later Edmund G. Brown, Jr. Campaign Preparations, 1976	266
VII PARTY POLITICS, WOMEN, AND RELATED ISSUES	278
The Role of the Political Party	278
Women in Politics	280
The Place of the Women's Division in the Democratic Party	280
Differences Between Men and Women in Politics: Myth and Reality	283
The Women's Movement and Family Interests	294
Personal Disappointments and Goals	295
TAPE GUIDE	298
INDEX	299

PREFACE

The following interview is one of a series of tape-recorded memoirs in the California Women Political Leaders Oral History Project. The series has been designed to study the political activities of a representative group of California women who became active in politics during the years between the passage of the woman's suffrage amendment and the current feminist movement--roughly the years between 1920 and 1965. They represent a variety of views: conservative, moderate, liberal, and radical, although most of them worked within the Democratic and Republican parties. They include elected and appointed officials at national, state, and local governmental levels. For many the route to leadership was through the political party--primarily those divisions of the party reserved for women.

Regardless of the ultimate political level attained, these women have all worked in election campaigns on behalf of issues and candidates. They have raised funds, addressed envelopes, rung doorbells, watched polls, staffed offices, given speeches, planned media coverage, and when permitted, helped set policy. While they enjoyed many successes, a few also experienced defeat as candidates for public office.

Their different family and cultural backgrounds, their social attitudes, and their personalities indicate clearly that there is no typical woman political leader; their candid, first-hand observations and their insights about their experiences provide fresh source material for the social and political history of women in the past half century.

In a broader framework their memoirs provide valuable insights into the political process as a whole. The memoirists have thoughtfully discussed details of party organization and the work of the men and women who served the party. They have analysed the process of selecting party leaders and candidates, running campaigns, raising funds, and drafting party platforms, as well as the more subtle aspects of political life such as maintaining harmony and coping with fatigue, frustration, and defeat. Perceived through it all are the pleasures of friendships, struggles, and triumphs in a common cause.

The California Women Political Leaders Oral History Project has been financed by both an outright and a matching grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. Matching funds were provided by the Rockefeller Foundation for the Helen Gahagan Douglas component of the project, by the Columbia and Fairtree Foundations, and by individuals who were interested in supporting memoirs of their friends and colleagues. In addition, funds from the California State Legislature-sponsored Knight-Brown Era Governmental History Project made it possible to increase the research and broaden the scope of the interviews in which there was

a meshing of the woman's political career with the topics being studied in the Knight-Brown project. Professors Judith Blake Davis, Albert Lepawsky, and Walton Bean have served as principal investigators during the period July 1975-December 1977 that the project was underway. This series is the second phase of the Women in Politics Oral History Project, the first of which dealt with the experiences of eleven women who had been leaders and rank-and-file workers in the suffrage movement.

The Regional Oral History Office was established to tape record autobiographical interviews with persons significant in the history of the West and the nation. The Office is under the administrative supervision of James D. Hart, Director of The Bancroft Library. Interviews were conducted by Amelia R. Fry, Miriam Stein, Gabrielle Morris, Malca Chall, Fern Ingersoll, and Ingrid Scobie.

Malca Chall, Project Director
Women in Politics Oral History Project

Willa Baum, Department Head
Regional Oral History Office

15 November 1979
Regional Oral History Office
486 The Bancroft Library
University of California at Berkeley

CALIFORNIA WOMEN POLITICAL LEADERS ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

- Frances Mary Albrier, *Determined Advocate for Racial Equality*. 1979, 308 p.
- Marjorie Benedict, *Developing a Place for Women in the Republican Party*. In process.
- Odessa Cox, *Challenging the Status Quo: The Twenty-seven Year Campaign for Southwest Junior College*. 1979, 149 p.
- Pauline Davis, *California Assemblywoman, 1952-1976*. In process.
- Ann Eliaser, *From Grassroots Politics to the Top Dollar: Fundraising for Candidates and Non-profit Agencies*. 1983, 306 p.
- March Fong Eu, *High Achieving Nonconformist in Local and State Government*. 1977, 245 p.
- Jean Wood Fuller, *Organizing Women: Careers in Volunteer Politics and Government Administration*. 1977, 270 p.
- Elizabeth Rudel Gatov, *Grassroots Party Organizer to Treasurer of the United States*. 1978, 412 p.
- Elinor Heller. In process.
- Patricia Hitt, *From Precinct Worker to Assistant Secretary of HEW*. 1980, 220 p.
- Lucile Hosmer, *A Conservative Republican in the Mainstream of Party Politics*. 1983, 200 p.
- Kimiko Fujii Kitayama, *Nisei Leader in Democratic Politics and Civic Affairs*. 1979, 110 p.
- Bernice Hubbard May, *A Native Daughter's Leadership in Public Affairs*. Two volumes, 1976, 540 p.
- LaRue McCormick, *Activist in the Radical Movement, 1930-1960: The International Labor Defense and the Communist Party*. 1980, 166 p.
- Hulda Hoover McLean, *A Conservative's Crusades for Good Government*. 1977, 174 p.
- Emily Pike, *Republican Party Campaign Organizer: From Volunteer to Professional*. 1983, 389 p.
- Julia Porter, *Dedicated Democrat and City Planner, 1941-1975*. 1977, 195 p.
- Wanda Sankary, *From Soñ House to State House*. 1979, 109 p.
- Hope Mendoza Schechter, *Activist in the Labor Movement, the Democratic Party, and the Mexican-American Community*. 1980, 165 p.
- Vera Schultz, *Ideals and Realities in State and Local Government*. 1977, 272 p.

- Clara Shirpser, *One Woman's Role in Democratic Party Politics: National, State, and Local, 1950-1973*. Two volumes, 1975, 671 p.
- Elizabeth Snyder, *California's First Woman State Party Chairman*. 1977, 199 p.
- Eleanor Wagner, *Independent Political Coalitions: Electoral, Legislative, and Community*. 1977, 166 p.
- Carmen Warschaw, *A Southern California Perspective on Democratic Party Politics*. 1983 (edited transcript in The Bancroft Library), 450 p.
- Carolyn Wolfe, *Educating for Citizenship: A Career in Community Affairs and the Democratic Party, 1906-1976*. 1978, 254 p.
- Rosalind Wyman, *"It's a Girl:" Three Terms on the Los Angeles City Council, 1953-1965; Three Decades in the Democratic Party, 1948-1979*. 1979, 150 p.
- Mildred Younger, *Inside and Outside Government and Politics, 1929-1980*. 1983, 353 p.

The Helen Gahagan Douglas Component of the California Women Political Leaders
Oral History Project

Volume I: *The Political Campaigns*

Discussion primarily of the 1950 Senate campaign and defeat, in interviews with Tilford E. Dudley, India T. Edwards, Leo Goodman, Kenneth R. Harding, Judge Byron F. Lindsley, Helen Lustig, Alvin P. Meyers, Frank Rogers, and William Malone.*

Volume II: *The Congress Years, 1944-1950*

Discussion of organization and staffing; legislation on migrant labor, land, power and water, civilian control of atomic energy, foreign policy, the United Nations, social welfare, and economics, in interviews with Juanita E. Barbee, Rachel S. Bell, Albert S. Cahn, Margery Cahn, Evelyn Chavoor, Lucy Kramer Cohen, Arthur Goldschmidt, Elizabeth Wickenden Goldschmidt, Chester E. Holifield, Charles Hogan, Mary Keyserling, and Philip J. Noel-Baker.

Volume III: *Family, Friends, and the Theater: The Years Before and After Politics*

Discussion of Helen and Melvyn Douglas and their activities at home with their family and among friends, and their work in the theater and movies, in interviews with Fay Bennett, Alis De Sola, Cornelia C. Palms, and Walter R. Pick.

Volume IV: *Congresswoman, Actress, and Opera Singer*

Helen Gahagan Douglas discusses her background and childhood; Barnard College education; Broadway, theater and opera years; early political organization and Democratic party work; the congressional campaigns, supporters; home and office in Washington; issues during the Congress years, 1944-1950; the 1950 Senate campaign against Richard M. Nixon, and aftermath; women and independence; occupations since 1950; speaking engagements, travel to Russia, South America, Liberia inauguration, civic activities, life in Vermont.

*William Malone preferred not to release his transcript at this time.

INTRODUCTION

One quality politicians prize greatly in other people is integrity. Perhaps because it is as rare in the political world as in any other, and politicians are uniquely vulnerable. Integrity is the one-word description that comes first to mind among those who have worked with Ann Alanson Eliaser. That, plus her ubiquitous sense of humor, personal generosity and warm hospitality.

Ann began her political career working as a professional volunteer in the days when most of the work for the Democratic party in California, and for its candidates and ballot propositions, was done by volunteers who kept office hours, paid for their own incidental expenses and performed tasks requiring technical competence which today cost a great deal of money.

Because Ann worked harder and better than anyone else, she was rewarded by being put into positions of more and more responsibility, which she accepted because she felt the work was important, not to her but for human betterment. Her idealism was admired and her energy envied. She took on the Dollars for Democrats program in 1957, part of a national campaign. The job involved the recruiting of literally thousands of grassroots doorbell ringers who solicited money from registered Democrats for the support of party activities at the local, state and national levels. It was here that Ann's talent for fundraising, rare among women in those days, first attracted attention. Today she does it professionally through her firm of Compass Associates with such success that her skill is regularly sought by candidates inside and outside the state, such is her ingenuity in persuading the initiated and beguiling the novices to part with considerable sums of non-tax-deductible dollars.

For example, over the weekend of New Year's of 1975 she was able to enrich the presidential campaign of Senator Frank Church of Idaho by some \$20,000 at a time he would not yet admit he was running, and almost no one cared whether he did or not, especially during the New Year's holiday. Prior to that, she raised front money for Jimmy Carter before the phrase "Jimmy Who?" was coined.

Her spectacular success with Dollars for Democrats turned on a faucet of money for the party in California that no other state could match. Then she took on the hitherto obscure post of northern California Women's Division Chairman, and began inspiring women who had only very limited political goals to help with mailings, lists and messages, to reach out to the point that they too became fundraisers, putting on highly successful events which raised money for candidates, provided them exposure and media coverage and served as magnets to draw other people into their campaigns.

Be it noted that it was never Ann's philosophy to separate men out from functions she put on or stimulated. She was highly successful in what had previously been considered a man's world, and from her example a great many women moved into high political roles as equals; they became professional campaign managers, finance directors, press managers and campaign chairmen.

Ann then moved on to become an essential part of the executive direction of most of the successful campaigns in California for governor and Senator in the sixties (Brown Sr., Cranston and Tunney).

In 1965 she was elected Democratic National Committeewoman. During the harrowing spring of 1968 she served as National Women's Chairman for Senator Eugene McCarthy and helped organize a sensationally successful grassroots campaign for him in the California presidential primary. Only the dynamic personality and seemingly fathomless funds of Bob Kennedy pulled him to victory (and to his death) on election day. She went on to the chaotic frightening national convention in Chicago, which haunts her still and which took the presidency away from her old friend Hubert Humphrey.

She served then in local and state offices by appointment of San Francisco Mayor Joseph Alioto and Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr., a fact which by itself is testimony to the high trust she inspires in widely dissimilar people.

To explain why Ann survives so long in the ferocious jungle of California's fast-changing political world, something must be said, if briefly, about her enduring personal relationships, her warmth and compassion for people great and small, her enthusiasm as hostess, cook and doer of drudgery, her singular sensitivity to the personal variables of candidates, her effervescent good humor and the steel-girded strength of her commitments which are simply never to be broken.

Someone said of her "Ann is the sort of person who not only runs the headquarters but arrives in time to sweep the place out in the morning." Her love of family, and by extension her community is the core of her being. Her work is one expression of it from which so many have derived lasting enrichment of their own lives.

Elizabeth Gatov

21 July 1978
Kentfield, California

INTRODUCTION

One quality politicians prize greatly in other people is integrity. Perhaps because it is as rare in the political world as in any other, and politicians are uniquely vulnerable. Integrity is the one-word description that comes first to mind among those who have worked with Ann Alanson Eliaser. That, plus her ubiquitous sense of humor, personal generosity and warm hospitality.

Ann began her political career working as a professional volunteer in the days when most of the work for the Democratic party in California, and for its candidates and ballot propositions, was done by volunteers who kept office hours, paid for their own incidental expenses and performed tasks requiring technical competence which today cost a great deal of money.

Because Ann worked harder and better than anyone else, she was rewarded by being put into positions of more and more responsibility, which she accepted because she felt the work was important, not to her but for human betterment. Her idealism was admired and her energy envied. She took on the Dollars for Democrats program in 1957, part of a national campaign. The job involved the recruiting of literally thousands of grassroots doorbell ringers who solicited money from registered Democrats for the support of party activities at the local, state and national levels. It was here that Ann's talent for fundraising, rare among women in those days, first attracted attention. Today she does it professionally through her firm of Compass Associates with such success that her skill is regularly sought by candidates inside and outside the state, such is her ingenuity in persuading the initiated and beguiling the novices to part with considerable sums of non-tax-deductible dollars.

For example, over the weekend of New Year's of 1975 she was able to enrich the presidential campaign of Senator Frank Church of Idaho by some \$20,000 at a time he would not yet admit he was running, and almost no one cared whether he did or not, especially during the New Year's holiday. Prior to that, she raised front money for Jimmy Carter before the phrase "Jimmy Who?" was coined.

Her spectacular success with Dollars for Democrats turned on a faucet of money for the party in California that no other state could match. Then she took on the hitherto obscure post of northern California Women's Division Chairman, and began inspiring women who had only very limited political goals to help with mailings, lists and messages, to reach out to the point that they too became fundraisers, putting on highly successful events which raised money for candidates, provided them exposure and media coverage and served as magnets to draw other people into their campaigns.

Be it noted that it was never Ann's philosophy to separate men out from functions she put on or stimulated. She was highly successful in what had previously been considered a man's world, and from her example a great many women moved into high political roles as equals; they became professional campaign managers, finance directors, press managers and campaign chairmen.

Ann then moved on to become an essential part of the executive direction of most of the successful campaigns in California for governor and Senator in the sixties (Brown Sr., Cranston and Tunney).

In 1965 she was elected Democratic National Committeewoman. During the harrowing spring of 1968 she served as National Women's Chairman for Senator Eugene McCarthy and helped organize a sensationally successful grassroots campaign for him in the California presidential primary. Only the dynamic personality and seemingly fathomless funds of Bob Kennedy pulled him to victory (and to his death) on election day. She went on to the chaotic frightening national convention in Chicago, which haunts her still and which took the presidency away from her old friend Hubert Humphrey.

She served then in local and state offices by appointment of San Francisco Mayor Joseph Alioto and Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr., a fact which by itself is testimony to the high trust she inspires in widely dissimilar people.

To explain why Ann survives so long in the ferocious jungle of California's fast-changing political world, something must be said, if briefly, about her enduring personal relationships, her warmth and compassion for people great and small, her enthusiasm as hostess, cook and doer of drudgery, her singular sensitivity to the personal variables of candidates, her effervescent good humor and the steel-girded strength of her commitments which are simply never to be broken.

Someone said of her "Ann is the sort of person who not only runs the headquarters but arrives in time to sweep the place out in the morning." Her love of family, and by extension her community is the core of her being. Her work is one expression of it from which so many have derived lasting enrichment of their own lives.

Elizabeth Gatov

21 July 1978
Kentfield, California

INTERVIEW HISTORY

Ann Alanson Eliaser is today a successful businesswoman, the founder of Compass Associates, a San Francisco firm specializing in raising funds for non-profit health and education organizations, candidates, and issues. Her flair for raising money, along with attendant organizational skills, creativity, energy, and drive, were recognized in 1956 when, having joined forces with other volunteers for Adlai Stevenson, she set up a unique financing venture for the Democratic party by selling all manner of buttons, jewelry, and other gimmicks now so common a part of every political campaign. Thereafter she was put in charge of raising money for Dollars for Democrats, for the California Democratic Council, and for innumerable candidates. Simultaneously she was learning about other facets of politics: press coverage, dinners, lecture tours, conventions, and women's functions.

In so doing she began to recognize the differences among the volunteer leaders, the paid staff in headquarters, and all the other volunteers who labored in the precincts in San Francisco and in the outlying counties. She also noticed that there was a special sphere for women in politics and that only a few women, regardless of their abilities and their efforts, moved outside of this sphere. Within that sphere, in 1962, Ann Eliaser established her official base within the Democratic party as chair of the Northern California Women's Division. Dissatisfied, however, with the role proffered women within the division, she founded Democratic Women of the Bay Area, an organization which provided a different and broader scope of activities for women--published an informative newsletter, and sponsored luncheons with major speakers. Until her election as national committeewoman for California, in 1965, she lent much of her dynamic energies to this offshoot of the Democratic party.

Although the position of national committeewoman was at the top of the state's party ladder reserved for women, Mrs. Eliaser did not function in that office as expected of a party regular. Between 1965 and 1968, the years in which she was national committeewoman, American society and politics were turbulent and volatile. President Johnson's Great Society program, the civil rights movement, and the Vietnam War combined to challenge the social norms and shake the structure and the leadership of the Democratic party in California and the nation. Mrs. Eliaser, philosophically ready for change, had already moved away from the party's standard bearers when she voted to seat the Mississippi Freedom Delegation at the national convention in 1964. When President Johnson decided not to be a candidate for reelection in 1968, Mrs. Eliaser immediately joined Eugene McCarthy's campaign for the presidency as his national coordinator for women's activities along with other major responsibilities. Such was her opposition to the Vietnam War that she did not, even in the end, campaign for Hubert Humphrey, the party's choice.

Then once again, in 1971, she challenged the political norms by becoming a candidate for the position of chair of the Democratic State Central Committee of Northern California, a post which would have put her in line for state party head in 1973. She lost that election for reasons not solely connected with her gender, although that was a factor. As a footnote to history it is worth noting that eight years later, in 1979, Nancy Pelosi was elected chairperson of the central committee's Northern Division and in 1981 state chair. Today, if the state chairman is a man, the vice-chair must be a woman--and vice-versa. The women's division is now the women's caucus. Whether it has more influence within the party is uncertain, but women campaign for the top spot within the caucus much as they did formerly within the women's division.

With the death of Lionel Alanson in 1971 and her marriage to Dr. Maurice Eliaser in 1972, Mrs. Eliaser decided to devote less time to working within the hierarchy of the Democratic party and to try a different aspect of politics. She accepted Mayor Joseph Alioto's appointment to membership on the San Francisco Board of Permit Appeals, and later Governor Jerry Brown's appointment to the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency. For various reasons neither of these positions satisfied her and she resigned from each in mid-term.

Gradually she realized that even while she continued active and vital work on campaign committees for candidates and issues, she was rarely included in the decision-making process. Her ideas were not taken seriously, she concluded, because she was a volunteer, not a professional. With the encouragement of her husband and the assurance built up through the years in politics that her ideas were sound enough to take seriously, she launched Compass Associates. Although she remains politically active where candidates and causes interest her, she has transferred her creative energies to managing her business.

The span of twenty-one years during which Ann Eliaser moved from volunteer to professional fundraiser and organizer comprise the main theme of this fifteen-hour oral history interview. What emerges is a woman with a strong ambition to succeed at a given task, the vital nervous and creative energies needed for success, commitment to a cause which inspires others to help--in short a leader. Also a woman who moved into situations which others either feared, or into which they were perhaps more politically sophisticated to venture--situations which would cause her to come headlong into, what for her, were bruising confrontations.

The eight interview sessions, each lasting about ninety minutes, were spaced about one month apart from July 1976 to March 1977. We met in the living room of the Eliaser home in Pacific Heights, a comfortable, contemporary-style home enriched by beautiful wood floors and panelled walls, a perfect setting for her fine collection of Oriental art. The day was usually Thursday and the time two o'clock. Mrs. Eliaser had frequently preceded the interview with a luncheon meeting in her home with one or

two staff members or with representatives of an organization for which she might be planning a campaign. But by two o'clock she was ready to concentrate on her interview and despite an occasional phone call, she did so.

Prior to each session she had received an outline of the material to be covered, which she had usually scanned and thought about. Her memory of events and the participants was sharp. Because she has devoted years trying to know herself, she was willing to discuss and analyse the major events in her life and the links between herself and others with detail and a candor which makes for a lively account of these events and the principal actors. Elizabeth Gatov, Ann Eliaser's friend and mentor in politics, has, in her introduction to the volume, offered further insights.

Fortunately for history, Mrs. Eliaser had saved press clippings and other materials relating to the CDC, Dollars for Democrats, Democratic Women of the Bay Area, the Eugene McCarthy campaign, and her campaign for office in the state central committee. These, along with papers which this Office had amassed from other women in the California Women Political Leaders Oral History Project and those collected in the California Governmental Eras Documentation Oral History Project, provided excellent research background for the interview. Some of this documentation has been inserted into the volume. The remainder will be deposited in The Bancroft Library.

The pressure of her business and occasional serious, but fortunately short-term health problems--either her own or her husband's--delayed for long periods her review of the edited transcript. Finally in August 1981, having agreed to check only those portions which I had indicated needed clarification or correction and assume that everything else was all right, she completed her review and returned the transcript.

It is with considerable pleasure that we now make this interesting and stimulating story of a woman's career in politics available for research on women in politics and California political history.

Malca Chall
Interviewer-Editor

14 December 1982
Regional Oral History Office
486 The Bancroft Library
University of California at Berkeley

Ann Alanson Eliaser: Brief Biography

- 1926 September 24, born in San Francisco
- 1932-1940 Alamo Grammar School; Presidio Jr. High School, San Francisco
- 1941-1944 Dalton High School, New York City
- 1945 Connecticut College for Women
- 1946 Return to San Francisco
- 1950-1956 Books Incorporated, salesperson and weekly T.V. book reviewer
- 1956 Adlai Stevenson campaign, fundraiser
- 1957 Chair, women's activities, Western States Democratic Conference
- 1958-1960 Coordinator, then co-chair Dollars for Democrats, Northern California
- 1957-1959 Finance chairperson, California Democratic Council, Northern California, then statewide
- 1959-1969 Press coordinator, California Democratic Council
- 1960 Democratic National Convention, alternate
- 1962-1965 Chair, Woman's Division, Northern California Democratic State Central Committee
- 1963 Founder, Democratic Women of the Bay Area
- 1964 Democratic National Convention, delegate; member, Rules Committee
- 1965-1968 Democratic National Committeewoman for California
- 1968 National coordinator, Women for [Eugene] McCarthy and other campaign responsibilities in California
- 1968 Campaign committee, Alan Cranston for Senate
- 1971 Candidate for Northern California chairman, Democratic State Central Committee

- 1971-1973 Member, San Francisco Board of Permit Appeals, appointed by Mayor Joseph Alioto
- 1974 Campaign committee, William Matson Roth gubernatorial primary
- 1974-- Established Compass Associates, a public relations and fundraising firm dealing primarily in raising funds for candidates and non-profit health and education agencies.
- 1975-1976 Member, Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, appointed by Governor Jerry Brown
- 1976 Campaign committee, Jerry Brown presidential primary

I FAMILY BACKGROUND AND EDUCATION

[Interview 1: July 6, 1976]##

Parents and Grandparents

Chall: To start with your personal background, I like to know your place of birth and your birthdate if you wish to give it. Some women won't give it.

Eliaser: Oh really? Oh, I'm delighted to do that. September 24, 1926. San Francisco.

Chall: Could you tell me about your parents?

Eliaser: My mother was born in San Francisco. My father was born in Great Falls, Montana. Grandparents--two born in San Francisco, one in Woodland, California, and one in Great Falls, Montana.

Chall: It looks as if your family has been in the United States for a long time. Tell me about your grandparents then, on both sides of your family to the extent that you can.

Eliaser: I didn't know my maternal grandmother, who died when my mother was sixteen.

Chall: What was her name?

Eliaser: Her name was Tillie Patek.

Chall: It was her married name?

##This symbol indicates that a tape or a segment of a tape has begun or ended. For a guide to the tapes see page 298.

Eliaser: Yes, her maiden name was Ettlinger.

Chall: Was she born in San Francisco?

Eliaser: Yes.

Chall: When, do you know?

Eliaser: No.

Chall: That was your maternal grandmother?

Eliaser: Yes.

Chall: Who were the Ettlingers?

Eliaser: A large family. This is going to be a little difficult for me to reconstruct. She [Tillie Patek] had one brother, and two sisters that I knew. I don't know about her parents.

I knew my grandfather's mother; my great-grandmother lived into her nineties--the senior Mrs. Patek. I know that she and her husband came west in a covered wagon about the time of the Gold Rush and settled in San Francisco. My grandfather Fred Patek had a brother who was a well-known physician here in San Francisco, and two sisters that I remember vaguely. I didn't know his brother the physician; he died either before I was born or when I was a small child.

Chall: These Pateks, had they come originally from Germany, or some place in Europe in the eighteen hundreds?

Eliaser: Yes, German background in all my grandparents. Actually I think the Pateks were from an area which is now Czechoslovakia, but I'm not positive. I think my paternal grandparents' background was all German. Both families spoke German when they didn't want us to understand, as children. [laughter] They didn't speak it very well--they were too many generations away from Europe.

Chall: The paternal grandparents, what was their name?

Eliaser: My father's name, and my maiden name, was Wertheim.

Chall: Those grandparents were also here in San Francisco?

Eliaser: Right, and my paternal grandmother's maiden name was Kaufman. She was born in Woodland, so one can presume they had some kind of rural or agricultural background but I can't be sure of that.

Eliaser: My grandfather, Nathaniel Wertheim, was from Great Falls, Montana, where my grandmother went when she married him. They were merchants--the only Jewish family in Great Falls at that time.

Chall: Did I get your grandmother Kaufman's first name?

Eliaser: Mary.

Chall: So their first, early married life was in Great Falls, Montana?

Eliaser: Yes. My father went to grammar school there and then went to Berkeley. I don't know exactly when they moved to San Francisco.

Chall: But they did before your father was ready for college?

Eliaser: Oh, yes.

Chall: So, you have a fairly good-sized family of grandparents and aunts, and uncles, and cousins?

Eliaser: I have the most enormous family in San Francisco, and I kid and say if they're Jewish I'm related.

Chall: Are there Wertheims?

Eliaser: I have a brother, Fred Wertheim, who has four children. Three of the four had dinner with us the Fourth of July.

Chall: What does he do?

Eliaser: Our family--my grandfather Patek, to go back a bit, was an attorney by preference. He became an attorney studying at night, and was for a short period in the firm of Hiram Johnson. He didn't find it enjoyable or profitable, and soon after, I forget the chronology, he founded a wholesale meat firm here in San Francisco which is called Patek & Ecklon. (Don't ask me who Mr. Ecklon was, because I don't know.) And, he ran that business until his death. He left that business to my father, who was his son-in-law, David Wertheim, and to his closest friend, whose name was James McLaughlin.

My father, in turn, took my brother Fred Wertheim into business with him, and ultimately my first husband, Lionel Alanson. So, at the death of my first husband I was bought out of the business by an insurance policy--there were no options involved. My brother decided he didn't want to stay in on his own and he sold the business to a large meat packing industry, San Jose based, and he's there managing it still, but doing other business things as well.

Chall: Does he still live in San Francisco?

Eliaser: Yes, on Jackson Street.

Chall: Your grandfather Patek had, apparently, a fairly good education-- at least he continued it, educating himself. What about your grandmother, Tillie; what kind of background do you think, or know, that she had in terms of her education?

Eliaser: I would be sure she didn't go to college. I can't document that but I don't think so.

Chall: What about your paternal grandmother, Mary?

Eliaser: She was not college educated either, nor would I guess was her husband, Nathaniel, but again I'm not positive of that. I think perhaps the only ones with college educations were my parents, though my father didn't graduate from Berkeley--he left incomplete. Mother almost completed at Mills, but I think she finished finally with a summer session at Stanford.

Chall: Who was your mother?

Eliaser: Eleanor Patek.

Chall: She graduated from Stanford?

Eliaser: I think she did her completion at Stanford summer school, because just as she was finishing Mills she wanted to become engaged to a young man from Portland of whom the family did not approve, and she was shipped off to Europe for six months--without completing her college education.

Chall: That's the way it was done then.

Eliaser: Exactly.

Chall: So then she came back and ultimately married your father?

Eliaser: Right [pause] who was not the same person.

Chall: What did she study, do you know?

Eliaser: Botany has been one of her life-long interests.

Chall: Is she still living?

Eliaser: Yes.

Chall: What were the years when she was in college? Can you reconstruct that?

Eliaser: It's hard for me to do that. She was twenty when she was married, she's seventy-one now.

Chall: So about 1923-1924 she would have been in college.

Eliaser: Something like that. We could check with Ellie Heller. I think she and Ellie were at Mills at the same time.

Chall: Was your mother an only child?

Eliaser: No. She has one sister, Mrs. Walter Newman, Sr., of San Francisco.

Chall: Did your father have brothers or sisters?

Eliaser: Yes. He had one sister, Mrs. Richard Goldman, Sr., of San Francisco.

Chall: And your father's educational background was--?

Eliaser: University of California, I guess from Montana public schools. I'm not positive. There can't have been an awful lot of schools in Great Falls, Montana. In those days it was a tiny town, nothing like what it is today--a real outpost. My grandfather was the only merchant.

Chall: The only merchant?

Eliaser: I think so.

Chall: A general store?

Eliaser: One general store kind of thing.

Chall: What was your father's interest in school?

Eliaser: I would imagine "playing." I don't know anything about it. He was not a serious scholar at any time; didn't read, was not interested in cultural activities of any kind; gambled, loved sports events, cards, women. He was a good father, kept a wonderful house, worked hard--worked terribly hard.

Chall: In his business.

Eliaser: Yes. Well, I think people who came through the Depression, who didn't have a lot of inherited money, did work hard. He wasn't in this meat packing business in the beginning. He was in something called the California Clothing Company down on Powell Street, which was one of those wholesale-retail places as I recall. He had a partner. They had a real struggle, paying the people who worked for them, and taking any money out of the business. Ultimately it failed.

Chall: Then he went into the meat business?

Eliaser: Right--which was a family firm. My grandfather was tough, and he didn't take him right in by any stretch of the imagination. He sent him to live, during the week, down in San Jose where he had friends who ran a meat packing plant. And the family may have had some ownership. It was a slaughter house, which was never in San Francisco. So he worked in San Jose and learned that business from the bottom up--and the long hard hours.

My grandfather was a terrible taskmaster, and not beloved by many members of our family. I was very close to him because he fed my intellectual needs, which no one else seemed to recognize. We were close, and I counted on the weekly dinners and discussions of the books he'd given me the week or two before--that kind of thing.

Chall: What about the weekly dinners? Where did they take place?

Eliaser: At our home. He came every Thursday night for dinner. It was like a religion. Once a week, I presume it was Thursday. Those were the days where you did the grandparent thing once a week. We had him to our house once a week, and once a week we went to the paternal grandparents--the kind of thing families avoid today--of establishing patterns which are unbreakable.

And, he usually went to the Swan, which existed in those days--the oyster house on Polk Street. He'd pick up shrimps in the shell, which you don't do any more, and we'd sit around the table shelling our own little Bay shrimp and talking at the same time. Something else was the main course.

Chall: I see, that was a sort of ritual.

Eliaser: That's right.

Chall: Your parents, you and your brother, and your grandfather--

Eliaser: My parents were divorced when I was eight years old.

Chall: Oh.

Eliaser: My mother moved to New York, and my father won custody in a very rare case for those days in California. So we only saw our mother at vacation time. My grandfather maintained this very rare relationship with his ex son-in-law, where they worked together for many years--were tremendously close.

Chall: In your household, did you have a housekeeper?

Eliaser: Yes, governess.

Chall: I see.

Eliaser: Two in help. A cook-type housework person, and the governess for us.

Chall: Was your brother older or younger than you?

Eliaser: Two and a half years younger.

Chall: So, you could really establish a very close relationship then with your grandfather, who was a close member of the family?

Eliaser: Oh really. Right. And established funds for all of his grandchildren to assure a college education if they wished to pursue that.

Chall: Did you go to New York to visit your mother, or did she come here?

Eliaser: She came occasionally, largely for custody fights, and legal matters. The better vacations were in New York where it was more harmonious.

Chall: The two of you together?

Eliaser: Right. My brother when we were very young went for part of the summers also. But as we got older I spent more time in New York. As you know, the courts in California allow a child at fourteen, I believe, to choose his or her own legal guardian. At that time I opted to move to New York and I finished high school in New York.

Chall: So you remained as close to your mother as you could.

Eliaser: Yes. I had a child's sense of justice I think. I thought my father had had us all those years and she was terribly lonely, and that she deserved to have us. That's how I worked it out in my own adolescent thinking. It wasn't the correct decision emotionally--for stability. But educationally I had a real privilege. I went to the Dalton School in New York City, to which I give most credit for any government, cultural, or intellectual involvement, or achievement that I've enjoyed.

Chall: Did your mother remarry?

Eliaser: Yes. She remarried, not terribly long after the divorce, a German gentleman many years her senior--at least twenty years her senior.

Chall: She was comfortable?

Eliaser: Yes. She worked from the time of her divorce, and continued to work even though her husband took very nice care of her, financially.

Chall: What was she doing?

Eliaser: During those Depression years it was tough--she went to work first at Saks for a short period of time, where she sat in the basement and stacked coins that went up in those old-fashioned coin machines that some of the stores still have. She had no training.

Chall: Not as a botanist.

Eliaser: No. From there she went to Lord & Taylor, because, I think, there was a family connection--a woman named Peggine Fitzgerald who was an executive then; my grandfather had known her. She was very prominent in merchandising and fashion in New York at one time, and she and her husband had an old radio program. I've vague memories of it, just a commentary--the forerunner of talk show kind of thing. And so, through that connection Mother went to work in sales in Lord & Taylor, and from sales to assistant buyer, and briefly, buying.

From there, after many many years, she went over to Bonwit Teller--which she left briefly to open the Miss Bergdorf department when they went into younger, less expensive fashions at Bergdorf's after the war.

Chall: She really had a career in merchandising.

Eliaser: Yes. Then she went back to Bonwit's until she was seventy. She retired temporarily at mid-sixties and couldn't stand it, and went back and worked. But she has glaucoma, and some color blindness--which doesn't fit glaucoma necessarily. So she really couldn't do well in fashion. She'd say, "Look at the lavender dress," and it was blue or yellow, or whatever.

Chall: So it was sales and merchandising that she could do.

Eliaser: Yes.

Chall: Where is she living now?

Eliaser: In Manhattan, with her third husband. Her second husband died.

She's tremendously attractive, and energetic.

Early Intellectual Stirrings

Chall: I want to go back to your relationship to your grandfather and ask about the books--if you can remember what kind of material he wanted you to be reading and talking to him about.

Eliaser: Well, we had a family library, and by that I mean book shelves. All fashionable families had book shelves with good covers and good bindings, but if you pulled them out you'd see the print was really too small to read comfortably. They were traditional classics, but very uninspiring. I think there was a time when I had read every book twice, that the family had. I was very bored, and a very lonely child--and suffered terribly from this divorce, which was certainly not traditional in those days. I felt, whether I was or not, that I was a social outcast. Reading, to a great degree, replaced the ordinary social life of a very young child. I was precocious in my reading, and mentioned to my grandfather that I didn't have enough to read.

So every couple of weeks he'd arrive with a brown carton of new books for me. I remember, for example, Dickens. The Last of the Mohicans--I must have read ten times. These kind of things. He was a friend of the old man Lilienthal of the book firm Gelber and Lilienthal, which is now Books, Incorporated, in San Francisco--that's generations ago. And he'd just call somebody down there, Mrs. Lilienthal, Mr. Lilienthal--whoever it was--or Mrs. Gelber, I guess, and get a boxload of books. They were never gift-wrapped, there was never a ribbon or a piece of paper, just stacks of books. I read them as quickly as I could have them.

I got a library card very young, but I was frightened. I didn't go great distances. I was a fearful child, and getting on the streetcar in those days and getting to the library--And the school library's books were too young for me--juvenile, in the professional sense. I worked in a bookstore for a number of years, and juveniles very quickly were not a part of my life, except for the classics.

Chall: And your father's activity was primarily with business?

Eliaser: He was out a lot, socially and business-wise.

Chall: Did he remarry?

Eliaser: Yes, much later than my mother did. He married a distant German cousin, European cousin, who came here because of the Hitler pressures--very late. She and her mother. She was quite young. She was twenty-one when he married her and he was about twenty-five

Eliaser: years her senior, something like that. She and her mother came to the United States to escape German oppression. They were already in Switzerland. They were relatives of the Lazards--her maiden name was Lazard--of the banking family in Europe.

She was not brought up as a Jew; she was baptized something or other. They were living in Switzerland and saw the handwriting on the wall, and emigrated to this continent; couldn't stay in San Francisco; went tentatively up to Canada where she gave French-German lessons to support her mother, and support herself. My father brought them back, and married her. And her mother lived with us also.

Chall: What was her name, her other name besides Lazard?

Eliaser: Gabrielle.

Chall: How old were you about that time? That was in the late thirties?

Eliaser: I was, let's say--my parents were divorced when I was eight--twelve, thirteen.

Chall: How did that change your family life?

Eliaser: It was much better. We loved it. She was helpful with our lessons, helped us along in languages. She was supportive of our interests and wishes, would take us to play tennis. She was young, she was another companion; got rid of the governess too, which was a great benefit.

We had a very strict German governess. We hated her, just hated her. She was just terrible, and really resented us terribly because we weren't wealthy enough in her terms. She and her sister had taken care of children of all the best families in San Francisco. We just didn't measure up either socially or economically in her terms.

And she was very much pro-Hitler when the difficulties in Europe started, and if you can imagine a refugee listening to her kind of conversation. It became very painful; my father had some choices--and the governess left.

Chall: By that time you had a new grandmother and a stepmother.

Eliaser: That's right. We didn't need a governess.

Chall: And your grandfather [Patek] continued to be a part of the family?

Eliaser: He died before this marriage. I forget the chronology. I guess I was twelve when my grandfather died. I vaguely remember his cancer, and his illness. I guess I was in junior high school by then. I didn't know that he had left an estate and left us any money because it was considered very poor taste to discuss money. His will was clipped out of the newspaper--I read the paper every day, and someone just saw to it that page wasn't there. Someone told me about it at school.

The whole discussion of money was considered bad taste, unfashionable for young ladies, I guess. It stayed with me and had severe psychiatric implications, resulting in my suffering and not knowing about money. I remember that my mother never paid any bills at home, that my dad sat at a card table upstairs once a month and paid her bills, did the whole household. She wasn't allowed to deal with money. So it came to her as a great shock to be shipped off to New York with no visible income, and so forth, and she learned the hard way. I made a point of understanding, even though I haven't essentially had to.

Chall: When you say your mother was shipped off to New York, does that mean--

Eliaser: It was a very miserable divorce, with charges of adultery, and unpleasantness. Her father just put her on a train and sent her there in a very, very bad emotional condition--gave her enough money to survive. We had a distant cousin in New York who took care of her because she was in extraordinarily poor health--emotionally. My grandfather begged her to have psychiatric assistance, for which he would pay, and she would not. In those days people thought of psychiatry and insanity, unless they were well trained. And she ultimately ended up in Christian Science, where she still is, though she has periods where she does not practice Christian Science and sees doctors and uses medicines.

Chall: So this was the maternal grandfather Patek.

Eliaser: Yes. A very strong, very tough guy, mean to a lot of people, a community leader of some stature who was generous of his time and money.

Chall: Did you become as close to your father's parents as you did to Mr. Patek? What was your relationship with the Nathaniel Wertheims aside from weekly dinners?

Eliaser: Yes, I did become very close to my father's parents, though the focus was different than the relationship with Mr. Patek. His was an intellectual kind of relationship whereas the paternal grandparents represented a kind of parenting.

Chall: What about the religious background--these were all Jewish people?

Eliaser: Right. My brother and I were dutifully trotted over to Temple Emanu-El to religious school every Sunday, for as long as I can remember. I went until I moved to New York at fourteen, and would like to have continued at Temple Emanu-El. But the children, as I recall, were confirmed a year or two earlier in the East than they were here. And though I had an incomplete religious education here, there was no place for me to go because the people in my high school level class were already confirmed. And so my mother took me to The First Church of Christian Science every Sunday, where I went for two or three years. I learned about the New Testament--it was fine--it gave me a literary education that had been denied me. And I saw many Jewish children who were in my class in high school, which was fairly amusing.

Chall: In the Christian Science church?

Eliaser: Yes.

Chall: None of your grandparents, though, followed the special Jewish traditions?

Eliaser: No one went to temple in my family, no one ever has except for me.

Chall: They didn't go on High Holy Days?

Eliaser: No.

Chall: They just sent you to Sunday school to learn the background as if that were a necessary part of being Jewish?

Eliaser: It was traditional. It's like being a Republican. Everybody in that group, socially and economically, was--they didn't think about it. It was simply, you were born Jewish, you were born a Republican.

Chall: Were they Republicans?

Eliaser: Oh, yes.

Chall: I see. And what about--all the cousins went to Temple Emanu-El?

Eliaser: I guess. Most of them did, everybody did, but nobody went to temple for services.

I don't know how I got there as a young adult, what brought me to it. Certainly nothing from my background.

Chall: Was your husband, Mr. Alanson, a temple goer?

Eliaser: No, hated it. When he was bar mitzvahed here he told me (I didn't know him as a young person) his parents asked him what he wanted for a bar mitzvah present and he said "not to have to go back and be confirmed."

The only time he would go was once a year, with me, if I asked him to. The rest of the time on Friday nights and Saturday mornings I went by myself.

Chall: Oh, you did? So you really were a temple goer--if you went to Friday night and Saturday morning services.

Eliaser: Yes.

Chall: Do you still attend services regularly?

Eliaser: No.

Chall: I'd like to get something about your schooling, find out about where you went to school, and what you did study--how school seemed to you, if you were feeling like a lonely outcast for many years.

Eliaser: I was in the fourth grade, I think, when the disaster hit my family, something like that. I had a very loving teacher, here at the old Alamo Grammar School on Twenty-third and California. She helped me through it and related to me, and gave me more of herself than teachers ordinarily do to one student.

She stayed a friend throughout her life. She's a remarkable woman. She gave me things to read and she read to the class always, which I adored; taught us some awfully good music--she was basically a frustrated opera singer, I recall. I started going to the opera very young. My father had to take me and he couldn't stand it after a period of time. I was embarrassed by his snoring some of the time, so he sent the governess instead.

Children's Symphony always. Music has been a lifelong interest. When the governess wanted to punish me, the way to punish me was to deprive me of the symphony, which was really painful--not to let me go to that.

Chall: Did you study music?

Eliaser: Had piano lessons, dancing lessons, French lessons--all those things. I don't play the piano.

Chall: Did you enjoy any of this?

Eliaser: No.

Chall: You did it because it was expected?

Eliaser: I was clumsy in dancing school. My French was passable at one time. Piano lessons were a chore. Tennis lessons, swimming lessons.

Chall: All of those?

Eliaser: I don't play tennis, and I swim less well than my five year old granddaughter.

Chall: You went to Alamo Grammar School, and from there to a junior high?

Eliaser: Presidio Junior High School, which is Twenty-ninth or Thirtieth Avenue at Clement here, and left there to go to school in New York.

Dalton High School, New York City

Chall: You had all of your high school education in New York--the four years of high school?

Eliaser: No, I guess not. Three years.

Chall: Was Dalton a private school?

Eliaser: Yes.

Chall: And who paid for the school?

Eliaser: My father.

Chall: What kind of a high school was Dalton?

Eliaser: The Dalton School was, if not the first, one of the first progressive schools in the United States. It was originated by a woman named Helen Parkhurst, who was still there for my first year. There is something in education known as the Parkhurst Plan, which has to do with the schooling. It was one of the early non-competitive, non-grade, systems: the encouragement of the individual and her strengths. The Dalton Lower School was co-ed, the nursery school up through eighth grade, let's say, was co-ed, and girls only for high school. Although I think they've now gone co-ed all the way. I still hear from them.

Chall: Was there a boys' Dalton and a girls' Dalton?

Eliaser: No. The downstairs floors of this very beautiful, tall, nine-story building in New York was the Lower School which was boys and girls, and the upper floors was the high school, for girls.

Chall: Where in New York was it?

Eliaser: Eighty-ninth and Park.

Chall: Did you like that high school?

Eliaser: Loved it, just loved it. When I decided I'd like to move, Mother had me tested at Fieldston School, which is north of the city; Lincoln, which was then for very special scholarship--academically accomplished kids--and to which I was not admitted. I was admitted to Fieldston, and Dalton--which I was tremendously comfortable at, just loved it.

It was easy for me, I just fell right into it. I was very serious about it. I studied very hard; I adored it. It became my whole life for three years; a very rewarding experience. They had very special faculty and very special students.

In my class was the middle daughter of Lin Yutang--his two other daughters were there. Susannah Reed, who for a while was a well-known folk musician. Numbers of people who have gone on into various fields. One of the gals is the chairman of the Poetry and Literature Department at Manhattanville College. Carolyn Stoloff.

Marian Seldes was a year behind me, and is still prominent in the theatre. It was really a very remarkable experience; and the teachers were people we all knew. We had Elizabeth Seeger for literature, and Ferdinand Smith for history and government. It was, interestingly, the school where Priscilla Hiss was teaching, and where Mrs. Carl Binger was the head of admissions. He [Carl Binger] was the psychiatrist in the Hiss trial.

Chall: Did you like it because of its lack of pressure, or did you just feel at home intellectually?

Eliaser: I felt achievement for the first time in my life, real achievement, tremendous involvement in everything I did. I did a lot of writing, on government and history, and contemporary happenings during the war. I felt a real relationship to just about everything that was going on.

They had a program called "integration hour." Every day for one hour you met with your home-room class, or your class, and discussed everything you were studying, and each course's relationship

Eliaser: to the other courses. Nothing was separate. And your activities, and your life, and what all of these studies meant in terms of your present and future. So, it meant that nothing was separate.

They did an interesting thing. They had a nursery there which was donated by Frederick March and Florence Eldridge, whose children were there and who were adopted, evidently. I believe this was the reason they gave this nursery to the school, in which there were ten or a dozen babies, new babies. The care of infants of working mothers was arranged once the mother returned to the job. This means that we took babies from six weeks of age and worked with the infant for approximately a month. The child was not necessarily returned to the parent at that juncture. The student nurse returned to her regular studies and the care of the infant became the responsibility of another nurse.

The student nurses were from the school. We were assigned to the nursery either for a week or a month. You dropped all other study. You were at the school bus by seven-thirty, then picked up the baby about seven-forty-five at its home and took care of it all day. You took that baby to its home on the school bus at six or six-thirty when the mother was done with her work. So you had the total responsibility for this child and its care--medically or paramedically--feeding, general work. No studies; you were forgiven studies for the period of time you were assigned to that nursery and every girl had to do that.

And then we went into the war. Since I had done some work with smaller children in the school anyway, I was trained to take the lower grades up through fourth grade--teaching, even though I was seventeen years old or thereabouts. The Gessell Institute at Yale sent people down to give us a month cram course--to teach high school kids how to do assistant teaching, temporary teaching, child care. And Dr. Gessell himself came down on three occasions that I recall. It was a remarkable war-time procedure.

One summer I worked in one of the LaGuardia nursery schools. I stayed in New York instead of coming home to San Francisco--for part of the summer--to have this experience. This just absolutely blew my mother's mind. She came to see me one day, and there I was with these little black children on my lap, spending the day with them, taking them to the bathroom, doing everything. Upset her deeply. She didn't feel that's where I belonged, because she didn't understand that's what I was doing.

Chall: You told her you were working in the playground?

Eliaser: Yes.

Chall: So this is a period of time when you felt you were coming into your own?

Eliaser: You can tell, there's multiple interests, really, a tremendous amount of government and politics.

Mrs. Roosevelt had been one of the early sponsors of the school. The school that she ran, in New York, amalgamated with Dalton School. I forget the name of it now; it's in all the new books on her. When she left for Washington, or for one of those many reasons, Dalton and Mrs. Roosevelt's school were merged. Up until the war the Dalton senior class went to tea at the White House as her guest. They did the Washington number. I was never privileged to do that.

Chall: Did you also, while you were in New York, go to the opera and the concerts?

Eliaser: Oh yes, in the early days of Leonard Bernstein's emergence on the scene. He ran the New York City Symphony, as opposed to the Philharmonic. I always had the season tickets to that because that's what I could afford with my allowance. I just thought he was something heaven-sent anyway.

All the ballet. Theater regularly. We were spoiled--living in New York, and walking every place, even at night. No fear of walking home at night after the theater. I might go up Park Avenue so that the lighted canopies and doormen were present, but it wasn't out of any kind of fear particularly.

Chall: Where was your mother living?

Eliaser: We lived in those years at Ninety-third and Madison.

Chall: While you were in New York your brother stayed here?

Eliaser: Yes.

Chall: Did he ever go to New York?

Eliaser: Rarely.

Chall: Did he go beyond high school in San Francisco to one of the colleges in the Bay Area?

Eliaser: My brother attended the University of California at Davis since, at that time, it was largely an agricultural college and animal husbandry directly related to our family's business.

Chall: You've mentioned several times government and history. Does that mean that this was your primary interest in school?

Eliaser: Yes, I got interested in student government. I can't recall what brought me into student body activities. They had a student council and the first year that it existed I was president of it. I was vice-president, I think, of the student body my last year. I don't really remember anymore. But those activities were very serious in the school. The student body met regularly, I think every Friday, and we discussed government--had government speakers. One time Rudolf Serkin came and played for us, because Peter--one of his many kids--was in the school. I don't even remember anymore.

Much was offered. Lin Yutang spoke at our graduation. It was a very remarkable school because of the parents, the children, and the faculty--not necessarily in that order.

Chall: You said that while you were much younger and living here you were very shy and felt out of things, but there you felt as if you were a part--

Eliaser: I belonged, I felt that I was equal to everybody else. In fact in many respects I was better, and I think I saw that very early. There were a lot of very rich children in that school. And they were spoiled, and they broke the rules, and they didn't get to school on time, and they didn't work very hard--and they after all didn't have report cards to show for it. Naturally, the principal or a teacher would call the parent--the thing that happens to everybody nowadays.

But I was a very high achiever because I had all my built-in discipline. It was already there. Nobody had to tell me to do it.

Chall: Your main interest then, in terms of school, was government?

Eliaser: All the activities--literature, writing, cultural activities. It would be hard to separate one from the other. It was very exciting.

I didn't score that well academically. Though we didn't get grades, the remarks from the faculty and all didn't put me in the genius category in terms of achievement. But in terms of understanding, and interest, and grasp, it was there.

Chall: What did you do during your summers?

Eliaser: I did, during many summers of my life, go to camp--Huntington Lake Camp for Girls in California. My first summer in New York, before I started Dalton, I went to a camp, Accomack in Maine--which absolutely was a total experience I hadn't had and was unprepared for. It was an all-Jewish camp, and I had never had that kind of experience in the West. As you know, the Jewish families that have been here a long time are part of the total community. I understood that in the

Eliaser: East the focus of my life would be, with the exception of the girls at Dalton--totally Jewish. My mother didn't have any non-Jewish friends. The dancing school was all Jewish, the boy-girl dancing school. The camp was all Jewish.

I went only one year to camp there. I came home every summer. That was tough during the war because of transportation priority going to troops. I spent the summer in California, just with my family.

Chall: Doing what?

Eliaser: Doing nothing outstanding that I can remember. Seeing friends, seeing family, and staying in touch, which was very nice. No chores that I can recall, or jobs. One summer my father sent me to business school for the entire summer because I had overdrawn my checking account--fifty cents. He thought I should learn preliminary bookkeeping, and I learned typewriting at that time. I couldn't handle the shorthand. I took it, but I didn't manage well.

Chall: A good way to spend the summer.

Eliaser: That's right. I've not regretted it--though it was a punishment of sorts that year.

Chall: When you were through you planned, I suppose, to go to college--and did?

Eliaser: Went to Connecticut College for Women.

Chall: Oh, so you remained in the East?

Eliaser: For one year.

Chall: Connecticut College for Women?

Eliaser: New London, Connecticut. It's now gone co-ed also, I understand. It was a very heavy war year, and it was across the river from the submarine base, and across the street from the Coast Guard Academy. My activity was mainly social rather than an academic nature there.

Chall: Why did you choose to go to a school on the east coast?

Eliaser: At seventeen I became engaged. As I was about to graduate from high school, I became engaged to a young man from New York who was about to be sent overseas. He didn't know whether he'd be sent out to the Pacific, or to Europe. So I applied to Stanford and Connecticut, so that I would have an eastern or a western base, and was accepted at both.

Eliaser: I remember the headmistress calling my mother into school and saying "She'll never make it. Her grades aren't that good, she hasn't studied hard enough, and it won't happen." But I performed well and I really knew what I was doing--it may not have showed--and was admitted, the same day, very easily, to both places. Of course, we didn't have the competition then, of so many wanting to go to those schools. The potential students were all elsewhere.

In any case, I accepted and made tentative room reservations at both--until I found out where my fiancee was going to embark. And it was New York, Port of New York, for Europe. So I informed Stanford I was remaining in the East, which I did.

Chall: Then he went off to Europe and you stayed?

Eliaser: He went off to Germany in some kind of armored division. And on to Vienna, at the end of the war. Before he went to Vienna, at the end of the war, he was coming home and so I was leaving college to be married--at eighteen. And I did leave Connecticut College, incomplete, first year, to plan my wedding. He was on his way home. It was the time of a dreadful dock strike, here and abroad; it spread all over the world at the end of the European war. They held his division for six weeks in Brussels or someplace--I don't know where. And then, because they couldn't ship them home, because there was no place they could dock, they turned them around and sent him into an army of occupation in Vienna.

There I was, having dropped out of college--had a beautiful wedding dress, and no wedding. So I went to work, near New York, that year. It was during that period that I met my first husband. I broke my engagement.

Marriage and the Return to San Francisco

Eliaser: My husband was in the navy. He'd been overseas for four years, but as you may remember, people with no responsibilities were the last to get out--they had a point system. So he headed the Naval District Command, New York, whatever number that was. I met him through friends from San Francisco, and, ultimately, broke my engagement. We came home the minute he got out of the navy, and were married here.

Chall: Was he a San Franciscan?

Eliaser: Yes.

Chall: What was his name?

Eliaser: Lionel Alanson.

Chall: Was he about your age?

Eliaser: Four or five years older. Five years, I guess.

Chall: And he had graduated from college?

Eliaser: Stanford.

Chall: So, you were married in what year?

Eliaser: I was nineteen years old. Subtract that from fifty this year, and you'll get the answer.

Chall: You were born in 1926?

Eliaser: Yes.

Chall: You were nineteen? That would make it 1945.

II YOUNG SAN FRANCISCO HOUSEWIFE, 1945-1956

[Interview 3: October 27, 1976]##

Establishing a Home, a Family, and an Income

Chall: When we finished with our first interview, you had just decided to marry Lionel Alanson. I knew that he was from San Francisco and was in the service, I guess about to be retired to civilian life. But that's all I know about him. Who was he, and who were his parents?

Eliaser: He was born here. His mother's name was Eugenie Sachs--from Cincinnati. His father, Lionel Alanson, Sr., was born in Guatemala of a German Jewish family named Abrahamson. During a period which I can't give you exactly chronologically, he and his parents, two brothers, and a sister, were forced to leave their coffee plantation there because of some overt anti-Semitism in Guatemala. And they came up here, I believe, just before the 1906 fire and earthquake--or it could have been after--somewhere in that general period.

When they moved here, having suffered this experience--and losing everything, or almost everything--they changed their name upon arrival in San Francisco from Abrahamson to Alanson. And I believe Mr. Alanson, senior's parents bought what was the old Richelieu Hotel on Van Ness Avenue, and operated that. Since I obviously didn't know them, I'm vague.

His other brothers were a Dr. Milton Alanson; a sister by the name of Bertita, who died in the flu epidemic during the First World War; and Bertram Alanson who was, I believe, an early president of the San Francisco Stock Exchange, president of the Stock Exchange Club here for many years--and probably one of the closest friends of Somerset Maugham. It is in his former home in San Francisco where Maugham stayed, whenever he came to the United States.

Eliaser: I think that the Alansons, senior, were married when Mr. Alanson probably was in his early forties. She was considerably younger than he, and my husband was their only child. [January 12, 1922]

Chall: I see. They were married in San Francisco, then?

Eliaser: He may have gone back to Cincinnati for the wedding, but they met here through mutual friends of the family. My late husband Lionel Alanson's maternal grandmother, Mrs. Sachs, is still alive and well in Cincinnati at 104.

Lionel was educated in public schools here. I suppose--no, he didn't go to Grant School. He went to Galileo High School, Stanford University--from which he graduated. Then went into the navy, and took one of those fast officers training things that were done, I think, at Northwestern--somewhere in the Chicago area--before he was shipped out. And he was literally all over the world. He was single, so he was one of the last to get out.

I met him when he was still in the navy, in New York--waiting for that point system by which people were dismissed. Interestingly enough (if I told you this in the first interview, stop me) we courted, if you will, in the old fashioned way. During that period I was working in New York and he came down with what appeared to be just a very bad flu. He was awfully sick, and I moved him out of the navy hotel where he was billeted into my parent's--my mother and stepfather's apartment in Manhattan--so that we could have the family doctor look after him, to be sure that he was all right. At that time this old German doctor said to my mother, "I'm sure it's just the flu and I'm giving him everything that he needs and he'll be okay, but he really ought to see a navy doctor--go up to Brooklyn Naval Yard--because they're in charge of him and I'm not positive there isn't something else here. It's just routine that he should go there." He didn't, and he recovered quickly and was well.

I came back to San Francisco to my father's home, and he came back a week or so later. And a couple of weeks later, when we realized that his mother would never consent to his marrying anybody, with ease, we went to Reno.

Chall: That's why you eloped?

Eliaser: Yes. She knew my whole family. I was so acceptable within this narrow concept of the German Jewish community--which I think is still there. They knew my grandfather, they knew everybody; all the families knew me. All the pieces of the family knew each other, engaged in social life, and philanthropic activities together, and what have you.

Eliaser: But she just felt because he had not yet started work, and because I was very young, that we shouldn't be married. We felt we had known each other quite a few months by then and we knew what we were doing. I was nineteen and he was twenty-four, I guess, so we rented a car and drove to Reno. They didn't like it much. My family was thrilled. And his mother still hasn't gotten over it. She's still very much with us, and she still hasn't got over it. His father was very happy and very good to me always--and is a lovely, cultured, elegant, very musical, well-read, kind man.

We came back and my husband went right to work. We had no honeymoon because he was expected to go to work the following Monday, at the stock exchange, for his uncle and father. An interesting tradition--he was paid, I think, and I can't be sure anymore, \$150 a month or some great salary like that. Mr. Bertram Alanson, who was really the senior partner, wanted to pay him a living wage and his own father wouldn't permit it. So we had a tough time, because we really tried to live on it.

I had a tiny income from a grandfather that may have been close to \$100 a month, that I got from securities--that I couldn't really have till I was twenty-one. But because I was married, the administrator of the estate saw that I got it. It was still a struggle, and in retrospect I think we managed because of my parents. My mother clothed both of us, and my father, who lived here, saw to it that we would get out a couple of nights a week to a movie or whatever. They'd take us out and treat us, saw that we did the things we needed to do without indulging us.

Because my father had been in the wholesale meat industry, meat--which was important, always everyone's big piece of the budget--was given to us for nothing. We bought a car on time, I guess the way everybody did in those days.

Chall: Well, yes, and they were hard to get.

Eliaser: We knew Roger Boas [laughter] I confess to that.

Chall: All the right connections. [laughter]

Eliaser: That's right.

Chall: I see. So you started out as a housewife?

Eliaser: Very much so.

Chall: And your husband in the firm. Now, I'm not sure whether I missed finding out what Lionel Alanson, senior did?

Eliaser: Lionel Alanson, senior and Mr. Bertram Alanson were partners in a seat on the San Francisco Stock Exchange. Mr. Alanson, senior had been--prior to the Crash--in the real estate business, independent of his brother, and he suffered enormous losses, as many people did. He went into this brokerage business after the Crash. Mr. Bertram Alanson took a terrible financial bath in the Crash too, but he was a man of enormous courage and great brilliance, and he fought his way back and died far more successful and wealthy than he was prior to this tremendous loss.

Chall: So, your husband went into the family business, then?

Eliaser: It was perfectly natural for him to go to work for them, except that he found--they were both quite old, he was a late child, as I mentioned--that they really didn't have a business. They traded their own securities, and they had a small account of Somerset Maugham's which has been very famous and has been written about frequently. And very little else. In those days I think the banks would pass their business to various brokerage houses--I don't know the arrangement. So they had a little of that. My husband was starting out, he liked to work hard and was ambitious, and he would bring in new accounts. Friends of my family, as a courtesy, would give him an order, and things of that kind. And his father and uncle really didn't want to be bothered with this--at their ages.

So he didn't stay with them an awfully long time. I don't remember how long it was. First of all he wasn't being paid very much. He had nothing to do, which was very unhealthy. He played a lot of golf and we went to a lot of football games--but it was not good for a young, extraordinarily intelligent person to be that idle.

Chall: And he had a law degree?

Eliaser: No law--just undergraduate.

Chall: I see. Was he a graduate of Stanford?

Eliaser: Yes.

Chall: Did Bertram have any children?

Eliaser: No.

Chall: Had he been married?

Eliaser: Yes. Lionel had two female cousins. He was the last Alanson, male Alanson.

[interruption]

Chall: I think you were about to tell me that your husband finally changed places of employment.

Eliaser: Yes. I'm trying to think where--I remember where he went next. He worked for a gentleman named Barnhagen, who is no longer living-- who had a wholesale women's apparel business over on Fremont Street. It was dresses and underthings, and garments--things of that kind. The price range was similar to that of the Grant Stores, J.C. Penney, and smaller shops all over this state, and Nevada, and Oregon.

He went to work as a sales representative, and he worked Northern California, as far south as Bakersfield, as I recall, and traveled into Winnemucca, Nevada, and north into southern Oregon. It was all his territory, and he was away an awful lot of the time. A five-day trip was his shortest trip, five days to three weeks. We had a little house. A very difficult life. It was terrible for a young couple to start out that way.

I guess I was pregnant when he changed jobs. I'm really not clear; it was so many years ago. The apartment which we had after the war we weren't allowed to keep. It was one of these places where they wouldn't allow babies, and it was a three-story walkup. It was rent-controlled anyway, and it was the kind of situation where the landlord always was asking for extra money for things that really, I'm sure, weren't quite legal. I was very happy to be out of there.

I got pregnant--we had been married a year and a half when Mary was born. During that pregnancy we bought a little house out on Seventh Avenue and Lake Street near the Presidio wall for \$12,300--a little old shingle, pre-fire and earthquake house that backed into that park next to the Presidio that starts at Seventh Avenue. There was a wild, wild beautiful garden which I improved, and we improved the house a little--it was a mess. We didn't have enough money to do a lot. We could afford to have a contractor come in and clean up the first floor. I painted. I was terribly, terribly pregnant at this point. I painted all the closets myself, did a lot of the work.

We just were not going to clean the upper floors--a two-bedroom and one-bath house. And my father said, "Once you move in you'll never do that. What you don't do before you move in, you don't do. So instead of giving you a baby present we'll pay to have that work cleaned up upstairs." And they indeed did that. Mr. and Mrs. Alanson were simply furious with my parents, because they felt that we oughtn't to do anything we couldn't afford to do ourselves, and they felt we were being overindulged.

Eliaser: So, anyway, we moved into a clean house. We lived there while the work was going on, and, as I say, we were young and we did a lot of it ourselves. Mary was twenty-nine in September this year, and she was born in a three-hour labor--which is unbelievable for a first child--great ease. She was an eight and a half pound, big, healthy, strapping child--and still is.

Chall: Yes. She looks like a strong, healthy person. She was born in September?

Eliaser: I'm so bad on years. September 2 is her birthday and she's twenty-nine--so 1947. My husband was home long enough to become a father, and then went off on this traveling nonsense again.

Fortunately, we lived next door to a highway patrolman who worked on the Golden Gate Bridge, and he had tenure--so he was home most nights. He and his wife were very kind to me, and looked out for me, and there were lovely neighbors on that street, as there always have been. I was born on that block. Everyone always knew everybody else, socialized, took care of children, gave each other permanent waves, cooked block dinners for everybody. It was a nice life. I don't think I could have managed, with my husband away most of the time, in any other kind of a community--it was lovely. It was like living in a tiny town, on that one block.

Chall: I see; so he might even be away weekends.

Eliaser: Oh, yes. On his three-week trips definitely. And it was the kind of communal life that I think most Americans don't have anymore.

Coping with Husband's Ill Health

Chall: Yes. You were fortunate.

Eliaser: It was terrific. I loved it. We had been married about four years (it was on my twenty-third birthday) that I discovered--that we discovered--that my husband probably had cancer. He went into the hospital for what they felt was a testicular tumor, which it indeed was, a very malignant one, and the testicle was removed. There was also a large tumor in his groin which was benign. But the X-rays taken right after surgery suggested that the cancer had previously metastasized, or was in the process of, to his chest area--so that he had radiation treatment.

Eliaser: The surgical hospitalization was two or three weeks, and he came home afterwards, but he suffered such intense pain and discomfort from the radiation that he went back into the hospital to finish up the radiation there. I couldn't take care of him. Our physician at that time had to come twice a day to the house, and at night--it was for morphine. He tried to teach me to do it, but I really didn't want to do the injection, and take on the responsibility. I was taking care of a small child. I, by then, had a mother's helper--an older woman who was very much retired, and who did laundry, and ironing, and was there to help me a little bit with my baby. I was a full time trained nurse, but I did not want to administer morphine. I stopped there. Carried trays and did everything I had to. I was up all night.

It was a terrible experience for a small child, because she was almost ignored, and she was a year and a half--something like that. And though Mary's a very stable young woman, I am quite sure, because this as we go along will repeat itself, that it will show in her life--in a psychiatric sense. It's got to. To have so much rejection, so young. It was just a terrible experience.

It was six months till my husband was able to go back to work. He was severely weakened, not by the operation, but by the cure, by the radiation. And, as you know, the procedures have, in these many years--it's been thirty years almost--changed markedly and people can go through it today with lots less pain and discomfort. It was before the day of cobalt; there was no such thing.

Chall: That's right.

Eliaser: So he was pronounced cured. There was a spot in the chest area but they felt they had contained it and reduced it by the X-ray therapy. We went on about our lives. At the time, though, that this spot was seen on the picture, the surgeon and our family physician came to see me and told me that his life expectancy--he would be well and comfortable--but his life expectancy would be anywhere from two to five years.

Chall: Well, they were wrong.

Eliaser: They certainly were. They were trying to tell me the right thing. We had very little money. I was going to have to think through how I was going to be the keeper of my family. Also they were very anxious that I have no more children, that I understand that. There was little chance in my becoming pregnant because of that amount of radiation tending to make people impotent. But they just wanted to warn me to look at things that--I was a kid--I couldn't possibly have thought through. Also they were aware of my mother-in-law's attitude toward me. Her reputation in the community was pretty much--not just because of me. She was a very difficult woman. And they wanted to protect me from that corner of it, too.

Eliaser: So as soon as my husband was well and back to work, on his feet, I went to work.

Chall: What did you start doing?

Eliaser: Well, once I stopped being a trained nurse--There are two corners of that: Once I was needed, I rose to the occasion magnificently. All physicians tell me that's very normal. Most people do. No matter what the stress, you rise to it, deal with it. After I wasn't needed, and after this intensive kind of experience was behind me, I backslid emotionally--terribly. I went into what I think we would almost call a semi-breakdown situation. I didn't function. I didn't cry. I didn't do anything; didn't take pills. I just didn't do anything; I was almost paralyzed from non-activity. And here I was--a person who was always an enormous reader, and an enormous doer, and at nineteen years of age on all kinds of boards around here. I was already a Campfire leader, on the women's board of Temple Emanu-El, and all this stuff. Suddenly I found I couldn't go to meetings, I couldn't get on a bus--I didn't drive. I couldn't go downtown by myself. I couldn't get in a cab. I got so I wouldn't take a bath unless someone was in the house with me.

And so I started going, two or three times a week, to see the family physician who'd seen us through this, and I said, "Look, I think I need to see a psychiatrist." And he said, "You don't need to see a psychiatrist. You have no need for it. You're going through a perfectly normal or expected reaction after having been through these several months that you have."

I said, "I would like to see a psychiatrist."

He said, "No, you come see me and we'll talk about this."

He was wrong. I needed to see a psychiatrist. And finally I was so miserable I said, "Look, the few top men in the community (in those days) won't take you except on a referral basis. So I would like you to make that call." And he did make it to Dr. Norman Reider, who was chief of psychiatry at Mt. Zion for a number of years. Norman was very busy, but did see me--took me on cancelled appointments, would squeeze me in for ten minutes in the beginning, and then as he had a cancellation, so that I saw him a couple of days a week for a few weeks. And I got progressively better.

Chall: You just needed something at that point to get you over the hump.

Eliaser: I think you need to talk through the kinds of problems you don't even understand. I've only come to understand them now. I did not then. You need to talk with someone who isn't a relative, someone who isn't a close friend with whom you confide what you're cooking that day, and everything else. But someone who can look objectively, and help you to see your life objectively.

Chall: Well, you still had that five-year limit ahead of you.

Eliaser: That's right, and so he was a huge help.

The Bookstore: Sales and Television

Eliaser: One day I went down to send a wedding present from the old Books Incorporated on Sutter Street, in the block where the Sutter-Stockton Garage is now, which was a trade bookstore. It was in two buildings. You'd walk through the front, which was trade books, to the back where they had old used books, rare books, fine stationery, a fireplace. I sat down with the owner, selected a wedding gift-- I still like to give books as gifts, preferably. I said, "Oh, Lew [Lewis Lengfeld], I envy you so much because you know all of this and I don't know anything. And I wish I did." He said, "Ann, you do too know, you know exactly what's here." I said, "No, I don't." He said, "Well, why don't we find out. Why don't you come to work for Christmas." [1949]

Let's say this was October, I don't really know which month-- maybe September. "Why don't you take a Christmas job with us, and come in early enough so that we can really show you what we're doing." And I said, "May I let you know" because I wouldn't think of doing it without discussing it with Dr. Reider, though I didn't tell him that. And Norman said, "This is what you need. Go do it. Get out of here. Let's get together once a week. Tell me when your day off is and I will make room for you."

So my mother's helper was there. I guess also somewhere along the time during Lionel's illness, I put Mary prematurely into nursery school: I got a nurse when he was so sick and all I could do was take care of him. I hired a recommended children's or baby nurse who would push her out and take care of her for me, who was awful. I look back on that as the worst crime I ever committed in my life. The woman was so terrible. But it got the baby out of the house when a man needed rest and quiet. She was a normal little kid, and hollered for food and hollered when she needed something. And we couldn't have that. So she was kind of put out with a nurse until it was time to go to nursery school.

So, when ultimately I took this job, the nursery school, which had a pick up-delivery arrangement would bring her home to the mother's helper, whenever the little kids came home.

Eliaser: I took this Christmas job, and I had been there two weeks when they took me out to a late breakfast and asked me if I would stay on permanently. They had a television show, one of the early TV shows here--reviewing books for a half-hour on Sunday nights. The woman who did it for my employer quit to move away. So very early on there I not only worked at the bookstore five and a half days a week (we were only given a half day off a week), I did their Sunday night television show--which took an enormous amount of preparation. So at nights I would close my door on my family and read.

I left Dr. Reider after a couple of months of work. I was secure and on my feet. But looking back at it analytically now, I see what I did. My doctors told me something that was closing the door on my life, and I turned around and I did the same thing--through my work. Just total work. I didn't bother anybody visibly but I just cannot imagine a small child surviving emotionally.

Chall: And how about your husband?

Eliaser: Though unintended, there is no question that my work cut me from all traditional ties and was a response mechanism to the real tragedy in our young lives.

Well, he was never able to travel again, as much. He stayed in the house for a while. And then a relative of ours, who was conversant with the case and terribly concerned that Lionel wasn't in the kind of job where his employer was being fair or understanding, came to his aid. So Lionel moved to another firm owned by a distant relative of mine, Marcel Hirsch. It was called Patek & Company, and was a laundry and chemical supply house. It was out in the Bayshore area, industrial area somewhere. He worked for them and was a sales representative again, but the Bay Area was his territory and he could come home every night. That was a lot better for everybody's health.

So, he did that. About four years later I was working full time and by then Mary was, I guess, pre-school. By then I had her in pre-school at the Convent of the Sacred Heart. Our pediatrician lived across the street, and his little girl was her best friend. The two of them entered pre-kindergarten up at the convent. The doctor drove the children to school in the morning, and his little girl came home early. Mary stayed with the nuns and I picked her up after work. I would either take a cab if I was late, or I'd take a couple of buses and get her and bring her home.

Chall: And your job was what, nine to five or something like that?

Eliaser: Yes, it was really tough duty--and with no really substantial household help, just a lady who could do a little ironing. No cooking.

Chall: The same mother's helper?

Eliaser: Yes, or similar. She left me somewhere in there. Her daughter got a divorce and she had to go take care of her daughter's children. And there was a period in there where I was totally alone, doing everything--house, young child, husband, full-time job. Of course, everybody does it today.

It was an interesting situation. When I took this job, I came from a corner of this community where women simply did not work. The family had a lot of money, or enough. The family was generous. During the illness they paid all the hospital bills and the doctors. What nobody understood is there were expenses that were needed to run a household which I was earning. Just to pay the garbage collector, and the newsmen, and the groceries. We had never heard of medical insurance. This was an astronomical kind of thing. A devastating financial thing which I forgot to mention as I was talking because that's so unimportant compared to everything else it does to you.

So anyway, I left Mary in afternoon playschool with the nuns. I would pick her up either in a cab, after work, or by bus if I was early enough, get her home, get the dinner, bathe her, put her to bed--the whole thing. Today that's the story of our society, but this is thirty years ago. And women, particularly from the segment of this community I come from, didn't do it; and frankly they still are not working. Most of my friends don't work as hard as I do. They simply don't.

Chall: Did your family feel that you were doing the wrong thing, that you were sort of shaming them in the community?

Eliaser: Some of them, yes.

Chall: Mrs. Alanson, senior? Or didn't she ever speak to you?

Eliaser: We didn't communicate that much. Oh, we had dinner once a week, that old-fashioned thing that everybody did, and Oh God!

Chall: I was going to ask you. You still had your dinner then with--

Eliaser: In the kitchen. Or Mr. Alanson, senior loved Sam's Grill and if I could get a babysitter we'd go on Thursday night to Sam's Grill.

Chall: But you always had dinner with the senior Alansons, once a week?

Eliaser: About. We tried very hard not to make it the same night and not to establish that old fashioned thing families used to do, because then if you were invited to go to the theatre, or a movie, or just to a friend's house, you couldn't do it because it was too tight a pattern. So we tried not to do it the same night. It's hard. It was very hard.

They treated me so badly always that Lionel wanted to break with them. When I was pregnant he said, "We're not going to let them see that child, we're not going to have anything to do with them." And I said, "No, what would that prove? What would we be doing for ourselves? We'd be hurting ourselves. So let's not do it that way." But it took a lot of persuasion on my part, and my father's part, to influence him to be a little more kind to his family.

Chall: His father had the same attitude as his mother?

Eliaser: No, not at all, but he was very put upon. He had very little to say about anything. He was very docile.

Chall: What about your family, your father and your stepmother?

Eliaser: They really were most supportive, and saw us through everything. My husband was very close to my father--he was the best friend he ever had in his life. When my father died, whatever year that was, he wept. I'd never seen a man cry like that. He certainly never cried for himself the way he cried for my father. It was a marvelous relationship and it helped us a lot. He got along with my dad much better than I did.

Chall: Did you have dinners with your family?

Eliaser: Oh yes, but when we all felt like it. It was something we wanted to do, just for fun, and at the last minute.

Chall: I recall that you always had dinner with--it was your mother's father wasn't it, once a week?

Eliaser: As a child. Oh, yes. Thursday night.

Chall: I just wondered whether your father wanted to carry that on with you.

Eliaser: Oh, no. He was a very contemporary man.

Chall: Now what was your husband's attitude toward your work?

Eliaser: He was very proud of me, he always was. It wasn't what I brought in, the earning--though we needed it. It was the achievement, and that continued throughout my career.

Chall: He was proud of you then. He was a sort of modern man--as one looks at it today?

Eliaser: He didn't feel deprived because he got home earlier than I did or anything like that. Not put upon at all.

Chall: Did he have a feeling too that this was necessary for you because he didn't know his own future?

Eliaser: I don't think he ever--he was never told that.

Chall: Oh!

Eliaser: It was told to me alone. I was sitting alone: my father was in the next room, and my husband was upstairs in bed, but he was still out from the morphine. It was about eight o'clock in the morning. My father went into the kitchen when the doctors came to talk to me. I couldn't even tell him after they left because I couldn't speak. It was just devastating. I couldn't blurt it out, it was just--the words weren't there. So he threw me in the car.

Chall: Your father?

Eliaser: Yes. Got me out of the house; drove me around the block, and drove, and drove, and drove, until I had cooled.

Chall: So your husband never knew, or didn't suspect?

Eliaser: No. He knew that he had had a major malignant illness but that he was pronounced well. He was told, and had to know because of insurance, that there is a five-year term on all malignancies. That's a very public secret. He couldn't get insurance for anything. We had no health insurance. We were able to finally get a health insurance policy excluding any related illness to that basic illness so that Mary and I could be covered. And no life insurance of any kind. He only had one policy from the navy years, some tiny thing, whatever everybody had during the war.

Four years later (I remember I was in the middle of a television show and I went on after hearing about this, which was tough), it was discovered that there was cancer in the other testicle. This is very rare and has been written about in the medical books up at the University of California. That's not the way it happens--ever, or rarely.

Eliaser: When they did the surgery it wasn't the same kind of cancer-- totally different. A very unusual case. But he was not as sick and worn down.

You see, at the time of his first illness we went, in the beginning, to a very very old doctor, a well-known name here, who decided that this complaint was a prostate problem and treated him with some kind of a supporter and the use of ice packs. This went on a very long time. This old man was either ill or on vacation when I got a cold. I had a terrible cold and there was nobody to take care of me. So I said, "I want our friend Harry Weinstein. We're such good friends, and he's closer to our age." So he became our doctor. And right then and there we mentioned Lionel's little-- what we thought was a little problem--and he said, "I want you to come right in." And he was in the hospital the next day.

Chall: So you'd wasted a lot of time.

Eliaser: A lot of time. So this time he went in immediately. They had no problems and they did a little radiation as a precautionary measure only. They then were confident they had it beaten.

Chall: I see, because that was the locus of it both times.

Eliaser:- Yes. The radiologist that treated him for many years died. He was a Dr. Low-Beer of the University of California--a well-known Viennese-American doctor. As you probably know, in the early days of the history of radiation the therapists received too much exposure. He got it and he died of leukemia, I believe. At that point, Dr. Weinstein moved Lionel to Stanford because Dr. Henry Kaplan was thought to be the finest man in the United States, and he indeed is--still. And Dr. Kaplan looked at the old X-rays and he couldn't believe there ever was anything, when he started with the case--any spread.

We saw him first every six months, and then once a year. Always once a year, total checkup. And when the Stanford Hospital moved from here to Palo Alto, Lionel went down there every year. And so he was always in their care, for what, eighteen--he had eighteen years on the guessers. It was amazing.

Chall: Was his ultimate disease cancer?

Eliaser: Yes, but unrelated.

Chall: Just had a predisposition for it, didn't he?

Eliaser: Yes, and there's no history of it in his family, none. That's not true, the uncle, Bertram Alanson, died of a throat cancer. He was very old, in his late eighties, and never had had any illness.

Chall: So you were working then for what, four or five years?

Eliaser: I was there a full six years.

Chall: A full six years with Books Incorporated, and all during that time you had a weekly television show?

Eliaser: I only did the television show for about two years. I hated it. It made me very nervous. I couldn't stand it--I had done my homework. We had, you see, no script. We talked from knowledge, straight. The decent part of the show was we just chatted, the two of us, for thirty minutes, about books.

Chall: With whom were you chatting?

Eliaser: My employer.

Chall: Oh, I see.

Eliaser: So we did it for a couple of years, and then I was replaced. What I did for many years, even after I stopped working for them, is--if he wanted to go away, or she did--I'd fill in. I could live with that for a couple of weeks. But I just was terrified, of television. You know about people and public speaking, much less television. It was just awful. I couldn't stand it, and Harry Weinstein gave me phenobarbital which didn't help a bit. Or I'd have a martini--which did help, but my employer didn't drink. And you know, if you're sitting with someone who's had one martini and you don't drink, it just smells like they've had the bottle. It's obnoxious, and he asked me please not to. [laughter]

I had no comfort, except that there was a very nice man who appears on a list you handed me, who was one of my first directors, and his name was Agar Jaicks. He was a director in early television, and still works in production at one of the channels here. He was so attractive, and young, and kind, and he would sit there and kind of vocally hold my hand until television time. But I was awful, I really was awful.

Chall: How do you know?

Eliaser: Well, I could see it. Later on they'd tape it. Toward the end. We were really an early show, but as things progressed, they'd tape it and you'd see it an hour later. Things like that; all these fancy modern tricks.

There was no union. I had been on a year, or a year and a half, before AFTRA [American Federation of Television and Radio Artists] came. Up until that time they added fifty dollars a month to my salary for working every Sunday night, or whatever night it was.

Chall: And after all those hours you spent studying.

Eliaser: An extra fifty bucks. And there was a minimum wage. First of all they were required to pay my entrance and my dues by this union law. I don't know what it was--or I paid the dues and they paid my initiation fee. And the minimum base pay was fifty-two dollars I think, or darn near what I got a month for each thirty-minute segment. So the unions changed my life. And I really needed it.

Chall: It must have been a relief though, not to have it every what--Sunday night?

Eliaser: Oh, really, I got no ego gratification from it. It just frightened me terribly. And it took a lot of work to get by that. I can sit in front of a television camera now and go on as you and I are talking.

Chall: At least you had the early exposure.

Eliaser: But I hated it. It took a lot of heavy psychiatric work, finally, to deal with it. Not to go on television, about which I could have cared less. But there came a time in my career where I realized that I needed to do some analysis and really work through and face up to what my whole life was about.

Chall: Was that much later on?

Eliaser: It was after I left the bookstore. Well, I left the bookstore in February of 1956, to volunteer for Adlai Stevenson. My husband was well; he was working and earning well. There was no reason economically for me to stay there. They were so pleased with my production at this store that they gave me stock every year for Christmas. So I was really a part owner when I left. I had loved it. It was a marvelous experience and in retrospect it probably saved my life emotionally.

Chall: What did you do in the store?

Eliaser: Sold books.

Chall: In which part?

Eliaser: The new books. But also, I studied. I really worked; I learned a lot. I handled the rare books--I got to know all about that part of it also. And I got to know the publishers and the publishing representatives rather well. Because, you may have noticed, I am sociable in my attitude. We became quite friendly and they started to send me galleys to read.

Eliaser: What we did--and I won't bore you with the details of the retail book trade in those days. The publishing representative would come four times a year, or twice a year--seasonally--sit down and show you a dust jacket of something that was going to come, and briefly tell you what that book was going to be about. Then our employer would sit with us in a meeting, before the store opened in the morning, and we would decide whether we'd order six copies, sixty, or two hundred, or none.

A lot of these representatives were disappointed in how it was being handled; sometimes they were wrong and we were right. But I started to read galleys, and one of the ones that stands out in my mind--I think it was either The Cruel Sea or the H.M.S. Ulysses--one of the big sea novels of that period. My boss, because it was coming out so late, mid-December, said, "I'll take ten copies. It's too late." I read it, every word of it. I couldn't believe it. I said, "If you order five hundred copies, even though it's getting here the week before Christmas, I'll sell it."

By then he trusted me, because I had made him buy those 1952 campaign speeches of Adlai Stevenson. I was working for him at that time and was quite a Stevenson fan, though I couldn't do much about it. I joined a political club at that time, but the meetings were in the evening and it wasn't often I could leave my child, to do much about it.

When I saw that that book, that collection of speeches, was coming out in paper as well as hardback, I said to my employer, "Look, we're going on television Sunday night, and there is a talk show on just before us. (Oh, it's now on radio as well as a TV show--Ira Blue, or somebody like that.) He is going to interview Adlai Stevenson. I tell you what we ought to do. We're going to go on even though that book isn't out yet. (Five seconds after Stevenson is off, right?) And we're going to advertise that book. We're going to say, 'In two weeks, we are going to have a hardback edition of his speeches, for \$3.50 or whatever it is, and the paperback for a dollar, and a special limited signed edition for \$10.' You just watch the orders." And he said, "That's ridiculous, who will care?"

I said, "How can you say that, when the man's going to be on for thirty minutes, or an hour, or whatever it is before we are?" This man was a Republican and didn't think much of Adlai Stevenson anyway. But I got him to order, I think, a thousand of the paperback, and maybe five hundred of the \$3.50 one, and a hundred of the \$10 one--against his better judgment. He didn't want to do it. There were only a thousand of them published and that was taking a big piece of them for San Francisco.

Eliaser: Anyway, we got on television, and you can guess what happened. We never got our shipment of the signed ones. They were lost, and finally we were able to locate them at the Abraham Lincoln Bookstore in Chicago and then we got them--took everything they had.

Chall: You sold them?

Eliaser: Oh, yes. Couldn't fill the orders, no way. So after that he trusted my commercial judgment. So, when Christmas came and I could see this marvelous sea novel coming, I just took orders--because my customers trusted me. They'd say, "Here's the card, send it to so and so. Just gift wrap it and send it." I sold them all before they arrived. It was one of the biggest movies, whichever one it was--and all of that.

So I became very close to the publishers. Also Bertram Alanson was still alive and Somerset Maugham was here and I had met him. The Doubledays were his publishers in the United States and I had gotten to know that family and all of them very well through the Alanson family. Mr. Bertram Alanson did not care for my mother-in-law, in fact he wouldn't speak to her. So I became his hostess in the last years of his life, when his wife was ill.

##

Eliaser: We were talking about Bertram Alanson. He received literary figures from all over the world. And as he got to know me better and began to feel that my youth wasn't a tremendous detriment [laughs] and that I was understanding about sexual life-styles, I used to be there when he entertained. He would never have his brother and his sister-in-law, but he would have my husband and me. I was really the hostess, more or less--informally.

Chall: In his home?

Eliaser: In his home or he'd take people out. If someone gave him some wild ducks, let's say, he'd take them down to Jack's [Restaurant] to be cooked for this general, and that Mr. Doubleday, and whomever!

Chall: He was sort of a man-about-town, wasn't he?

Eliaser: Very much so.

Chall: I think I have read something about him.

Eliaser: [Charles] McCabe did a column [San Francisco Chronicle] on the friendship and missed the whole point--either that or he was trying to be a gentleman. He mentioned that Maugham and Uncle Bertram had met on this voyage to the South Seas, which they did. And he based the friendship on this investment, but it was a sexual relationship, I'm quite sure.

Chall: The hostessing, your role, was simply--?

Eliaser: To be able to discuss what they were discussing. He felt that his family let him down, and there wasn't anyone properly educated in his family to meet with people such as many of his guests were. But he had confidence in me, which was a great compliment.

Chall: And you were required simply to be a good talker?

Eliaser: Or listening is more required. [laughs] But at least if something came up, I knew what they were talking about; and I was conversant with the publishing trade. To this day I maintain relationships with some of those people who've gone on in that industry, which I'm grateful I'm out of. The Madison Avenue-type pressures in publishing must be something terrible.

Chall: Have they changed? I mean are the pressures of a retail bookstore quite different today from what they were when you were working in it?

Eliaser: Yes. And on the publishers--they all amalgamated. They got together like crazy and then they're all absorbed by conglomerates today. It's changed! I imagine editors' jobs remained the same, but I think everyone else's is different.

Chall: I would guess that you had a rather unique experience at a time when it was changing.

I don't think I have the name of the television channel.

Eliaser: We went to all three of the local ones. We moved as prices changed. Because what we were was not a very literary program, and it always embarrassed me terribly. It was a thirty-minute commercial! We were selling books we had in stock, it could be on how to train your dog or how to cook an omelette. I remember interviewing Morrison Woods. Remember him?

Chall: Some of my favorite recipes are from old columns of Morrison Woods.

Eliaser: We'd get the authors through in a less commercial fashion than is done today. The publishers would ask if we wouldn't have the author on the program.

The man who wrote The Japanese Inn (the name escapes me)--charming man! And he subsequently did a book on Admiral Perry's visit to Japan. Had a couple of good visits with him. [Oliver Statler]

Oh, we had fun! Except that I was terrified, it was interesting.

Chall: Maybe if it had just been radio it wouldn't have been so terrifying?

Eliaser: Well, you could have read at least! [laughter]

There's something about the camera. I worked it all through later in analysis and came to understand what some of the problems were--they were quite infantile. Not really infantile, juvenile. We were taught that to exhibit or display oneself--exhibitionism was a no-no; right?

Chall: Television was just the new form of that?

Eliaser: That's right. Very complex.

Chall: How long were you in therapy, and did it help you in directing your life and your activities?

Eliaser: Four and one-half years. It had a serious affect on my life and activities. I did not change a great deal but I was better directed and the results of my activities were more fruitful and gratifying.

I had problems dealing with the matter of money, and I had some problem in getting up on my feet in front of people, and I felt I had to deal with it, and I went to a psychiatrist's couch to do so. It was a four and a half years of intensive work. I dealt with my family history only briefly, and what brought me to my motives in the work and what I did. I got a lot of laughs from some of the things that I said, but as I went on it was quite clear, as most of this is of all of us, that I was doing this for approval and love. And then I had to reconcile what you do for approval and love, and the fact of being faced, as I matured in my career, with having to make unpopular decisions, taking positions which could have the friends from whom I wanted love to be very angry with me.

I arrived at that stage in my life, where I understood self-esteem was the only thing that was really important. That was the love I really wanted. And then I had to accept and understand some of the difficult things I had had to do, which caused friends to turn against me in politics.

III PLUNGING INTO THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY MAELSTROM, 1956-1965

The Adlai Stevenson Campaign, 1956

- Eliaser: So I left Books Incorporated. In Stevenson's '56 race, things in my family were going well, and so I was able to volunteer for this marvelous hero. That is when people jokingly said I hadn't been seen or heard from since.
- Chall: That's right. You took off and you said, "I haven't been home since," but I'm not sure that that was literal.
- Eliaser: That really isn't true. I brought everybody home with me. I remember now the names of the women who seduced me away from my job--there were two of them. One was a Mrs. [Jean] Macauley and you're going to hear about her from some of the older woman that you interview.
- Chall: And her husband.
- Eliaser: Captain [Edward] Macauley, right. She was a customer in the bookstore; that's how I met her.
- Chall: Tell me about her, because the two of them seem like most interesting people to have known.
- Eliaser: I met her because she was a customer and we'd talk. Stevenson came up, and I said I was leaving the store. She said, "My dear, you must come and help me." At the same time I was approached by Sue Lilienthal. She was a great activist with Ellie Heller--she kind of worked with Elinor Heller, who was national committeewoman for many, many years, and is a retiring regent, as you know, of the university.

But anyway, Sue Lilienthal and Mrs. Macauley simultaneously invited me to assist them. Mrs. Macauley was interested in raising money--though as I look back, that was small potatoes in those days--because of her friendships, starting with the Roosevelts, all of which you've heard, I'm sure.

Chall: No, I haven't.

Eliaser: Captain Macauley was a great friend of the president. He was a retired naval officer. I don't know how Mrs. Macauley got to all these people, but she was quite charming; she lived up in an old, old house on Russian Hill that was wonderful, where she held all these events for Stevenson and everybody else.

Sue Lilienthal opened the headquarters down on Market Street. That's where she was. Two different concepts in what they were doing. Sue's task was to get signatures on petitions, to get the name on the ballot, or to win a primary, or whatever. I didn't understand what I was doing in those days. I just did it! For years I stood out in the middle of Market Street getting signatures. Marvelous! And then Sue had to end up raising money to keep her headquarters open.

Mrs. Macauley was raising money privately, selling raffle tickets, or entrance to lovely cocktail parties in their homes, and I helped her do that.

Sue found she had to raise money to keep her headquarters open, which is what's happening to everybody these days. And so she decided the thing to do was to get hold of all the names of people who had signed the Stevenson petitions for nomination in California. In those days you couldn't get them because you wanted them. Now it's the law that they have to be provided to you for a nominal fee by the secretary of state--computer print-outs.

Chall: Oh, yes, then you had to go down to the county courthouse and copy them.

Eliaser: Or names of contributors. I mean, everything is available now by law. So I was instructed to get a group of volunteers and go to Sacramento and copy these hundreds of thousands of names! So I got two car loads of women who agreed to go to Sacramento. It was a long drive, too. We were put in the basement of the old capitol. No one bothered to tell me there was a cafeteria in the capitol, so I took lunch from my house for everybody. And we went up there and worked until our eyes couldn't stand it. And you couldn't read many of these signatures. It was just guess work.

We came back, and Sue wrote a letter to all these people for money--whether she ever got it never was worth our wildest conjecture! I really don't know. It was awfully hard work; but it was good indoctrination for me. All those kinds of jobs were very important and are today, and I still do them.

Chall: Where did you pick up your cars of women? Where did you find those women?

Eliaser: Some of them were in the headquarters volunteering already, and there has always been a problem historically, of not having anything for volunteers to do--and there is nothing worse or more destructive. The others were personal friends who said, you know, "If you want us to do it, we'll do it."

Chall: I see. Because you had just begun, I wondered where you were able to get all those people.

Eliaser: Well, I always have friends, it seems, who are looking for things to do or enjoy my projects. So we spent the day in Sacramento, and that was that. And that year--I may have told you this--wasn't that the year the convention for the Republicans was in San Francisco?

Chall: I guess it was.

Eliaser: It was Eisenhower. A friend of ours from New York, an acquaintance with whom we had made a friendship at Lake Tahoe up at the old Brockway--

Chall: Up at what?

Eliaser: At Brockway. It was an old hotel of cottages up at Lake Tahoe, long since burned down. They're all condominiums. We met a woman there with whom we became quite friendly, and she was on the Eisenhower committee. Sitting around the lake she had sunglasses on that said, "I like Ike" across the top of the sunglasses--and jewelry in all kinds of rhinestones in every color that said "Ike." Dangle bracelets. She was coming down here from Tahoe, to the convention. I'm not clear on the chronology. She came down with a trunkload of that stuff, and she moved it into the Palace Hotel where she sold it to New York delegates. They wouldn't let her onto the convention floor. But she sold that junk all over San Francisco, and she made thousands of dollars.

I gave her my home. By then we had moved to a little house on Euclid Avenue near Jordan Park here. She asked if one night she could have our house and give a party for her Republican friends. We had become quite close, and I said sure I'd be very interested.

She had all these assorted characters, among them were a couple of these button manufacturers. So, I met them and entertained them, and it occurred to me that if Ellen Selden could make all this money for Ike, they obviously must make the same kind of flasher buttons, and so forth for Adlai Stevenson. So, I said to Sue Lilienthal, "She's just making thousands of dollars off that junk for the party, shouldn't we do it?" She said, "Sure." And I said, "Well, who gives you permission?" By then we were about to start the general election, and Stevenson was the candidate of the party.

Chall: I see, this is rather late.

Eliaser: It's early fall--the end of the summer. She said, "I'll have Bill [William] Coblentz take you to the central committee." John O'Connell must have been chairman. There it is, 1956 [referring to documents]. "I'll tell Bill Coblentz what you want, because we work together, and he's a member, and he'll take you up there and introduce you. You get their permission to sell." There were neckties that said, "Adlai," playing cards, the whole number. "You talk to them about financing and allowing you to do it." I think Coblentz took me to dinner, I don't remember. We've grown up together. Bill Coblentz is now a regent of the University of California, and a leading attorney here.

Chall: What was he then?

Eliaser: He was a member of the county committee, evidently. Sue Lilienthal felt she couldn't take me there, he could.

I grew up with that family. His father was my physician, my gynecologist.

So, we went together. It was my first introduction, literally to official Democratic politics as opposed to the volunteer--Mrs. Maccauley, Sue Lilienthal--type. I was never so upset in my life. We started at eight o'clock at night. It was quite clear to me, though in those days drink was a very small part of my life--I was always a good drinker, but a couple of cocktails, that was it--that all these guys had come in fairly sloshed, and nobody was paying any attention to anything. I had a husband and little girl at home, and I waited and waited. I think it must have been about eleven-thirty, Coblentz got them to call on me. They listened and they were very polite, but nobody responded. Nobody said yes, no; no one wanted to ask me a question. I didn't get permission, but I wasn't forbidden. Nothing happened.

The next day I called Mrs. Lilienthal. I said, "Sue, what do I do?" She said, "Well, how much will it cost you to get started--investment--so you have stock of all these buttons and jewels?" I said, "Oh, \$100." She said, "Do you have \$100?" I said, "Yes." She said, "Are you confident you can sell enough to get the \$100 back?" I said, "Oh, YES!" She said, "Well, why don't you just do it, then."

So, I sent East to these manufacturers that I had met through the Republican group; ordered it on credit, which they didn't generally give ever to politics! But, because they'd all been entertained in my home, they figured I was going to pay for this. And I established credit immediately. Of course, I paid. The

Eliaser: minute they were able to bill me, I paid. Found out a few other manufacturers, and I just ordered all this jewelry, neckties, playing cards, badges, buttons; nobody else had them here. They just had the official campaign, round button, that said "Adlai," that was given out by the national campaign.

I got a schedule of all the Democratic club meetings in San Francisco, would call the president or secretary and ask for permission to bring my card table and all this stuff. I would get someone to drive me or take a cab almost every night, and set up shop at these little meetings all over the city and sell this.

I got a convention schedule from the Convention Bureau in the city. The big labor conventions obviously were a market for this kind of stuff, and I must have made thousands of dollars at one of the large labor conventions. It was just a pushover. I could have charged ten times what was correct, and it wouldn't have mattered. And then I hit some locals as well as those national labor conventions that were being held here. Then, when the county committee pulled their act together in the fall, and opened a headquarters on Market Street, I was permitted to have a desk there where I could distribute this to other people. In other words, I enlarged it. It became a citywide operation within weeks!

Furthermore, though they never would give me permission to do anything about any of this, I just kind of did it. By the end of the campaign, I had earned enough so that my earnings picked up the entire phone bill for their headquarters, furniture rental, and just about everything else.

Chall: The county's central committee office?

Eliaser: The county central--which listened to me at eleven-thirty--drunk, and no reaction. Just blank. But I could come in there with all kinds of stuff in the end.

You have to have a place where you put this money. You reinvest it, of course, to keep your stock up. And so I ended by picking up a heavy part of their cost for the operation of that local headquarters, as opposed to the Northern California headquarters, where I actually started.

Chall: That was what Sue Lilienthal had organized--the local headquarters?

Eliaser: The Northern California headquarters, with Don Bradley, and Roger Kent, and Libby Gatov (Libby Smith then), is where I started. But when the Market Street headquarters opened--the county committee, which is different--they sent me over there, got me out of their way. There at the Northern California headquarters was where the

Eliaser: big shots and the leaders operated, and where policy was done, and where there was no foot traffic to speak of. So, they pushed me over to the county headquarters where people came to sign up to work, or to donate, or whatever, and it was better. It removed me from the leadership, but it put me in a place where I could peddle my wares, and where I got the grass-roots experience I think everybody should have.

And I took a cab tour with all this stuff every day. I took home a good deal of it. I'll tell you why.

The county committee shared that headquarters with the local campaign, as they still do. And in the very back of this very store-front headquarters on Market Street was a Young Democratic operation, run by a young man I'd never met before named Rudy Nothenberg, for Phil Burton for the assembly.

Phil Burton had run for the assembly previously, before I was active, and had been defeated by a dead man on the ballot. This was his second try, and it was run by volunteers who would come in after work. These were all kids who worked very hard, who came in after work to try and elect their hero.

I'd find in the morning my stamps were gone, and my stuff would disappear. Nobody was dishonest, it was just in their head-- a kind of sharing--except that I was trying to be meticulous because someone told me I ought to have been or try to be.

Also, they couldn't afford a janitor. So, every morning--not every morning--but every couple days, I'd bring my Electrolux in the cab. And I was always the first one there anyway; though there were paid people and I was a volunteer, I was first. And I'd come and vacuum up after all these kids, and clean up the coffee cups, and the cigarette butts, and the mess they'd leave thinking somebody was going to take care of maintenance.

Chall: And somebody did!

Eliaser: [laughter] Somebody--a well-known writer, who was writing for the Ladies Home Journal in those days--came out after that election and wrote a story on my vacuum cleaner and the whole number.

Chall: The Ladies Home Journal did this?

Eliaser: I may still have it. I may find though that when I moved here I threw it out.

Chall: Was the Phil Burton headquarters mainly staffed by Young Democrats?

- Eliaser: Right. And middle-aged ladies to younger women up front for speeches. We kept a schedule, and if an association was having a meeting, we'd try to send a speaker. That level of activity.
- Chall: Were there many women working as volunteers in the county and city headquarters?
- Eliaser: Yes.
- Chall: Do you remember who some of them were?
- Eliaser: Ann Breyer, the late Mrs. Irving Breyer--Irv has remarried--was there full time, and Serena Rosenblatt helped Mrs. Irving Breyer a little. They were all new friends. Jane Morrison, Jack's wife, came in on her lunch hour and after work always, and still does. I don't even remember all of this anymore. It's twenty years ago.
- Chall: These were different from the people who were in the other headquarters?
- Eliaser: Yes. These were judges wives, aspiring judges wives, local people, people who were for Stevenson--and as you know they came out of the woodwork always. Stevenson's candidacies created the volunteer movement in the Democratic party in the United States. Kids, old people, they were all over the place looking for something to do. And that was my first exposure to lots of people coming and nobody having work for them. And you see, I was able to provide that. I set up a schedule where women would man the tables for all this--contributions for all this junk, and at least it was a job to do.

Also, I got the schedule of the big dinners at the Fairmont and I would take four or five women with me, and young girls--beautiful girls with baskets to sell the buttons in the bar before the dinner. People who were closer to my age would manage the tables with the heavy merchandise in front of the dinner. And we made lots of money. That's how I was able to turn over stock and buy more, and establish good credit in the East.

Moving Into Democratic Party Headquarters, 1958

- Eliaser: The first thing that happened afterwards, I was invited to the "in group" party of the real leadership and the paid people. It was my first exposure to the fact that people stick pretty close together. They had a post-election celebration of sorts, just togetherness, and I was included and asked to bring my husband, which was very nice, because there were an awful lot of people in that campaign, and I was the only one at my level to be asked to join them.

Eliaser: And then Roger's secretary called. For many years, and possibly still, Roger Kent sends New Years cards. There's no time to get Christmas cards out before Christmas, and also he likes to respond to people who send him Christmas cards. She said, "Mr. Kent would like you to come up to headquarters and do his New Years cards." I said, "Oh, I'd love to!" I was beside myself to get this recognition, I tell you! [laughter] I thought I was all through after his party; that that was the end of it. And it was a sadness, because I loved it. So, I went up there and there were about five thousand cards to do. Oh, God! [laughter]

I'd never been in a Democratic headquarters--the ongoing headquarters. And it was fun. I really had become attached to some of these people, and it kept it together. I got the job done; got friends in again to help. There was no way of doing that by myself. We had several lunches with Mr. Kent, and Libby [Gatov] and all the people at that time. They were all very nice.

I beg your pardon, I had been in that headquarters before. Between the primary and the general election, the delegation was put together out of that office. And the professionals who ran the delegation asked if I would volunteer. They had taken notice of me in my early works and asked, would I come up and work in the headquarters to help put the delegation together--which meant run the mimeograph machine, record the airplane reservations, the hotel allocations. Just anything.

Anyway, I found they all worked very late there every night, and there was a lot of drinking going on. The kind of thing we all do, only I didn't do it then; I was a young mother, housewife. I'd come in in the morning, and the addressograph plates for the delegation--they had always been dropped on the floor. So, my first job every morning was to pick up the addressograph plates and re-alphabetize them, and put them back in a case, and learn how to crank out the old addressograph machine.

Mr. Kent took great exception to my doing this. For many years I did it, and he used to say, "Ann, you'll never be a leader, if you run all these machines." And I said, "Roger, my mother brought me up to believe that you never asked anybody to do anything you weren't knowledgeable about and willing to do yourself." And so I did all that junk work for the delegation. I wasn't invited to go and there's no reason why I ought to have been. But, I got to learn in that experience who was for real, who wasn't. An awful lot of things I learned.

On the delegation they always had a house black and a house Chinese in those days; maybe we still do, I don't know. And a house labor representative. A token this, a token that. A lot of Jewish people always went. There were a considerable number of Irish still

Eliaser: active in those days; not anymore too much. And so I began to understand the constituency through helping on this delegation. And then, everybody went to Chicago and they locked that place up and that's when I got shifted to the actual campaign headquarters, and went through all of this that I've just told you.

So, I was invited back to do the New Year cards and at that time we were beginning to plan the spring Western States Democratic Conference, combined with the meeting of the Democratic National Committee. Occasionally the national committee, in the old days, moved out of Washington and would meet elsewhere. They had chosen San Francisco, and they were going to meet concurrent with the western states conference. And as you may know, the western states conference initially was put together in order to achieve statehood for Hawaii and Alaska.

Chall: No, I didn't know that.

Eliaser: It was one of the political arms of that movement, and a very effective one, through which I ultimately got to know people like Frank Church, and people from the other states--Mike Gravel. Mike wasn't a Senator when I first knew him in those meetings.

Chall: What did you help to do with this?

Eliaser: This was all being planned out of Roger Kent's headquarters in the end of '56, the beginning of '57. Alan Cranston was then active; I guess he was president of the CDC [California Democratic Council]; he had offices there. It was in the years when everyone was together, which was perfectly marvelous. Alan ran the club movement out of there; Roger ran the state committee out of there; they had space for the county people if they wanted it. The Young Democrats got their mail there. Everybody shared the mimeograph. It was the way it should be done.

Women's Activities for the Western States Democratic Conference

Chall: This was at 212 Sutter, right?

Eliaser: Yes. They had a man in there, professionally, to run the western states conference by the name of Jack Abbott, who died just within the last year. I had come to know all of these people through the work of the previous few months, and Jack asked me if I would be willing to help on the western states conference. Of course, I would have died if he hadn't asked me.

Eliaser: They had women's activities, which nobody else wanted to do--naturally, I was too dumb to know that--and I said I'd love to. Also some press help. Jack was a superb public relations man, but there was just so much he could do when he was running the whole thing. The fund-raising dinner for Stevenson was coming up. Averell Harriman--everybody in the Democratic party in the United States, of any significance, was going to be present for part or the whole of these meetings, so there was a lot of work.

So, I took over the women's activities, which would center around Katie Louchheim, who was then women's chairman of the party. I may have met her once during the campaign; I rather doubt it. I don't think I did. Anyway, I was in charge of setting up a lunch in her honor in the Fairmont Hotel, in a room that held 450 people. I'd never done anything like that in my life. I didn't know where you'd go for lists, how you started. It may have raised a few bucks--it was cost, plus a few bucks. They wanted all the northern counties represented. I had no idea what a county was; I was born here [San Francisco] after all. [laughter]

Chall: [laughter] In the center of the world!

Eliaser: They still say, "You know she won't go to Oakland!"

So, this was an enormous job. There was the luncheon, all press having to do with women's activities; and on the day prior to the luncheon, workshops all day for women's groups on various subjects like fund raising, press, and whatever else. We were segregated, totally. They wanted women labor leaders, and blacks, and whatever else. It was all terrible, when I think back, but that's the way things were done.

Chall: You were accepting it, of course, at that time.

Eliaser: I said, "Sure, whatever it is." I never said no--I had no idea what I was getting into, and I was too dumb to be frightened. Jack Abbott was very helpful. He gave me a list and said, "Now, these are counties." [laughs] And then a woman, whose name was Madeleine Smyth then, and is Madeleine Day now, who has been on the professional payroll of Democratic politics since I can remember, gave me some basic lists of women, or just lists of people, and told me to address to the wives, and leadership lists of women. They were very careful; in retrospect, they were very smart. They said to call everybody, and to address an invitation to everybody. I'd never designed an invitation, never worked with a hotel before, but I did it all.

Eliaser: What they didn't tell me or mention--there are always people with whom they're having problems. That's endemic to politics. In fact, I often say, "People go into politics to let out their hostilities." And so I would call these women, who would just scream at me, and I didn't know who they were. And then I'd introduce myself, and I'd start over and say, "I'm new at this, and I'm volunteering. I'm not on the paid staff, but I would like to have good representation for Mrs. Louchheim."

We did things like have a drawing at the lunch for prizes. I remember Tom Lynch was district attorney, and I asked him if he would draw the ticket for the prize at this women's luncheon. He told me it was against the law, but for me he'd do it. [chuckling]

So, I was involved in, and went to all the meetings as a participant, but I ran all the women's activities, and ended up pretty much running the press room. I met all the political press for the first time, by virtue of running the mimeograph machine or handing out notices at the last minute. That kind of stuff.

And the night of the fifty or a hundred dollar dinner for Adlai, a cousin of mine who has participated for many years, gave me tickets.

But I have always been somebody who'd rather work than be the ticket holder, even after a time when I could afford to be a big contributor or a relatively good one. I worked the door the night of the dinner. I took tickets, saw people to their tables--even though I had my own ticket. It was fun; it was a good experience, and it exposed me to the western states group.

Persona non Grata to the San Francisco County Democratic
Central Committee

Eliaser: I was interested when you handed me this list of [San Francisco] county chairmen since I never was a member of the county committee. I ran once, I think.

Chall: I know you ran, because I saw your materials.

Eliaser: Yes. I ran once or twice.

Chall: Didn't get elected.

Eliaser: Right after the Stevenson '56 race--when I worked with all these young Burtonites, and I learned much from them in the way of strictly mechanical procedures--there was a dinner honoring Phil,

Eliaser: once he won [election to the state assembly]. They had to count the absentee ballots before we knew who was elected. Those were in the days when you counted them later. And so Phil won on the absentee ballot count, and the Young Democrats gave a five dollar dinner in his honor at the Rowing Club here. I thought, oh my goodness. I was a part of this, and I was very gratified he'd won, so I bought a five dollar ticket, which was a lot for me then. I didn't do things of that kind. I was terrified to go alone; it was at night.

I had become very friendly with a labor leader, Marie de Martini Bruce. I think she just died a few weeks ago. Marie Bruce was from the Communications Workers of America, and she was, as long as I can remember, practically, the cochairman of our congressional district, whatever number it was then. Just immovable. I asked if she was going and she said, "Of course." She was delighted to pick me up. We walked into Phil Burton's party, and he was standing there with what appeared to be a glass of water or something very light in it, and he looked so irritated that I walked in with this labor leader. I didn't understand it. I thought, this is nice of me to leave my family and come.

Fortunately, Roger Kent and a lot of my new-found friends were there, and I was made comfortable within ten or fifteen minutes. I didn't know most of the people. There was a dance, and a lot of people asked me to dance, and I really didn't want to. I was coming as a courtesy to Mr. Burton, to pay tribute.

As the evening progressed, he began to drink very heavily. The color of what was in his glass changed radically. And you know, here he was a newly-elected assemblyman, and he took a new volunteer [me] aside, and he said, "I know that you are going to be the next women's chairman." Mind you, at this point I didn't know the structure. I didn't know the club movement, from the state committee, or the county committee. He said, "I know you're going to try to knock over my person." And he mentioned a woman's name; it was Frances Shaskan, I think. And I didn't know her; I may have met her. I didn't know what he was talking about. I had no idea. He said, "You're going to try to knock my organization over, and it's not going to happen." He said, "You are in the ivory tower with all those rich people." He was very abusive. I'm refining that. He was just horrible, and very drunk, and very rude. And the tears started to come down; I didn't cry, but the wetness was on my face. I didn't know what prompted this.

At this point I was with Marie Bruce and Andy [Andrew] Hatcher--remember him? He was one of President Kennedy's press secretaries later--and another member of the black community, Herman Griffin, who is still a labor leader and on the county committee, and who became a good friend of mine.

Eliaser: There were four of us, and Phil kept coming back and doing this, and they finally said--Marie was about to leave and take me home-- "We can't let you go home to Mr. Alanson. You're crying. I mean, this has been the most horrible experience for all of us, and we don't understand it." So they took me up to the Fillmore. In those days there were marvelous late-night drinking places with good piano, good jazz. I'd never done anything like that in my life. They decided they were going to settle me down plenty before I got home, and they sure did! And by the time the evening was over, I'd forgotten the episode entirely.

Chall: Did they try to explain anything to you?

Eliaser: No. Most of them couldn't stand him. They brought me home, and I couldn't have cared less. I had had a wonderful evening, ultimately-- just the four of us out at some bar. And the next day about eleven o'clock, Sala Burton, Mrs. Phillip Burton called me, and she said, "Ann, it was so wonderful of you to come to the party honoring Phil." She said, "I want to thank you for both of us." As I tell you this conversation, I haven't changed it in twenty years, because I always tell it; I come right out and say it. I said, "Sala, it's very nice of you to call, but I think you're calling to tell me that you're aware of your husband's performance last night. Whatever it is, I appreciate your phone call very much." She said, "Well, I'm sorry it offended you so, and he shouldn't have done it, but what he said was the truth." And I said, "I don't understand." I said, "I didn't understand last night, and I don't--" She said, "You're into ivory tower politics. You're the creation of Roger Kent and Libby Smith." I said, "I've only come to know them. I volunteered. I never heard of them when I walked in to help Adlai Stevenson." "That's true dear, but they are grooming you for high places, and Phillip is threatened. I'm very sorry he spoke to you as he did, but he didn't tell an untruth." I said, "I don't know what they're grooming me for-- addressing more Christmas cards maybe, or more mailings, or more publicity, or whatever." And she said, "Well, we understand each other, something, goodbye." It was only a moderately pleasant conversation, well mannered.

That was the beginning of a relationship which was to keep me out of being active in my own county because Burton, from the time he was elected, controlled this county, and still does. I had to circumvent San Francisco County where I live, in order to remain active.

Roger and Libby wanted me to come to the state convention that year in Sacramento, which must have been July or August [1956]. They had no intention of having me run for anything, anymore than I did; I'd never been to a convention, and it would have been very foolish. I'd already started the CDC thing. They tried to get me an appointment

Eliaser: to the convention. Today, I believe you have to be appointed out of your own district, or by someone you know awfully well from another district. In those days, they had things that were called pocket appointments. The chairman had them, because there was crossfiling, and there very often were no Democratic candidates, and therefore, those absent candidacies or their appointments would have gone to Mr. Kent or whoever was chairman. I was able to be an appointee from Siskiyou county or something, so I did go to the convention as a delegate from someplace ridiculous.

Phillip Burton did everything to make it impossible for me to go to that. He had a little deficit, which is what this dinner was about--aren't they always. And, I went as a courtesy, and I was kind of proud that I was working in the same building with him. It was a shocking experience. The relationships have improved, but not noticeably; none so you'd know it. [laughs]

Chall: Were the regulars from the party at that dinner for Phil Burton?

Eliaser: They were mostly Phil's friends--Young Democrats, and older people, attorneys from downtown, people who had business with the legislature, because he was elected--but nobody I really particularly knew.

Chall: Nobody from the party as such?

Eliaser: Roger Kent was there, and was appalled, but not surprised, because he knew him.

Chall: Did anybody ultimately try to explain this to you?

Eliaser: Oh, Roger Kent said, "He hates all of us. We spend all our executive committee meetings fighting with Phil Burton." He said, "That's what we do. Now we have one more thing to add to the list, you."

Well, and so I just moved around. I became a creature of Alan Cranston's creation in the CDC, immediately at a statewide level, and continued with Joe Wyatt, and at the same time moved into the state committee as a member. Roger would always arrange an appointment with me till I became known enough and served enough people well, so that I had my own appointments, or my own choices of appointments.

Chall: There aren't very many from San Francisco.

Eliaser: No. I don't think I've ever been appointed from San Francisco. I've been a statewide appointee because, as you know, people who run for governor or president, there are all of those appointments.

Chall: I wanted to go back and ask you about your activity with the Western States Democratic Conference, and your working with the group of women, because at the time, wasn't Pauline Rowland the Northern California women's division chairman?

Eliaser: She was from Yolo as I recall, is that right? That's a long memory. She never was very active as I recall, or didn't get along awfully well. And there was always the problem when you acknowledge your Valley counties, by giving them an officer, that they weren't where the work was to be done. This was always the argument for instance, when Mr. Kent retired. Shouldn't we have a chairman from the Valley? Yes, but the headquarters is in San Francisco, that's where the staff is; how do you manage it? This has been a traditional argument in the Democratic party whether it was a woman's group or the male leader. The headquarters is in San Francisco, so who runs the show if the boss lives in Fresno, or in this case, Davis possibly. I think that's where she was from.

Chall: Lionel Steinberg was the northern vice-chairman.

Eliaser: He was the other person Mr. Kent fought with, regularly. Lionel Steinberg and Phillip Burton against the world was what those meetings were.

Chall: Why was Lionel Steinberg such a thorn in his side?

Eliaser: I don't really know, because I was just such a new person. I'm a friend of Lionel's and I have great respect for him. He was arbitrary. I think there are personality differences in all of this, and I think possibly issue differences. I think a number of my older friends were pragmatic because they wanted to win. Whereas you would find Phil Burton and his friends, like Mr. Steinberg, taking positions which were perhaps more correct on an issue, but which would dilute the potential of winning the campaign.

How many years have you seen the Democratic party self-destructive, in terms of winning, so you can achieve your goals? The McGovern campaign was the ultimate.

Chall: Yes. I guess this is part of the problem with all parties, the Democrats as well as the Republicans. Maybe California's just different; more of a problem.

Eliaser: True. We're an exaggeration of everything, it's said.

Chall: So, you've always been working at the state level?

Eliaser: Right. Not because I haven't wanted to be local. I work very hard locally and always help local candidates, and am happy to work in local headquarters. But, I never could be an official part of the party here because of the Burtons.

Chall: Would they have accepted you if you hadn't been working in the state office?

Eliaser: With Roger Kent and Libby? Yes.

Chall: So, you would have had to leave one in order to work with the other.

Eliaser: It was never offered, because I didn't know about the dichotomy, and I just kind of proceeded blindly ahead, because I was enjoying it, and learning and making progress.

Dollars for Democrats and Other Fund-Raising Ventures

[Interview 4: November 30, 1976]##

Chall: Today I want to continue with your first few years of experience in the Democratic party.

Eliaser: In those days, Alan and Roger Kent shared office space. Alan had CDC, he was president, and Roger was state committee chairman, or northern chairman, or whatever that rotational thing was; Libby Smith was there full time or a lot of the time, and I believe even the San Francisco county committee--anybody who was active--had space there. It was marvelous. It's the way things should always be. We were pulling together, and it was a gorgeous time for the Democratic party in California. Even though I'm sure I was only stuffing envelopes and learning.

It seems too, at that part of '57, and I think we covered this in the last interview, is when they popped me into the Democratic National Committee in conjunction with the western states conference.

Chall: Yes. I do have that.

Eliaser: And chronologically from there--and I'm vague, not intentionally--Roger asked me to do the Dollars for Democrats drive. I'm giving you a lot of material today, but not going back this far.

But, I think in '57, I did Dollars for Democrats, which was a combined club and state committee activity. As I said a second ago, there was no difference. There was, but there wasn't, since we all worked together and everybody got credit for it.

Somewhere in there, between the Democratic National Western States Conference and Dollars for Democrats, was something called Democratic Party Night. I think it was '57--set up by the national committee, and then broken down to the state and local level--in which a party was held in as many places as you could initiate it, and the proceeds split up three ways. We still do things like that. The national committee took a third, the state kept a third, and

Eliaser: the local group did. And again, because it was here, it was a combination of state committee and club activities. I put on the whole thing for Northern California.

Chall: That was called Democratic Party Night?

Eliaser: Or National Party Night or something like that. We urged all northern counties--and I don't think I knew what a county was politically--to do this. At that time, the person who helped me was working with Alan; he was the treasurer of the CDC, Tom Saunders. And Tom sat and spent hours with me explaining about counties, and showing me everything I needed in print. He helped me to write letters encouraging the county leaders. He said I used too many commas always, still does.

It was my job. I had no feeling of structure, I just took Alan's lead and Tom's, and I did this, as well as putting on the local party. In other words, being the manager for the whole north, stimulating the activity, keeping the communication, bringing the money in, and being responsible 'cause nobody else would, for the one in San Francisco where we rented the California Club, as I recall. I brought in two personal acquaintances to do the San Francisco affair because there was no one in the headquarters who had the time. They were Elizabeth Heller, the youngest child of Ellie Heller, and one of Liz's closest friends, Nancy Sloss, who then had just left a job at Paul Elder's bookstore. They came in as volunteers, as was I, to work with me on this. They were in charge of the San Francisco one; but we really did that together. And it was very rewarding. It was very big, profitable and attractive, and press-worthy. And they stayed in after.

It was during that period I think, Alan or someone hired Liz Heller. She became the full-time secretary for one of them.

Chall: Of the CDC?

Eliaser: Or it could have been Roger, someone at the desk. And Nancy Sloss was eventually hired too. They both stayed after that. Neither of them was married, and they wanted employment. Tom Saunders encouraged them--I recall this awfully well--to ask for money after that, and to get a job. They were both highly trained, they were generous with the hours they could give, and he felt it wasn't fair that they should be working professionally and full time, and not be remunerated as were other people in the office, in spite of the money their families had. They brought in a good deal of freshness and creativity.

Eliaser: As a result of that party and my inviting them to help me, they were ultimately hired--though I'm not sure of the chronology. And it was right after that party night thing (I could be mixed up on the years), that Roger asked me to take over the Dollars for Democrats drive in Northern California.

At some point in 1957, Roger had all the former Stevenson leadership, the new legislative leadership, both CDC and state committee leadership, all to his home in Kentfield for a thank you party. It was the end of '57 or early '58; I remember I was working for Lionel Steinberg, who was the Dollars for Democrats chairman, and was Roger's Northern California chairman. That was one of the great pitched battles in party history, because Roger was always the boss and Mr. Steinberg was next.

He was from Fresno at that time. His interests were always agricultural. He's now moved into an area around Palm Springs and his agricultural interests are just in back of the desert there.

Chall: He was the southern division chairman at one time too [1958-1960].

Eliaser: But Roger was always number one in those days, and there was always a battle, so they gave Lionel the job of Dollar Day, because they thought it was a crumbly job, and I was selected to be the coordinator, which translated means, the one who does the work, under him. During all of this time, it seems to me, I was demonstrating my ability to work in fund raising. That's the time when Alan and Tom Saunders jointly asked me to be cochairman of the finance committee of CDC.

Chall: You were a cochairman for Northern California for Dollars for Democrats at one time with a Reginald Watt, and I wondered who he was.

Eliaser: Reg Watt is from Chico, California. And at that time, he was either a law partner or a senior lawyer of the law firm of Goldstein, Barceleaux, and Goldstein, which was one of the largest, Valley law firms in California--dealt with water problems and numbers of very serious, heavy, political, governmental issues, and was headed by the late Oscar Goldstein. This has to go back a number of years. His son, Burton Goldstein, is now in San Francisco, and heads that law firm. Mrs. Oscar Goldstein died just within the last two weeks, in her late eighties, possibly early nineties.

So, Reg Watt at that time was a young lawyer. Reg is older; I'm fifty, let's put him closer to sixty; I'm not sure. But he worked up there on the legal problems that that office handled; it took him all over the Central Valley. And he was a member of the state central committee, obviously. And whether he held office

Vote for ANN ALANSON

For Democratic County Central Committee



Ann Alanson accompanies Pres. Truman in San Francisco Dollars for Democrats Drive

ANN ALANSON IS A REAL WORKING DEMOCRAT

Democratic Precinct Worker, Stevenson for President Campaign, 1952

Member, San Francisco Finance Committee for Stevenson, 1956
Chairman for Women's Activities, Democratic National Conference

Chairman of Finance Committee, California Democratic Council
Member, State Democratic Central Committee

Chairman of Northern California Dollars for Democrats Drive
Publicity Chairman of California Democratic Council Conventions, 1959

Precinct Chairman of Brann for Assembly Campaign

Member: Democratic Women's Forum of San Francisco; Gold Gate Democratic Club; Democratic League of San Francisco

ELECT ANN ALANSON TO YOUR CENTRAL COMMITTEE

 PULL THE LAST LEVER IN THE FIRST LINE OF CANDIDATES FOR THE SAN FRANCISCO COUNTY DEMOCRATIC CENTRAL COMMITTEE, Number 38-A

38-A

Ann
Alanson

Publicist

Eliaser: within the party, I'm not clear on, or maybe he was Butte County chairman at some time. In any case, he's currently a judge. He's a Jerry Brown appointee. So, he's one of the people who doesn't fit the mold, who comes out of an earlier time in politics, and was older than most of the Jerry Brown appointees.

Chall: The Dollars for Democrats activity was, from something I've read, apparently successful. The Democratic party actually did make money on Dollars for Democrats.

Eliaser: The first year, in which I was just another volunteer--1956 was the first year here--I think we made \$186,000. It was remarkable! And then I went in from there.

Chall: And what did you do? By this time, apparently you knew the top people in each northern county so you could call them to activate their troops?

Eliaser: Yes.

Chall: Was there literature to send out?

Eliaser: In '56 we had coupon books--that's all I remember--as just one of the many troops. But you had the Stevenson body of volunteers to call upon. In '57 we had to develop material, and I think I've given you a lot of it, although it may be latter years. Each year we developed it, and the great moving force behind that was Nancy Swadesh, whom you probably know.

We hired her, paid her; I'm not sure which or for how many years, but she was a paid staff person to run this. I learned a good deal of what I know about organization from her.

Chall: She's still active, I've seen her name somewhere recently.

Eliaser: Yes. She ran something called the Skills Center, opened it here, a minority training thing, and is doing something else now. She's fully employed. And there in the middle somewhere, she was Governor Brown's appointee to the State Industrial Welfare Commission. She was the mover, the professional mover.

Chall: Pat Brown?

Eliaser: Yes.

Chall: Somebody has recently asked me whether all of this effort on the Dollars for Democrats drive was worth it in terms of the intake.

Eliaser: Lots of people think not, but I always saw--and I think you've seen some of the material I was responsible for--that the organizational by-product was well worth the effort. There aren't dollars in the world to buy what that put together for future campaigns, for bringing groups together. I would say Dollars for Democrats was not worth it, if you were counting dollars specifically.

The counties were given their share, their third; a third was supposed to go to the national committee, and the state committee was supposed to keep the middle third. Roger always found a way to deprive Washington, D.C., of their share. So we kept a rather large amount and we were able to portion it out to the legislative races, which therefore gave the Democratic party a voice in Sacramento, which is what it doesn't have anymore.

Assemblyman John O'Connell was an example. A large piece of his campaign war chest was from the Dollars for Democrats drive or cumulative activities. Then if you go back and ask him to vote for, let us say, fair employment practices or some kind of legislation which is important, he has an obligation to speak with you, because you've helped pay for his campaign. This is where the Democratic party has failed today. We no longer deliver troops or money, so why should anybody listen?

Chall: I see. In those days it was really just part of the volunteer activity.

Eliaser: Oh, yes. It all was. It's all lost somewhere.

Finance Cochairman, California Democratic Council

Eliaser: At some time in that period, 1957-1958, Alan Cranston asked me if I would be the finance cochairman of the California Democratic Council. I didn't know what that was either.

Chall: Oh, my goodness! [laughter]

Eliaser: But I'd been working in the headquarters so he knew I was diligent, and he knew I'd raised money, which was what that was about.

His treasurer was Tom Saunders from over on your side of the Bay. He lives here now, but he was a Berkeley resident at that time and raising a young family. Alan and Tom asked if I would do this and if I would go to San Diego with them to their next meeting. Well, I was horrified, but I said, "Sure." I flew down with all the stuff and the whole gang; went to the U.S. Grant Hotel in San Diego, where

Eliaser: I'd never been, and met my cochairman who was a gentleman from Laguna Beach by the name of Peterman. He lives in Mexico now. I hear from him occasionally.

Everyone talked about selling buttons, or silver pins that said CDC, or a silver broom--a new broom sweeps clean--all those old things; I can't keep them straight in my head--for a dollar or a dollar and a half. And you'd argue till two in the morning about how much you should sell these things for, and who would get the money. And you were talking about non-money, really.

I'm afraid I was aware of that even at that early stage--that this was an exercise for most of these people to get away from their families or whatever they were doing. And although they meant awfully well, I didn't see this as taking us anyplace, and I told Alan so, only because I was too dumb to do otherwise. I said, "I'll be happy to help you, but I'm not sure I can raise an awful lot of money with this committee that you have presented to me or presented me to them. I don't think this is going to work; we'll talk a lot, and I will try." So I said, "Perhaps I can come up with other ways to raise money that will help you with one of your causes as well."

Tom Saunders said to me at that time, "Try and live with it." He said, "Once you're accepted by these people and your willingness to work is demonstrated, you can pick the leadership and do bigger and better things--or bring them into next year's Dollars for Democrats, or any of the number of other things that you want to do, but first be tolerant." Anyway, it was a great experience; I loved it, and I stayed.

Chall: Had you had more experience than any of the others that you know of?

Eliaser: No, not as much.

Chall: Or was that just a different way of looking at it?

Eliaser: Well, I was bored. No, I didn't have any experience at all, except that little that I've told you about. But it seemed to me it was people who were trying to get away for the weekend and socialize and be with one another, and talk and make work.

Chall: Oh, I see. They weren't really seriously concerned with this problem at that time?

Eliaser: When you boil down to meetings of members of an executive committee, the refinement of an overall group, you're dealing with a lot of egos, including my own, and people who want to be heard, and enjoy the sound of their own voice, and repeat their ideas. I got quite experienced at this over the years.

Eliaser: In the general meetings, out of committee, there was a congressional district--the twenty-third (I'll never forget the number; I don't know whose it was)--which was a perennial sore spot in CDC board meetings. There were always arguments about who were the proper representatives of the Twenty-third Congressional District. When I saw it coming up on the agenda, I always walked out of the room and went for a swim, because I began to anticipate-- [laughter]

Chall: Did you ultimately become a finance cochairman on that board?

Eliaser: Oh, I accepted it, and took the advice, which was good advice, to listen, and cooperate, and contribute what I could. And I'm sure my ideas were just as small, and sometimes smaller. When you're dealing with clubs--and I had this to learn--the payment of dues, that form of tithing was really enough.

Tom Saunders that year or the following year came up with something called CDC Christmas cards which didn't break even. We printed them, sent books out to the various clubs all over the state. Again you had a division set up and split [the proceeds]. We all loaned our own money to it to get it off the ground; we all lost a great deal! Because by the time the clubs are taxed for dues to maintain the clubs, and then the dues that go into the statewide structure to maintain a convention structure, that's really all people can give. Because, too, you were only going back to your own people, always with these little ideas, you were taxing the same source.

The idea of Dollars for Democrats which I found was so good, or any other form of more open fund raising, is going public, going to registered Democrats, rather than to people who are already part of an active club movement, or the party, and having to pay. Very often your club leadership were also appointees to the Democratic State Central Committee where they were taxed for dues. There was just so far that you could take it, and I began to see it; it was a learning experience.

Chall: I understand that in time the clubs became rather hostile to the statewide organization, because they did feel they were overly taxed financially.

Eliaser: The legislators wanted to control the club movement anyway. So great hostility sprung up which really reached its high point during the reign of Jesse Unruh.

Chall: That was after '58, of course.

Eliaser: Yes. And somewhere along the line, in Alan's tenure or somebody elses--

Chall: Joe Wyatt followed him.

Eliaser: I think Joe put me as the head of the publicity, his total press-- He moved me out of money entirely. I still was raising lots of money for the Democratic party for Roger, because I wore two hats at all times. I was very active in the club movement, but also worked for the state committee, though I was never a member.

The Bookfair

Chall: Continuing on with finances, I picked up from your literature that you had been in charge, at least as far as I know, of two Bookfairs in San Francisco for the Democratic party.

Eliaser: I think one. That was a huge earner, it was tremendous, and was the start of a new club. That happened as a result of the Bookfair.

I had friends from St. Louis, friends here who were originally from St. Louis, where there was a philanthropic group that did, still does presumably, an annual bookfair. They were kind enough, the St. Louis group, to send me the structure of it: how they did it, how they worked it; it was an all-year-round project, still is. They had central points in the city where books were left off or where they could be picked up. They had crews that did the pick up, crews that did the soliciting, crews that marked books, sorted and priced all year, so forth. And because I'd been in the book business long enough, I had the contacts that I could bring in for professional help.

So, we took a spot in the old Montgomery Block--long gone here-- for three days. But we prepared for months in advance in the home of Naomie and Bob Lauter in Presidio Terrace. The books were accumulated by friends of theirs and mine, trucked in, usually in family station wagons. Then crews of women, two days a week for months, sorting them, with my professional friends, teaching them pricing. The rare books they left for me, and I found that in order to get rare books donated, you had to give them yourself. I donated, I think I mentioned it, a signed, limited edition of Mourning Becomes Electra.

Chall: Oh, is that right!

Eliaser: Which I regret. But, it stimulated some persons to give fine libraries or a portion of their personal collections. The bulk of the books that sold for good prices, current books, were from the home of Edward and Ellie Heller. When they heard what I was giving,

Eliaser: and what I was attempting to do, they asked me to send a truck down for the day. The bookshelves in their home in Atherton were three and four rows deep into the shelf, and they just, I think, cleaned off the back three or four rows! My truck was not large enough; they had to go back, and then they didn't get it all.

Chall: What a gift!

Eliaser: Really. And this Mrs. Macauley I mentioned to you, that brought me into the first Stevenson campaign, was still alive at that time, and she arranged with an estate of a friend of hers that the books come to me. And there were some very valuable things, I think some Theodore Roosevelt material of great value, and some other things.

Chall: What an endeavor!

Eliaser: We did records that year too. And I got some fantastic records; I forget where they came from, but really fine ones, collections.

And so the work went on for months in preparation, and then we hired a cheap mover, the most reasonable mover we could find to get us into the old Montgomery Block. It was not a thing volunteers could do by then. It was too large.

Then we had to rent tables and shelves--I forget how I got the equipment there--and we borrowed grocery carts for people to shop with. Bags, grocery bags, cartons, all of this kind of thing. We ran shifts, and I bought little smocks, all the same color, so that the workers, money-takers, could be identified. A lot of men were involved in this. They loved it!

We had advertised in the classified section. I wasn't aware of how important this was to book dealers. The lines outside of our door for hours before we opened, and for the days before, mostly of dealers, was unbelievable.

You see, we preceded the Friends of the Library, or that activity. In fact, many of those people came from us, that are now doing that for the City.

Chall: And this was done twice?

Eliaser: I did it once.

Chall: I read about the second annual Bookfair.

Eliaser: Yes, maybe someone did it after, maybe there was a second one.

Eliaser: I remember the first one because I was at Democratic headquarters all day, and Naomie Lauter was at her home. I remember sitting down at the typewriter every afternoon at four o'clock and writing her what needed to be done the next day, to keep filling her in on details that she would then administrate with the volunteers at her house. I was directing from the office.

Chall: A tremendous job.

Eliaser: It was thousands of dollars. I can't remember.

Chall: Let's see. I have one figure here, that in 1958, \$2300 was made. Is that profit?

Eliaser: That's profit. After rental of equipment, and so forth. To us that was a lot of money then. At that time, the St. Louis group was up into like \$42,000 with their numbers.

Chall: Forty-two thousand!

Eliaser: It's a really big undertaking.

Chall: You made \$2300.

Eliaser: Well, they got--because it's philanthropic as opposed to politics--the publishers' castoffs. They were the only ones in the country for years. It's been a long time ago--twenty years ago. In those days before book dealers learned to do the mark-down thing, publishers would just ship them large quantities--library discards and so forth.

Chall: This was, then, one of your primary activities that took most of your time?

Eliaser: Oh, no! I must have been doing two or three of these other things at the same time, which is why I must have been at headquarters with Naomie out here. Every day I took an hour or two to outline what would have to be done, so that I kept it moving from where I was while I was doing my other office jobs. I'm sure I was doing at least three things at once, as a matter of fact.

The Stanley Mosk campaign [for attorney general] was emerging at this same time. And out of this book group came the Stanley Mosk campaign and the Golden Gate Democratic Club.

Organizing the Golden Gate Democratic Club and the Stanley Mosk Campaign, 1958

- Chall: Now how did that occur with the Golden Gate Democratic Club? I noticed it was one of the three that you had some activity with.
- Eliaser: Naomie Lauter and Charles O'Brien, who was then with the World Affairs Council or some such--one of those kinds of things--and I, were kind of the movers of this Bookfair, and it was our combination of friends that put it together. And afterwards, the three of us formed the Golden Gate Democratic Club. The first meeting which was composed entirely of people who had participated in this book thing, because there were hundreds of them, was in my living room on Euclid Avenue. We had people for brandy and coffee. This was the basic group in Northern California, under Charles's aegis really, that got the Mosk campaign going in the primaries.
- Chall: That's the 1958 campaign.
- Eliaser: Because nobody ever heard of him up here; he was a judge in Los Angeles. So except for a few people in B'nai B'rith and Jewish philanthropy--that was it. He was a total unknown quantity, and that primary race was against [state] Senator Robert I. McCarthy of San Francisco. And that was heavy, because the senatorial districts up in the north had a lot of clout in those days. It was before one man-one vote.
- Chall: It was interesting that McCarthy would run regardless of whether he was endorsed by the CDC. Was it a tough race, do you recall?
- Eliaser: It wasn't the most popular thing I ever did in San Francisco.
- Chall: Yes. I wondered about your choice. I assumed your choice was with the CDC.
- Eliaser: It wasn't a CDC-motivated thing. I knew Robert McCarthy, and I met Mr. Mosk, so the decision was made solely on merit and not endorsement. I was able to do things, aside from my political involvement at that time, for Stanley. We gave a dinner at our home. The book group gave a great big cocktail party to introduce him to all the workers. I remember that; a champagne party at Naomie's house, which is enormous.

I had what had been planned as a stag dinner for Stanley, where I invited Sid Kossen, who was then political editor of the Examiner. It was off the record--obviously you couldn't ask someone from the press. He is Jewish and takes pride in his Judaism. I had Dan Koshland; I guess Louis Heilbron--that level of philanthropic,

Eliaser: community, religious, political leadership. Overall leaders in the community that I knew or was related to. I was able to do this because I knew them and saw them anyway. I think I invited Alphonso Zirpoli to kind of chair this dinner. I don't know why. [laughs] My token Gentile.

Chall: But these were not necessarily all Democrats, were they?

Eliaser: Mostly, yes.

Chall: Is Dan Koshland?

Eliaser: Well, he's a registered Republican, but that's never counted for much if you look at his contributing and his pattern of support.

So I had them all to the house, and there were to be no women, which is I think why I invited Al Zirpoli. I had worked with him over the years on a number of things; I think abolition of the death penalty is how we became close friends. I felt that my husband, who was a gracious and generous host, would be uncomfortable in a chair situation. Zirpoli was supporting Mosk, and I needed one person to understand the politics of this thing. I was either going to stay at Naomie's or be in the kitchen, but I was not going to be present.

To my great chagrin Mrs. Mosk arrived. So I quickly got somebody else's wife to come, because it was too difficult otherwise, and I guess I sat down. It was a small house; it was hard to do. It wasn't that I didn't want women; it was arranged a certain way for all kinds of political reasons. And I had to redo it a bit so far as the room would hold any changes. Our concepts have changed a lot in twenty years anyway.

Chall: Of having a dinner of this kind?

Eliaser: Yes. Anyway, I think everyone who was there left feeling he wanted to support Stanley Mosk. And I did a lot more of that kind of thing, just because of where I belonged and what was my home base, rather than political base.

Naomie and Charles delivered that club, those hundreds of activists who had done the book sale, literally. What they did, out of that group of hundreds who came for champagne, was to organize meetings in homes for Stanley for the following two-day weekend. Four or five meetings on Saturday, four or five on Sunday. And they accelerated that activity on weekends only. As the groups of supporters grew out of this initial thing, they did a pyramid--inverse kind of pyramid operation--so that Stanley would be doing fourteen to fifteen stops in the Bay Area a day. Just fast shots, where he or his representatives spread out and covered

Eliaser: for him. So initially this book group, which formed the Golden Gate Democratic Club, was the Stanley Mosk organization in the Democratic primary.

Chall: You must have had tremendous organization, then, for that Bookfair.

Eliaser: We did, and we had a lot of friends and a lot of people who wanted to do something they considered intellectual, rather than grubby. It was grubby, but it was intellectual. It was fun!

That club still exists. It's gone through a lot of motions and changes, but it's still one of the better clubs. But that club had so many dues-paying members--had the biggest clout in the City at one time. I take very little credit for it. It was originally my idea, and I perhaps presented the vehicle that helped it become something, but Naomie Lauter and Charlie O'Brien from there on did the work. Because I then moved, by some natural, but almost unconscious inclination, into the money, into the heavy community leadership.

Raising Money: Personal Consequences and Commitment

Chall: I understood that you were the fund raiser par excellence and I just wondered how this all came about. Partly it's ability and partly it is your base.

Eliaser: It's where I come from in terms of family and friends, but it was a very difficult thing. I don't know if we've talked about it at all.

Chall: No. I would be interested to know how you were able to take this base and--

Eliaser: I couldn't. It caused almost a collapse emotionally for me--dealing with money.

Chall: Even just asking for money from your family and friends?

Eliaser: It was hard. I was brought up not to discuss it. Well, women were brought up in my family not to discuss money. You didn't know about money.

My grandfather died when I was twelve or thirteen, let's say, and he left a substantial will which was published in the newspaper, and our governess was instructed to cut that out of the paper so that we wouldn't see it, we wouldn't know. So you hear about it from the kids in the school yard, right?

Eliaser: But that's how I was brought up. Money was not lady-like, money was something you didn't deal with, it was kind of a little dirty, and bad manners. And I found myself in this situation in Dollars for Democrats, and then moving up "in class," as we say at the race track [laughs] into the heavier money scene little by little, and it caused tremendous internal conflict which I didn't understand. There would be a Democratic dinner, and I would be out in the audience, and Roger would be up at the speaker's table, and he would always give me great credits and ask me to stand to take credit for all of this fund raising, and I really was physically ill. I would almost literally have to go some place and vomit. That is not an exaggeration.

Exhibitionism may have been part of what was bothering me. That's a whole other subject which may have been sexual, I don't know; but the money thing was obviously something. It was a very heavy trip that I wasn't dealing with. And it was somewhere chronologically in this period that I started in analysis.

Chall: It's interesting, though, that you would have just fallen in, in a way, to this whole fund-raiding activity. It must have been almost second nature to you. Elizabeth Gatov said she didn't like it and that she never did anything that had to do with raising funds.

Eliaser: I didn't like it either.

Chall: But she didn't like it and she didn't do it. And you didn't like it, but you--

Eliaser: Made myself do it. It was my German discipline for starters, and being brought up really by this governess. Some of the ugliest tales I could tell you--that if we didn't like something and it made us sick to our stomach, we were forced to eat it anyway. Ugly, horrible stories.

It was a split family when we were little kids. When my mother left the City, we were in the custody of my father, which was most unusual, and therefore brought up by servants. And we had a German governess who was most unpleasant. These were disciplines that were taught us and that was that.

I had to make my bed every morning no matter how many servants were in the house. And if the sheets weren't tight and straight, that bed was torn apart, and I was made to do it over again until it was right.

It didn't matter that I didn't like to raise money. That became my job. Someone saw something, a talent in me, I didn't understand. But it just triggered me into a very expensive psychoanalysis, and

- Eliaser: coming to deal with the exploring of my childhood, and working through numbers of other problems at the same time. But if anything triggered it, it was the money. I was ashamed, and it made me feel dirty.
- Chall: And yet you have this tremendous ability to organize and get people to do what you ask them to--skills in leadership.
- Eliaser: I have a lot of my own discipline. A tremendous amount of my own discipline.
- Chall: But they must have recognized it, because they always marched when you said to--all your friends.
- Eliaser: Yes. Well, I manage with all of this, to make what we do, no matter how unattractive it is, or boring, or whatever--to make it fun, enjoyable, and to somehow take the time to explain what it is about, so that we understand the ultimate goal, what it is we're contributing to.

Whenever I do a mailing, for example now, I stop with the volunteers and explain what it is, and why we're doing it, and what the end result will be. Otherwise, this kind of work is too unpleasant. But if you can see some goal that's beautiful, it's possible to put up with a lot.

- Chall: You knew the goal for raising money was important; it was obvious.
- Eliaser: That's it.
- Chall: And you happened to have a flair for doing it.

When people say that the "Jewish community" (using those two words) contributed a great deal financially to the Democratic party, is that term correct, in your estimation?

- Eliaser: Oh, sure. Republicans too, and symphony, and opera, and community chest.
- Chall: Now I'm thinking of Democratic party activities. Was it the Jewish community or some members of the Jewish community?
- Eliaser: Oh, it isn't the whole Jewish community--the Democratic party.
- Chall: Yes. I'm talking only about the Democratic party.
- Eliaser: This question has come up in the last week, is why it interests me that you ask. You know as well as I that Jews are trained from the time they're old enough to understand anything, the need to

Eliaser: give--the obligation to give. I think politics is no different than charity, because I think many Jews look upon politics as taking care of one's fellow man; I certainly hope so. That's one motive. There are others.

The newer Jewish money, if you want me to talk about it--the heavy Jewish money--very often in Democratic politics is newly acquired money, and that money is given for a whole other reason than Dan Koshland, for example, gives his. That is a fast buy into the community. The learning that in your socioeconomic pyramid--status--it's a status-buying procedure.

Chall: The Democratic party is important enough for that in this community, or was?

Eliaser: Well, for many years at least, it was an entre to business, government contracts, a little highway paving, buildings to be rented, and so forth and so on.

The difference for us is when Dan gives to Pete McClosky, or gave to me for Jimmy Carter, or whatever--whole other motive. He doesn't need to buy position for himself, he owns the world if he wants it; he's not interested. There's a difference between the person who gives who has "arrived"--among Jews and Gentiles, there's no difference--and the person who is buying something with his contribution. I understand that. That was a hard thing for me to deal with too.

Chall: But you're able to go and get it.

Eliaser: It's harder for me to go to the person who's buying something, even though I have nothing to sell. That is a person I basically don't like; with whom I haven't a language in common.

Chall: Now didn't you tell me at one time that the older Jewish community, that from which you came, was Republican?

Eliaser: Mostly, yes. I still get their money though. Ah-han! It must be personal. I hadn't thought about it till you asked. [laughter]

Chall: This term, "the Jewish community" has always puzzled me a little bit, knowing that the San Francisco Jewish community was largely Republican, and knowing that there were a few people who were definitely committed Democrats, like the Hellers. But I really don't know the community well enough to know.

Eliaser: They don't like to think of themselves as members of the Jewish community, though.

Chall: Those are the only Democratic party names I knew for sure.

Eliaser: Well, on your side of the Bay, though they're not identified with Democratic money particularly--Joan and Dick Haber, the Jim Harts. They certainly were Democratic leaders in their day. Ruth surely was. And that's part of the old time community here. Helen Moncharsh, which isn't old community, but really old time in perspective from today. Then, Nancy Sloss.

The last time I saw Jim and Ruth Hart was at Nancy Sloss's mother's house [Eleanor Fleishhacker], when she lived across the street. She's a Democrat, I think. She's always been very generous. There certainly is a dichotomy in that family because Eleanor's brother Mortimer Fleishhacker, Jr. was a conservative Republican leader. The Haases are all registered Republicans, but they supported Pat Brown, enormously generous; and Walter Haas, Jr. was one of Alan's cochairmen last time.

I've just come out of this delightful experience with them that made the Brandeis University dinner possible for me to do. And the man from L.A. for whom I worked directly, called me yesterday to send back the rest of the stamps--if you can believe that kind of miniscule thinking. Only the Haases and their staff at Levi Strauss saved my mentality; they just kept me above water.

Working in the California Democratic Council: Leadership Styles

Chall: Were you on the board of CDC as a result of being finance cochairman?

Eliaser: There's a slight difference. The board is made up of elected district members. The board had their top, their executive committee of chairman or president, vice-presidents from various districts, and congressional district cochairmen. That was the board.

However, finance committee and other committees, like publicity, which I served on and so forth--the chairmen of those committees were invited to board meetings and invited to participate. We were non-voting members. [pause] I'm almost positive of that. We're talking about really ancient history; I'm sure that's correct.

Chall: So that actually you worked for the CDC in finance when the need arose?

Eliaser: Yes. I went to all of their board meetings from almost the time of this San Diego meeting that I mentioned to you. At the same time, I also went to Roger's state committee meetings in a similar capacity. I was not an elected representative till much later. And that brings me right back to Phillip Burton.

I never had an opportunity to be an elected member of anything from this district, because this district, since I started in politics had been really dominated by Phil Burton, and he never wished for me to have an elected position. So when I had the inner strength and fortitude to seek this and feel that I would be able to deal with it, I went right around the district thing, and ran for a Northern California office, so I didn't have to deal with Phil Burton.

Chall: A Northern California office?

Eliaser: I was women's chairman for Northern California in the Democratic central committee.

I worked for the CDC and state committee continually straight through for these years, no more or less for either. I gave to them evenly. So that when I became national committeewoman, which was a state committee operation, the CDC, at their next board meeting presented me with flowers, because they thought I was their's. But I thought I was always everybody's, and I didn't think about myself in those terms; I just served.

Chall: Then in terms of the problems that would arise and did arise in the CDC with respect to issues, and their relationship with the party pros--the regulars in the Democratic party and the legislators after 1958--what was your general balance or role? Were you an issue-oriented person? A pragmatically oriented person? Did you find yourself in trouble, politically, between the two? Because after '58, I believe, there were--and long before that, of course--some really serious problems between the CDC and the party regulars over issues, over the orientation of the club movement.

Eliaser: I think I was an issues person with the CDC is those years.

Once Governor Brown was elected, I began to understand the problems that he had to deal with in order to maintain his political control of the state and to achieve anything that the CDC believed in or anybody else did. And he came right in with a fabulous program that the CDC could approve of almost a hundred percent. And after effecting that, which we did as a party, the following term he had to, in order to hold onto the legislature, to adjust.

##

Chall: Who were some of the people in the CDC whom you knew well? After Alan Cranston, one, I would assume, might have been Joseph Wyatt, since you were most active during his years as president [1958-1961], weren't you?

Eliaser: Well, Alan. I'd been a friend of Alan's during his presidency [1953-1958]. I consider Alan one of my closest friends, you know, just in my personal life today, and it all started there. And I feel that he would always be at my side or I at his, aside from politics. Many of my friendships came out of the political world, and I no longer consider them political friendships.

Chall: Can you contrast Cranston as president and Wyatt, and tell about each of them?

Eliaser: Yes [laughs] I can! Alan was serious; gave full time to it. I don't recall that Alan did anything else. He was in that office almost full time. We used to kid. I was very friendly with the secretaries who all came up out of the volunteer movement with me, and ended up working there.

Alan would write letters to people saying, "Thank you for thanking me for thanking you," kind of thing. I didn't understand at that time why this dialogue was being kept open. [laughs] It took me a while to learn that Alan was about to run for office.

He ran it well and creatively, and he gave an awful lot of himself, and his own resources, and the resources of his family. His wife was a brilliant political person, a great support to him in those years.

Joe Wyatt was the most professional chairman I've ever seen in my life. Brilliant, incisive, funny.

Chall: Yes. People talk about his sense of humor.

Eliaser: And a strong taskmaster. He worked us all very hard. I remember my own experience. He took me off of finance. He quite properly, in retrospect, I think, wanted to clean house in his presidency. I didn't understand it. All I knew is that I wanted to stay. I was a relative newcomer, so I was undone when he announced it.

I went to a board meeting thinking I was still on the finance committee, and he announced new chairmen; I didn't even remember who they were. In retrospect, I should have considered myself lucky to be off of this dumb committee, but I felt abandoned somehow, and very paranoid--I always say politics is a paranoid's profession anyway. That was one of the most miserable meetings, I think, of my twenty-year career, because I didn't understand that he was doing something correctly as a leadership person.

Eliaser: He called me the next day, and said he wanted to talk to me, and he handed me all the publicity and public relations responsibility for the entire organization statewide, which was a whole other experience for me, which directly leads into my business experience now, and everything I've done. It was marvelous! It was a great opportunity, and I didn't understand it. Because it meant at all subsequent conventions and meetings, I handled the national press as well as the local press for him. I set up all press conferences, did the writing of all the press releases, and just handled everything from room reservations for press, to their entertainment, and all arrangements for speakers that were going to be handled coming in. That's when I met Eugene McCarthy. It was a whole new life for me, but I didn't see it quite clearly at that time.

I worked just as hard in Tom Carvey's presidency as I did for Joe--even more so, because Tom was a very close family friend and relied on me for an awful lot of his work in the north, and relied on my judgment. Joe Wyatt didn't need to rely on anybody's judgment, and he made very fast decisions--mostly correct ones as I recall--without a heck of a lot of consultation with anybody but office holders. But the organization moved into a new phase by the time Tom Carvey had it [1961-1965], which would ultimately bring him directly in conflict with the legislature. But at the time, they had the heaviest membership, volunteer body, of any state in the country. We had seventy thousand members at that point; he had put me on as his membership chairman among the other things I did.

Chall: Carvey did?

Eliaser: Yes. I managed a drive by congressional district to increase club membership in clubs, and that was, obviously, a direct threat to the legislature. I didn't look upon it as that at that time, but I see now that that's what was responsible. Seventy thousand activists out there concentrating on issues was a threat to Jesse Unruh--which is an oversimplification, but--

Chall: They must have all felt a little bit uneasy.

Eliaser: That's right.

Women in the Democratic Party

The Role of Women in the California Democratic Council

Eliaser: Carvey relied a lot on women in his work. Nancy Swadesh did much of his issues work; Rudd Brown, I think, was very active during his tenure; he considers Libby one of his close friends and advisors-- Libby Smith Gatov. I don't think we thought of women's liberation in those days; quite positive we didn't, but he was perhaps a forerunner.

Chall: Was he any different in his relationships and use of women than Cranston or Wyatt?

Eliaser: Yes. He let them make decisions. Gave them responsibility.

In the beginning I remember--and I don't include myself because I wasn't in the hierarchy--people like Nancy Swadesh and others who were leaders resented it because they felt that they did the work, and he took the credit for it.

Chall: Who was this?

Eliaser: Tom Carvey. They felt all the men did, as a matter of fact. I wouldn't say just Tom; I think they felt that about Joe and Alan. But as the Carvey presidency evolved, he began to see this, and began to give the women not only the responsibility, but the credit and the recognition.

Chall: Do you mean that in your efforts in raising funds and handling all the publicity, et cetera for the CDC conventions, that you weren't given credit?

Eliaser: Oh, I was. I didn't have a problem about it, but some of the others did.

Chall: Why?

Eliaser: Let's take issues, and Nancy Swadesh; I think this was her title, Issues Chairman. What that really meant was months of research and preparation with campuses around the state, with various district leaders so that people wouldn't feel left out; subcommittee meetings in the interim of board meetings; being with legislators so that you wouldn't have a pitched battle; and bringing some kind of composite opinion together representing the Democratic party. This takes an enormous amount of administration and research, and work, and leadership. And then the president of the organization comes up with getting the credit for putting on a marvelous convention

Eliaser: or meeting, and having all this wonderful work done. When really it was done, in a particular year I remember, by Rudd Brown in Southern California and Nancy Swadesh up here.

Chall: Those special issues conventions, conferences?

Eliaser: Yes. Oh, the women did the lion's share of the work. Nancy Sloss, I guess, was the official secretary in those days.

I remember the California water program being one of the great pitched battles. And the involvement and the hard work of all of us, even I. It's hard to think of it now--we had speaking engagements all over the state. Remember the salad years of Ralph Brody? Things have changed.

Chall: Yes. During the Pat Brown administration.

So these women put in a great deal of time and felt they weren't given proper credit?

Eliaser: That's right. It was not a problem I had.

Chall: Maybe because your work was highly tangible in terms of what you brought in?

Eliaser: Well, yes. And as I look back I see I had different relationships with the leaders. I didn't have to personalize it, because I know they appreciated what I did, and I saw a lot of them. And I seem to have some need now, as I look back--I really haven't thought about it till this moment--of having very personal relationships with these people. Friendships. So, I knew that they recognized me as a person of value, and if they didn't get up in front of the auditorium and thank me, I really didn't care. I didn't need that. But, because these other people, perhaps, didn't see as much of them, or talk with them as often in the interim, they needed a tangible recognition that I didn't seem to need.

First of all, my achievement has always been what I needed the most. I have to see the end result. Nobody has to thank me, if I see that money in the bank.

Walter Haas, for example, sent me two dozen red roses last week after this Brandeis University dinner. I appreciated it; it was lovely. But I wrote him a letter and I said, "You have to realize, I stuff the envelopes. If Mr. [Robert] Sinton had not been the guest of honor, and you hadn't been the chairman, there wouldn't have been any dinner. But thank you very much."

Chall: Thank you for thanking me! [laughter]

Eliaser: [laughter] Exactly!

I really meant that, and I felt it was a privilege to work with him, and though much of it was very painful, the end result was that Brandeis University doubled what they had taken in last year, period.

Chall: Yes, well, that's tangible proof. Oh, it's always nice though to have somebody thank you, even as sweetly as to send roses.

Eliaser: It's really very, very nice.

Chall: Was it a different relationship in the CDC matter because you were in the office all the time, therefore you were present and these other women weren't?

Eliaser: Good question.

The Role of Women in the Democratic State Central Committee

Chall: Was there a difference in the way women and men worked together in the CDC, as you saw it, and, let's say, in the headquarters of the Democratic party?

Eliaser: Yes. I felt in those days, and I did personalize that, that Libby had an exalted position; that she was considered an equal to the men in terms of the decision making, day-to-day processes at the top level. There were often days that I was sitting there, out in the main room, doing a mailing, or organizing some program or another, where the doors to the executive offices were closed, and the only woman present, except perhaps someone to take notes, would be Libby Smith.

Chall: Of course by that time, she was the national committeewoman, but that wouldn't necessarily have meant that she went in.

Eliaser: No. She really had a great deal to contribute, and I don't think Roger Kent, in those days, or his administrator Don Bradley, or any of them would have made a move without her, and they were quite right.

Chall: So she had something special to give, and they recognized it?

Eliaser: Absolutely. I was never ready for it. I was aware of it; I felt excluded, but not hurt. I mean I was not ready to be in those rooms. I felt out of it, had mixed feelings, but there was no reason for me to have been in there--in retrospect. I hadn't had the seasoning or the experience.

Chall: Were you one of the only other full-time volunteers in that office, like Elizabeth [Smith] Gatov? So the others behind the doors were paid staff like Don Bradley and--

Eliaser: Van Dempsey.

Chall: Van Dempsey. Roger Kent was also a volunteer.

Eliaser: He came in at lunch time, and at five o'clock. There was always a joke whenever we interviewed secretaries, because one of the qualifications was how they mixed the martinis that would be ready for Mr. Kent at five o'clock. The proportion of vermouth and gin.

Chall: And also they would have to be there.

Eliaser: The hours were incredible. It was the source of much discussion, something that I recognized very early about women in their work, I think not just in politics, in offices too: the willingness to give the extra hours and to sacrifice personal life to be there when it was convenient for the chairman to be there. It went on into the night.

Then there were other women who were able to create their personal life by being there. In other words, I would be going like this [gestures], worrying about my child, and my husband's dinner, or the babysitter, or whatever, but they actually stayed there later than they had to, and prolonged their work in order to create a social life. So, it just depended where you were in your own life.

Chall: Well, Mrs. Gatov used to leave about three-thirty, quarter to four every day, because she also went home to take care of the family at that time.

Eliaser: I was terrible. I didn't want to miss anything; I had an awful conflict.

Chall: Because you knew--

Eliaser: Knew I was missing a lot of fun.

Chall: That went on at night?

Eliaser: And I learned very early on, that some of the heavy decisions were made in the bars and over dinner. There is no question that in politics--and at these meetings and conventions which is a different matter, in some respects--that in the socializing, much that is productive starts and is better done, than is accomplished over a hard bargaining table with cameras on your people and the other people involved. There was no question that I was nervous about missing fun and good times, and being left out; but other than that, I learned very quickly that really much that's very positive happens after five o'clock.

Chall: Did Don Bradley stay later, into the night?

Eliaser: Oh, very often, yes.

Chall: I don't know whether he has a family.

Eliaser: He's had several, I think.

Chall: It would be very difficult to maintain a family life under those conditions.

Eliaser: Well, politics is devastating to marriages.

I had lunch with a young man today who was seeking my counsel on running for office, and I counseled him not to. He's a successful stockbroker, successful political fund raiser, highly thought of in the world of philanthropy and Jewish activities. They just lost a child, and I accused him, very honestly, of running into this fanatic activity to try to foreclose the pain. And I told him when he was eighty, he would still feel the pain; he would never get rid of it, and not to strain his family that is left, by jumping into this.

Chall: Do you think you would counsel others to go ahead and do it, depending upon who they are?

Eliaser: Their ability. This is not the right person to run for office ever, I don't think. I just don't think he has the candidate's qualities, one of them being willing to sacrifice family. The Jewish ethic about family is still very much with us.

Chall: I think we were talking about the difference, if there was any, between the way the CDC officers, and the officers and staff of the central committee worked with women..

Eliaser: The CDC had more women officers in the first place, and women had greater equality there through the club movement and the CDC board than they ever did at the state committee, with the exception of

- Eliaser: Libby. There was an exclusionary policy--not consciously. It was part of the growth of our society. I wouldn't name the Democratic party as being separate from any other group.
- Chall: In their dealings with you were Roger Kent, and Bradley, and the others able to recognize your abilities and utilize them without making you feel put down?
- Eliaser: I had some very special problems which were mine and not theirs, I learned later. That is, it was because of this very dreadful childhood that I suffered that I felt left out--because no one ever told me the truth. I didn't know my parents were divorced. I heard it in the school yard. I never knew what was really happening in my life, and terrible things always happened--tragic scenes that don't even bear discussing--behind closed doors. Crying. I always was feeling shut out. So that throughout my adult life even the shut door symbolized something to me that didn't necessarily have anything to do with reality. Today, I still can't deal with something that I don't know all about, even though I have a very mature approach to it, and very deep understanding. No matter how bad something is that affects me, I would rather know about it and cope, than not know.
- Chall: So that that shutting of the door--
- Eliaser: It was much worse to me than it really was, and it had nothing to do with my being a woman or my competence in functioning. It had to do with where I was, and where I was entitled to be. I know that now; I didn't know it then.
- Chall: What about the women who worked in the women's division like Jane Morrison, and Virginia Foran, and Goldie Kennedy?
- Eliaser: I don't know Virginia very well anymore. I had a nice relationship with her; wasn't she from Tulare?
- Chall: Tulare, yes.
- Eliaser: My memory, God bless it.
- Jane Morrison has been one of my closest friends over all these years and to me she remains one of the most competent persons in Democratic politics today.
- Chall: You once told me that she used to come in--was it during her lunch hour or after work?
- Eliaser: Oh, she gave her whole life to all of this--the club movement, to her husband's campaigns, to the women's division--remarkable. She wasn't a theorist or an issues person; she just really did the work. She was just a powerhouse.

Chall: She was the women's chairman for many years.

Eliaser: She was elected the northern women's chairman at that first convention I attended.

Chall: In 1958 she started, according to my list.

Eliaser: It was a bloody, bloody battle between Roger Kent and Phil Burton; they each had a candidate. It was something that was very tough on me. I didn't understand it, and I was involved, and I didn't want to be, and it was awful.

Did I tell you about my Phil Burton experience?

Chall: Yes, you did.

Eliaser: Well, it was that race that was coming. I didn't know about it, or what it meant, or what a women's chairman, or a state committee was.

Chall: But Jane Morrison got that position.

Eliaser: Yes. I was never going to run for it. Nobody had a thought of putting me in.

Chall: He just thought so.

Eliaser: He assumed so, because of his paranoia which is still very much with him.

Chall: I see, and so it was actually Jane Morrison who was being picked by the party. Now where did she come from to this, do you recall?

Eliaser: Oh, out of years of activity and just doing the work that we women do for the Democratic party; she was very deserving of it. She had been up there; she was in what was then the Twenty-first District Democratic Club which came out of the old Democratic League here, which was formed after the '52 Stevenson defeat. The club movement was born here in post-'52, because there was an awful lot of Stevenson activity. I was somewhat active, though I didn't do anything but go to a couple of meetings, and care.

A huge club was formed in San Francisco, called the Democratic League, with Bill Roth, and Jack Morrison, and Phil Burton, and Nancy Knickerbocker, and Albert Brundage--an old friend and associate of Jack Morrison's, a lawyer, a very prominent one nationally today. A whole bunch of people. I went to a couple of meetings, when it meant getting a babysitter for me, and listening to a woman named Katherine Gehrels, an attorney, and Phillip, fight into the wee hours of the morning on issues. But Jane came out of that movement. Jack was an officer, so she dates way back in service to the party, and getting things going in this area.

Chall: Who was the opposition candidate? Can you remember?

Eliaser: Frances 'Shaskan was the opposition--wife of a psychiatrist here in San Francisco. Very bright woman; very into numbers of issues, and has done lots of good things. She was the Burton candidate and Jane Morrison was the Kent candidate. Very unpleasant convention, really nasty.

Chall: Isn't it interesting. Yesterday I was reading the Sacramento Bee for the convention years which I thought I would be covering with you and there wasn't a word about it. Generally speaking, they cover all these battles, so either I missed it, or it was not covered.

Eliaser: There was another one, David Friedenrich. I forget who beat him, probably Byron Rumford. That was the same convention.

Chall: Now, let's see, what would that have been for?

Eliaser: For secretary. William Byron Rumford. It was very ugly because it became racial. It just depends which minority you were for, although you could never really say Jews were in the minority in Democratic politics.

But Roger was very dependent on David Friedenrich; I think it was secretary.

Chall: I do have notes somewhere [searching]. You are right; it was for secretary.

Eliaser: Yes, that was it. There were two miserable battles, and it was my introduction to politics at the convention level. Roger got an appointment for me from out of Tuolumne County or someplace. In those days, chairmen had pocket appointments from uncontested districts when we still had crossfiling. So where a Republican won in a primary, Kent would have those pocket appointments. So somebody got me an appointment somewhere, because Burton was just going to be damned, and said so, that I would not have an appointment out of San Francisco. No way.

So they got me up there and I had this vote, but I was really sick at some of the things they were doing to each other.

Jane, for example, worked for NBC, now KNBR, and they got a labor group to get up--one of the female labor organizers, the head of the waitresses union then, I think--who said that she'd seen Jane cross a picket line. And they developed that theme; the whole thing was very contentious. Race came into it over on the men's side. It was a bad news convention, or maybe they're always

Eliaser: that way. I just was in for a great shock, and I was really very upset by some of what was going on. I was also not used to the hours, or the drinking, and I really didn't feel well. I had just started in analysis--it was the wrong place for me to be, no question about it, though testing the reactions, perhaps it was productive afterwards.

Leo McCarthy was always a good friend of mine. He was working for Gene McAteer; he was his administrative assistant, and he'd been up there. Leo drove me home. He just warned me please not to be sick in his car.

Chall: Is that so?

Eliaser: Yes. I really was ill from all of this. Jane had become a very good friend of mine and I was terribly pained by what was happening. She cried a lot, and it was just awful.

Chall: In the caucus? Let's see, this is done in the caucus.

Eliaser: In the northern caucus, but that's big. When you say caucus, you're talking about hundreds of people.

Chall: So this was fought out in the northern caucus?

Eliaser: Yes. And privately in rooms; and deals are made. And I remember Jack--I really was quite upset--Jack coming to find me so I would please at least be there to vote if I cared so much.

I was in the assembly lounge. Somebody had found me in the legislative hall, an assemblyman from Reedley, California, whose name was Charles Garrigus. He became a poet laureate--not a very good one--of the legislature, eventually. I'd never seen him before in my life, and he said, "You don't look well to me." He said, "You look very faint." And I said, "I'm all right. I'm just not enjoying this." He said, "Let me take you into the lounge and you can rest." Well, this wasn't sexual or anything like that. He was really being very kind.

He took me into a "men only" kind of chamber where I've not been since. Nobody was around; there were big leather couches that the men have; and he just got a cold cloth and sat with me and talked. He just rested me up and pointed out that this wasn't the end of the world.

Chall: That it happens about every two years. [laughs]

Eliaser: Yes. That's right. It was awful. See, I can laugh now!

Chall: But you did attend them regularly after that, didn't you?

Eliaser: And Leo got me home, and-- [laughs]

Chall: And Jane Morrison did win.

Eliaser: Yes. And I worked very hard for her after that.

Chall: Then she was [referring to notes] one, two, three--six years, as chairman of the women's division.

Eliaser: I don't remember. She was very productive.

Chall: She worked a long time.

Eliaser: Very hard, too. She had a nine-to-five job.

Chall: Yes. Now, Carmen Warschaw was another one who moved from southern division women's chairman to state women's chairman and back to southern division women's chairman. Then vice-chairman of the party.

Eliaser: Only because she couldn't be national committeewoman. It wasn't out of choice, that was as far as she could go. I came to know Carmen very late, and then I remember she ran for chairman against Assemblyman Charles Warren--forget which year--and Alan Cranston ran that operation to make sure she was defeated.

Chall: That was in '66.

Eliaser: And that was another miserable one. By then I was right in tune with it, and nothing much bothered me. It had nothing to do with Carmen; it's just that these kinds of things didn't seem very serious to me. They seemed a little frivolous and childlike after a while.

Chall: Oh, is that so?

Eliaser: Yes. It seemed to me that people were exaggerating what they did in political conventions and in their political life, over a short span, into something so that they didn't have to demonstrate these hostilities, these kinds of feelings in their real lives.

Chall: You mean they took out their hostilities at the convention?

Eliaser: Yes, and in truth, their political activities, not necessarily just conventions. They could go to these meetings and participate in these battles, and then maybe go home and be good husbands, and wives, and parents, or go to the office and not fight with the person at the next desk.

- Chall: So, you didn't think that it was important politically, like-- we must protect Governor Brown from the Kennedys, and that sort of thing.
- Eliaser: Yes, because that had a larger meaning. In other words, the state of California and progressive legislation, and so forth, meant protecting the governor and those legislators who were motivated to move program. But these in-house battles began to look a little less bloody, and a little sillier to me, and not the end all of anything. Though, ultimately they were important in terms of the kinds of leaders you select, but the game playing began to bore me. Even when it happened to me, I dealt with it in a way that--I didn't personalize it.
- Chall: That's the only way, I imagine, you can be active in politics, if you believe in what you're doing.
- Eliaser: That's right. It was silly, and childlike, and all the things they were saying were gross and untrue, and I knew it, and I didn't care whether anyone else knew it or not, because I knew it.
- Chall: And your supporters, no doubt, knew it.
- Eliaser: That's right.
- Chall: Now in the office as paid persons were Lenore Ostrow and Louise Ringwalt, as I understand.
- Eliaser: Lenore left just as I started. She was married to a close friend of mine. I knew her outside of politics. She was pregnant when her husband committed suicide, so she stayed on working, and really, I think, made it through the support and love of all those people there.
- I remember going to a baby shower for her; it was awful. Her sister-in-law was a widow also. She gave the baby shower. She turns out now to have remarried one of my husband's good friends, so I'm back in the family.
- Lenore has remarried and has a big family, I think, in Washington.
- But, it was sad. I knew her husband, oh, from the time I was married. I was more personally involved with them than most of the Democrats were.
- Chall: Was that a Jewish family?

Eliaser: Yes. Bob Ostrow. You still see his name when you buy the delicatessen stuff. Though they were bought by one of the big Chicago packing houses, they kept the label.

Chall: Yes. And so you knew Louise Ringwalt?

Eliaser: Well, Louise volunteered in the Stevenson campaign at the same time I did. She's still one of my oldest and closest friends. She joined me in a lot of the little jobs we did in '56 and stayed in there, and they hired her.

Chall: I see. So that's how she became a paid employee.

Eliaser; Yes. She was really a very diligent woman, and remained so, and is on the staff of Alan Cranston; one of his top people, I think, in the health field. I haven't talked with her in about a year, but I used to go see her twice a year. She used to stay with me in my other marriage when she was in California.

Chall: So some of these women actually went from volunteers into paid professional political work?

Eliaser: I would guess, and I'm only guessing, but Lenore may have done the same thing, because Bob had been the treasurer of the party before his illness--his weird depressions, and hospitalizations and so forth.

Bob Ostrow, Lenore's husband, before his death had been in and out of Belmont, and all the sad things, and it's quite possible they hired her--he was treasurer--to keep her busy. I don't know that.

She was alone because he was sick, and then he got out of the hospital. They were living in Marin, and he had a gun collection. I am of the opinion that if someone really wants to die an awful lot, eventually they will. My guess is she worked to fill her time.

Chall: The party was very close, wasn't it?

Eliaser: We were a family to some degree, as you know, having met so many of us; we still are.

Chall: Charlotte Danforth? Can you tell me about her? She was women's division chairman northern division under Bob Coate from 1966-1968.

Eliaser: Charlotte Danforth is the sister of Shirley Burton. She was Charlotte Cohelan, an attorney from the East Bay, member of Queens Bench, the eldest sister of former Congressman [Jeffrey] Cohelan. Always political, until she married Bob Danforth, who at one time

Eliaser: was very active politically also, no longer. He's an attorney. They married kind of in middle life, and had very young children. She was not awfully active, but an enormously competent woman.

Chall: Didn't stay around very long.

Eliaser: No.

Chall: Not too many people did after 1965, except Eleanor Fowle. After that it's been all changes.

Eliaser: Well, it's a job that hardly anybody wants!

Chall: It doesn't have much to offer, does it?

Eliaser: No. Mrs. Fowle would have stayed; she loved it. But I think it got to be too much for her family. There was a bifurcation of her role. She was Cranston's sister, and women's chairman. She was torn always as to where she could be in position, and so forth. And for the health of her own family, and for her own health, she had to step back just a little, and it was a very hard thing for her to do. We're very close friends. It was a real wrench, because she wanted a separate identity.

Chall: Which activities did you enjoy more--finance, publicity, or membership?

Eliaser: Publicity. Finance still is hard. I love the success, and it doesn't upset me in an emotional sense at all anymore. It's fine and I don't mind it, but working with the press is just a ball all the way. I love it!

Chall: And did you become good friends of many of the press people from here and there?

Eliaser: Oh, yes. All over.

For instance, when Dave Broder's out here, he still calls. He's become a family friend. My daughter sees him when she's in the East. When I'm in the East, they have us for dinner--that kind of thing.

Chall: Did you learn press relations in terms of how you deal with press?

Eliaser: Nobody told me anything.

Chall: What you say, what you don't say. It's one thing to set up a convention, but to be asked the hard questions--

Eliaser: Oh, I learned the hard way! I remember a terrible thing!

- Eliaser: I told Squire [Earl] Berhens of the Chronicle something that was still really not for publication. He was a gallant old gentleman; we were good friends, and I said something that I read in the Chronicle the next day. I thought Joe Wyatt would kill me. I mean, it was so small, but it was bad. It was really bad. That's how I learned.
- Chall: Yes. [laughs] It does take a bit of knowing, I think.
- Eliaser: Well, I learned the hard way. Oh-hhh!
- Chall: You learned that they can be your friends, but you don't necessarily talk business.
- Eliaser: No. You don't tell them anything that you don't have to, ever. There's enough to talk about.
- Chall: In publicity--all these various pamphlets that you showed me--did you have help in the art work and in drawing them up?
- Eliaser: Oh, yes. Layout, definitely--not one of my big numbers.
- Chall: Was that also volunteered help?
- Eliaser: All. Every bit of it.
- Chall: So, people with expertise in the field would really work with the CDC or the Democratic party?

Democratic Women of the Bay Area, 1963-1965

- Eliaser: This Democratic Women of the Bay Area, I don't think we ever affiliated with the CDC. I decided to keep that out of both that and the party--to keep it out of everything, and just develop an organization of women who cared, without the constraints and the rules of organization.
- Chall: That was the Democratic Women's Forum?
- Eliaser: No. The Democratic Women of the Bay Area. There's a packet of newsletters. That came at mid-career for me.
- Chall: Mid-career meaning after you had become women's division chairman?

Eliaser: I was still women's chairman, probably, but I guess I felt at the time that women were second-class citizens, I'm not sure. I didn't think of myself, ever, as a women's libber. But, something must have bothered me about the relationship of women to the party, or the degree of participation allowed women. Hard for me to remember. In any case, I formed the Democratic Women of the Bay Area, which is just a name, I think, the Morrisons--Jack, Jane--and I came up with over a conversation. I'm not always a good letter writer. I write about two good letters that are effective a year, just 'cause I feel them.

Jack Morrison wrote the letter forming the women's organization. We designed the letterhead over coffee, and I got out the list I'd accumulated over the years. I guess we formed one of the biggest membership rosters ever. It wasn't a club, and it wasn't a state committee; it wasn't anything. It was just a group of us who got together to generate issues, good legislation, to honor candidates, to help them move along, but without the constraints. Once you affiliate with CDC, you have to go by their rules. If you're an official arm of the state central committee, let's say the women's division, then you have to do what Roger Kent, let us say, or Bob Coate, or whomever tells you.

So, the reason I did this, I guess [laughs] is either to be a dictator, or an independent woman, or to have an independent group. I had a huge home in those days, and the board met usually for lunch once a month at my home. And we planned just gorgeous things! Our kick-off event was a luncheon honoring Lady Bird Johnson, when Lyndon was vice-president. It was just one month before the Kennedy assassination. I think we had four hundred women for lunch at the Fairmont, for \$12.50, which was lots of money in those days. That was fund raising for us.

Women were not in those days, and are not yet today, used to giving money. That has not to do with politics alone, that is philanthropy, and boy, do I learn that every day. There are lots of reasons: they haven't got the money to give it; they don't share equally family bank accounts; they have not been allowed to earn, and if they're allowed to earn, they are not paid equally. So they can't possibly give. So fund raising within the structure of a women's group was tough and still is.

But, it was the most glamorous affair. I just remember it so well, because Liz Carpenter came, and Lloyd Hand, who then became chief of protocol in the Johnson administration--all arrived. I wanted a suite for Mrs. Johnson, though she wasn't staying overnight. I felt that I had to have a suite at the Fairmont, but they were going to charge me full price, and I wasn't in a position to do this. So, I called Bobby [Robert] Lurie up, and he says, "I guarantee you, Ann, you can have a suite for the day across the street at our

Democratic Women of the Bay Area

65 MONTCLAIR TERRACE • SAN FRANCISCO 9

Mrs. Edmund G. Brown,
Honorary Chairman
Mrs. Thomas Lynch,
Chairman
Mrs. Abe Sirbu,
Treasurer
Mrs. Lionel Alanson, Jr.,
Secretary

Mrs. Spurgeon Avakian
Mrs. Roger Boas
Mrs. John Chargin
Mrs. Paul Ellef
Mrs. Richard Fisch
Mrs. Elizabeth Rudel Gatov
Mrs. Joseph Guthrie
Mrs. Bernard Glickfeld
Mrs. Henry F. Grady
Mrs. Richard Haber
Mrs. Edward Heller
Mrs. Edward Howden
Mrs. Reginald Jenkins
Mrs. Joseph Kally
Mrs. Roger Kent
Mrs. Robert Kroninger
Mrs. Robert Lauter
Mrs. William Lawrence
Mrs. Jack Morrison
Mrs. Gerald O'Gara
Mrs. Kathryn Oliver
Mrs. Cecil Poole
Mrs. William Byron Rumford
Mrs. Clara Shlrpser
Mrs. Vera Schultz
Mrs. Frank Sloss
Mrs. Stanton Sobel
Mrs. Mathew Tobriner
Mrs. John Tutaur
Mrs. Harold Watkin
Mrs. Stephen Walter

 100

We know women who are seeking a deeper engagement with civic and political problems. Many of them would respond to a plan of action that would not make too many organizational demands and yet would offer the opportunity to do productive, and challenging work. That's why we are forming the DEMOCRATIC WOMEN OF THE BAY AREA.

We invite you to join us. We want to combine Democratic activity with social functions and special events featuring national political personalities.

For example, Mrs. Lyndon Johnson will be with us for our first Fall event. She will help us launch an attractive program for participation in campaigns as our time permits and as real needs for our energies occur.

Merely to vote Democratic is not enough! We must lend our names and contribute our time, energy, and money. The concept that "someone else will do it" rarely generates a wholesome political atmosphere.

We look forward to hearing from you and to having the pleasure of introducing you to our program — and to the wife of the Vice President. 1964 is a vital election year. The DEMOCRATIC WOMEN OF THE BAY AREA need you!

Cordially,

Ann Alanson
Secretary

Democratic Women of the Bay Area

65 MONTCLAIR TERRACE • SAN FRANCISCO 9

Mrs. Edmund G. Brown,
Honorary Chairman

Mrs. Thomas Lynch,
Chairman

Mrs. Bernard Glickfeld,
First Vice Chairman

Mrs. Cecil Poole,
Second Vice Chairman

Mrs. Abraham Sirbu,
Treasurer

Mrs. John Fell Stevenson,
Secretary

Mrs. Lionel Alanson, Jr.,
Secretary

Mrs. William L. Porter,
Executive Secretary

Mrs. B. J. Pasqueletti,
Program Chairman

Mrs. Spurgeon Avakian

Mrs. Robert Barber

Mrs. Roger Boas

Mrs. Robert Bransten

Mrs. Irving Breyer

Mrs. John Chargin

Mrs. Henry Colarich

Mrs. Paul Eliel

Mrs. Joseph Fassler

Mrs. Mark Fiore

Mrs. John Fowle

Mrs. Albert Gatov

Mrs. Elaine Guthrie

Mary Frances Hazelton

Mrs. Edward H. Heller

Mrs. Lee Holman

Mrs. Edward Howden

Mrs. Reginald Jenkins

Mrs. Alice Johnson

Mrs. Joseph Kelly

Mrs. Joseph Kennedy

Mrs. Roger Kent

Mrs. Jeanne King

Mrs. Boris Krapivin

Mrs. Robert Kroninger

Mrs. Robert Lauter

Mrs. William Lawrence

Mrs. Fred Lenway

Mrs. Willard Le Vine

Mrs. Estelle Levine

Mrs. Byron Leydecker

Mrs. John McKeown

Mrs. Robert Morrison

Mrs. Jack D. Morrison

Mrs. Stanley Mosk

Mrs. Richard Nesbitt

Mrs. Gerald O'Gara

Mrs. Kathryn Oliver

Mrs. Alan Parker

Mrs. William Robinson

Mrs. William Byron Rumford

Mrs. Doris Rusk

Mrs. Edward Scoyen

Mrs. Clara Shipser

Mrs. Vera Schultz

Mrs. John K. Smith

Mrs. Stanton Sobel

Mrs. Judy Soms

Mrs. Eugene Stephens, Jr.

Mrs. Thomas Storer

Mrs. Matthew Tobringer

Mrs. Stephen Walter

Mrs. Harold Watkin

Dear Member of the Democratic Women of the Bay Area:

It's dues time again.

Yes, you're correct, that time does seem to come around very quickly, but this year it's a very important time.

We are concerned this fall in California with what has been called "the second most important election in America"--the race for the United States Senate seat from this state.

Alan Cranston, an intelligent, honest, hard-working and experienced Democrat, is facing Max Rafferty, the darling of the Far Right, and a man who smeared a respected and honorable senior Senator, Thomas Kuchel, in the June primary.

There is no doubt that Rafferty will use the same smear tactics against Alan that he did against Senator Kuchel.

Alan has said: "Rafferty's lies will not go unanswered by me. Senator Kuchel made a mistake in ignoring them. I will not. Every Rafferty lie will be answered with the truth."

Now, it's an expensive proposition, campaigning against Rafferty and all the money he's receiving from the ultra-rightists such as Texas' H. L. Hunt, one of the richest men in the world.

We must elect Alan Cranston!

Not only for the good of our state, but for the good of our nation, and for the future of our children.

California must not have demagoguery in the United States Senate.

I urge you to join with me in helping to elect Alan and all Democratic candidates in this crucial year.

Cordially

Ann Alanson

"Because we feel so strongly about the importance of Alan Cranston's election, this year we shall turn all of our dues monies to his campaign fund. I am sure you agree that this should be done."

NEWS from Democratic Women of the Bay Area

1965

NEWSLETTER NO. 7

ACTION ITEMS

SB#309, SAVE THE BAY BILL, will probably clear the Senate as we go to press, go over to the Assembly side where we anticipate that it will be sent to the Assembly Committee on Municipal and County Government, John Knox, Chairman. SB#309 may well be in trouble here. We urge you to write or wire immediately in favor of SB#309 to Chairman John Knox, Assembly Committee on Municipal and County Gov't, State Capitol, Sacramento, Calif., with a copy to Speaker Jesse Unruh, State Capitol, Sacramento. Please refer to the committee roster sent to you in the February newsletter for other members of the committee. A note to all of them, republicans and democrats alike, would be most helpful.

SB#482, COMPENSATORY EDUCATION BILL, will hopefully pass favorably from the Senate Finance Committee at this writing. If the bill clears the committee it should have no trouble on the Senate floor.

There is a special Assembly sub-committee set up to hear this bill, chaired by Assemblyman Lea Ryan of San Mateo. Here again we may anticipate real trouble for an administration priority bill of this session.

Please watch your newspaper this week to be assured of Senate passage, and then write and wire your support of SB#482, Compensatory Education Bill, to Speaker Unruh at the above address with copies to Mr. Ryan.

ACTION ON BOTH OF THESE BILLS IS URGENT! YOUR LETTER OR WIRE COULD MAKE THE DIFFERENCE!

FLASH!

As newsletter goes to press, President Johnson announces that Franklin D. Roosevelt, Jr., will resign as Undersecretary of Commerce to become chairman of a five-member Equal Opportunity Commission.

President Johnson also announces his intention to nominate four other persons to serve with Roosevelt on the commission. Among them is our own Aileen Hernandez, currently assistant chief of the California Fair Employment Practices Division, and an active member of the Democratic Women of the Bay Area.

The commission was created by the 1964 Civil Rights Act to administer Title Seven which makes racial discrimination in employment unlawful.

Congratulations Aileen! We shall miss you!

CONSUMERS IN THE CAPITOL

The pioneer spirit that inspired men and women to push back the West's frontiers is still alive in California. Today we are pioneering new ideas, and Governor Brown's administration reflects this ceaseless searching for new ways to improve and enrich our way of life. Among the new concepts he has pioneered in state government is his program for consumers, notably his Consumer Counsel program.

Since 1959, when the Legislature, at the Governor's request, established the Consumer Counsel office, other states have followed our lead in bringing the consumer's voice into government. Massachusetts has a multiple-member Consumer Council. Connecticut has a Department of Consumer Protection. Other states have come part of the way, with units patterned after our Attorney General's Consumer Fraud Section, started by former Attorney General Stanley Mask to back up the Consumer Counsel program, and now going forward under Attorney General Tom Lynch's direction. In our nation's capitol, President Johnson has appointed Esther Peterson as his Special Assistant for Consumer Affairs. With the creation of the Consumer Counsel office, Governor Brown again demonstrated his leadership and social progress.

MEET OUR CONSUMER COUNSEL

Helen Nelson, picked by Governor Brown to be California's first Consumer Counsel, brought to the job richly varied experience in economics and politics. A Marin County resident at the time of her appointment, she took an active part in the Bay Area's civic, community and political life. She was an energetic campaigner, served on the Citizens Advisory Committee for the Development of Marin County, and was active in the League of Women Voters and American Association of University Women.

Professionally, Helen is a research economist, specializing in the economics of family earning and spending. When Governor Brown appointed her, she was assistant chief in the Division of Labor Statistics and Research in the California Department of Industrial Relations. Her 20 years of practical experience as a housewife also comes in handy in her job, she says. She still does the family's shopping and cooking.



HELEN NELSON

The late President Kennedy appointed Helen to the Consumer Advisory Council, formed in 1962 to advise the federal government on public policy affecting consumers. She also served a term on President Johnson's Committee on Consumer Interests.

Although men and women equally are interested in consumer economics, Helen believes this field offers special opportunities to women in politics. For one thing, with a few notable exceptions on the national level (Senator Paul Douglas with his truth-in-lending bill and Senator Philip Hart with his truth-in-packaging bill), men have not pre-empted the field. For another, consumer economics deals with everyday buying decisions with which women are experienced and for which, in most families, they assume the major responsibility.

CONSUMER GAINS IN CALIFORNIA

In the past six years, the Brown administration has achieved some significant improvements for consumers, covering a wide variety of goods and services we buy, from prescription drugs to installment credit purchases to household moving services. Here are just a few:

- A safe labeling law to reduce the risk of accident or injury from dangerous household chemicals
- Improved labeling of packaged goods
- A major breakthrough in the means of curbing fraud and deception in TV repair
- Improved rights for the credit buyer, especially the low income buyer
- Better legal tools for cracking down on false and misleading advertising
- Prescription drugs exempted from State sales tax
- New rights for families when they hire the services of a moving company to move within the State.

CURRENT CONSUMER LEGISLATION

Pending now in the Legislature are these important measures to curb "suede shoe" operations and to build a marketplace where fair play is the rule:

AB 705 (Fenton and Beilenson) — to provide a "cooling off" period of 7 days for consumers to think over an installment sales contract over \$25 signed in their own home. Aimed at curbing high pressure door-to-door salesmen, it puts consumers in a better bargaining position with the seller who comes, unsolicited, to their home. Will also help reputable door-to-door sales organizations and local businessmen who lose out to the unfair competition of high-pressure operators who sweep into an area, milk it dry, and leave.

AB 1961 (Unruh) — to outlaw "referral rackets." The bill would make it unlawful to induce a consumer to sign an installment sales contract by offering a rebate, discount, commission or other "make-money" scheme for referring prospective customers. "Referral rackets" are among the worst of the suede shoe rackets. Police and district attorneys say present law is inadequate to stop the rackets, a stronger legal tool is needed.

AB 2327 (Meyers) — to establish safeguards for consumers against sharp practices, fraud, gross negligence and incompetence in auto repair service. Also protects ethical auto repair dealers against unfair and injurious competition from unscrupulous repair practices. The bill calls for full information to be furnished to consumers as to estimates, bills for labor and parts, condition of parts (new or used), etc. It also provides for a Bureau of Repair Services to receive and investigate consumer complaints. An important consideration is the potential this bill offers for increasing highway safety.

FARM LABOR HOUSING

A comprehensive plan to assist communities – especially farm labor, communities – with their housing problems has received its initial boost with legislation introduced last month by State Senator Thomas M. Rees (D. Los Angeles).

Senator Rees, acting on a request by Governor Brown, introduced a bill to create a state Commission of Housing and Community Development.

One major aspect of the Rees bill, is its focus on the need for farm labor housing. In a statement on the bill, Governor Brown said:

"Two years ago, my Housing Commission presented a detailed report on farm-housing needs. Among other things, the Commission recommended creation of a State Office of Housing.

"The Legislature turned down that request in 1963. I am asking the Legislature to take another look."

Senator Rees said his bill will assist private citizens and local governments in meeting the demands for adequate housing, thus concentrating on home rule and local control.

"The Congress of the United States, with strong support from the President, has developed a wide variety of federal housing programs over the years to aid local communities in meeting housing demands," Rees said.

"To date, in California, we have been deficient in coordinating between the needs of California citizens and communities and the federal programs available to assist these needs.

"President Lyndon Johnson is now placing great stress on the improvement of our physical surroundings with the goal of making our cities more liveable for all Americans. This means planning for orderly development, programs to resist deterioration and renew degeneration, and governmental assistance to private industry in meeting the housing needs of our less fortunate citizens.

"One example of our housing problem in California was brought into clear focus by the recent trip of U. S. Labor Secretary Willard Wirtz.

"He inspected farm labor housing and said he was disgusted by the condition of some of this housing. Spokesmen for California farm growers have since expressed their own disgust at these same conditions. What we have, then, is a problem in housing which has existed for some time without any corrective action being taken."

The Governor also believes that creation of the state office will help solve the persistent problem of farm labor housing.

"We needed the office two years ago," he said. Now we need it more than ever to help find thousands of temporary and permanent housing units for agricultural workers and other Californians who live in sub-standard dwellings."

Under terms of the bill, members of the proposed commission will be appointed by the Governor. The department that will be created to implement the commission's decisions will be administered by a Director of Housing and Community Development, also a Governor's appointment. Salary proposed for the Director is \$24,500 annually.

State Senator Thomas M. Rees has served the State of California for the past ten years, having started his career in public office in 1954 with his election to the Assembly. Aside from his public life, Senator Rees is an independent businessman whose export firm specializes in the Latin American market. He is married and has two sons.

Serving the most populous county in the nation, Senator Rees represents more constituents than the governors of 42 states. Forty-two per cent of California's population is concentrated in the 38th District of Los Angeles County – where more than six and a half million people now reside.

In his first term in the Senate, Senator Rees compiled an impressive record of legislation aimed at achieving a broader understanding of the vast urban problems and the explosive population growth of Los Angeles County.

A specialist in air pollution legislation, he authored Senate Bill 325, which puts teeth into the current regulations requiring anti-air pollution devices on automobiles and which provides for an automobile inspection system in Los Angeles.

Also approved was Senator Rees' vocational high schools bill, S.B. 1379, which sets up a county-wide program for young people who have the aptitude and desire to train themselves for vocational trades rather than to follow a strictly college preparatory course. This bill is in line with the current national effort towards automation retraining and job opportunities.



SENATOR THOMAS M. REES

STEPS TO THE GREAT SOCIETYTHE PRESIDENT'S PROGRAM

Five major steps toward President Johnson's Great Society already taken by the 89th Congress:

APPALACHIA. The Appalachia Bill provides a 6-year, \$1 billion economic development program for the depressed 11-state Appalachia region. Requested by President Johnson in 1964, one of the first measures to clear the 89th Congress in 1965, the program will start a 5-year, \$840 million, 3350-mile road building project, and a 3-year, \$252 million program to improve health, retrain the jobless, reclaim timber, water and land resources, and rehabilitate strip mining.

EDUCATION. The Elementary and Secondary Education Bill, the first general elementary and secondary school aid bill to become law, aids educationally deprived children from low-income families and authorizes grants to school districts in approximately 95 per cent of the nation's counties. Total first year cost of the bill is estimated at \$1.3 billion. The bill calls for the following programs:

Aid to Low Income Districts: A 3-year, \$1.06 billion (in the first year) program of federal grants to states to aid school districts with a minimum of 3 per cent of 100 children from families with annual incomes under \$2000. Funds will be allotted on the basis of each state's average expenditure per school child.

School Libraries and Textbooks: A 5-year, \$100 million (in the first year) program of grants to states to purchase library and textbooks for public and private schools.

Supplementary Education: A 5-year, \$100 million (in the first year) program to establish model school programs and community-wide educational centers to provide services schools are unable to provide.

Regional Educational Laboratories: A 5-year, \$100 million program of grants to train educational and research personnel.

State Departments of Education: A 5-year, \$10 million (in the first year) program of grants to strengthen state departments of education.

PRESIDENTIAL DISABILITY. Ending more than 175 years of uncertainty and debate about the removal, death or resignation of a President, the Presidential Continuity Proposal calls for a constitutional amendment to permit the Vice President to become Acting President if the President were unable to perform his duties and to provide for filling a vacancy in the office of the Vice President.

MANPOWER PROGRAMS. Extension and expansion of the Manpower Development and Training Act programs, which have trained 340,000 individuals and made 67,000 handicapped persons employable since they were launched in 1962, continues the programs for three years until 1969 and provides \$454 million for their operation in 1966. The bill creates a Job Development Program to stimulate on-the-job-training where there are shortages of trained workers, and is expected to create at least 10,000 jobs a month by July 1, 1965.

GOLD RESERVES. A bill allowing the nation's money supply to expand by eliminating the required 25 per cent gold backing for Federal Reserve deposits and freeing about \$4.9 billion in gold to meet international claims on the dollar.

LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE A SUCCESS

The Democrats' distaff side showed itself to be remarkably alive and purposeful, when it turned out 300 strong (according to the Chronicle) "to hear impassioned pleas for legislation to protect two of the State's main natural resources - its children and its scenic beauty," at the Northern California Legislative Conference in San Francisco April 23rd.

Our warmest thanks go to all of you who came from near and far to make the day such a success, and especially:

To Winslow Christian, Executive Secretary to Governor Brown, who overcame a balky microphone and talked interestingly on the Governor's "Building California" program and on areas of the Governor's program not covered in the panels - on the Budget, revenue and taxation, the Consumer Counsel program, aid for the retarded, the long-range prevention and cure of alcoholism, and raises in salaries for university and state college personnel;

To the stimulating members of the Compensatory Education Panel: Robert Mendelsohn, Administrative Assistant to State Senator McAteer of San Francisco; Isadore Pivnik, Director of Compensatory Education for San Francisco School District; Aileen Hernandez, Assistant Chief, Fair Employment Practices; Zane Meckler, Governor's Advisory Committee on Compensatory Education; Mrs. Joseph Wyatt, Governor's Advisory Committee on Compensatory Education; Hon. Willie Brown, Assemblyman from San Francisco.

To the inspiring members of the Conservation Panel: Harold Gilliam, Author of "San Francisco Bay"; Hon. Edwin Z'berg, Assemblyman from Sacramento; Hon. Alfred Alquist, Assemblyman from San Jose; Dr. Edgar Wayburn, Former President of the Sierra Club; Mrs. George Hogle, Vice President, Committee for Green Foothills and to Mrs. John Fell Stevenson, whose cocktail party and Edwardian home were great drawing cards.

Eliaser: hotel [Mark Hopkins]. My manager will call you." I said, "Well, I do this for the Neubergeres who like to stay at the St. Francis. I put them in there and they charge me for a maid and a towel change. Can we do this?" Bobby said, "I'll have the manager call you."

The manager called in five minutes, and he said, "Mrs. Alanson, we'd be glad to give you a suite for Mrs. Johnson and her party for the day, and we'll charge you no more than \$25." The Fairmont was going to charge \$100 or something. It was crazy. That eats up your profit!

Twenty minutes later my phone rang, it was Uncle Lou Lurie. He said, "Ann, you know why I bought this hotel. It was to beat that son-of-a-bitch across the street out of business!" He said, I am moving out of my apartment for the day, and Mrs. Johnson has my apartment when she comes. Norma (that was his maid of many years), and my whole facility is at your disposal. If you want to have the press up, you just tell Norma what you want to order, and it is to be done at my expense!"

Well, this established a friendship between Lady Bird Johnson and Louie Lurie that lasted until his death. They corresponded, they called each other. It was just lovely. She didn't stay very long or anything; and of course, he didn't stay out of the apartment, not the way he said, not for five minutes. He had to show her the gold pull on the toilet, and the whole bit up there, and the jade collection. But it was really nice. It was a demonstration of friendship to me, a demonstration of competitiveness between the Luries and the Swigs. [laughter] And it was a sell-out lunch for us. It was a great success, well covered in the press, and we moved from there!

Our audiences got bigger and bigger. We were tremendous money raisers for women. We had a new structure, like the museums, where you had the stated membership, or supporting, or contributing, in three or four categories. We had a lot of big givers, plus the regular membership. I don't know what it was. I went to the effort of billing by the month, instead of billing every September--the way Mt. Zion hospital does me. I billed people the month they joined; kept records in that way. Really worked! You'll see these newsletters; the numbers of things that we did.

Chall: I think you were also women's chairman at the time.*

*Chair, women's division, Northern California, 1962-1965. First meeting, Democratic Women of the Bay Area, October, 1963.

- Eliaser: I may have been. I felt no conflict or disloyalty. I just would be creative if I saw a vacuum!
- Chall: What did you think of the women's division?
- Eliaser: I felt it was limited always.
- Chall: You had worked with Jane Morrison, but then you took it over.
- Eliaser: That was swell, but her role diminished. Jane did less and less. And you got into the conflicts with the men, and the geographic conflicts between the Valley, and Carmen in Los Angeles, and all the nonsense here. And I, continually and to this day, see work that needs to be done; I see my goals, and I figure out a way to get it done.
- Chall: Did you think the women's division couldn't play a productive role because it was under the thumb of the chairman?
- Eliaser: I'm not sure why I felt it was limited then. I think I knew it was. I didn't understand, certainly, that we were coming to a day where it would be an anachronism. I lived through, during my own tenure, the argument as to whether there should be a women's division or not; discussed it openly with Roger over drinks always, and he said, "Ann, you're not old enough, and you weren't here then to remember, the only reason we socked that in in the first place, was to create more roles, leadership roles for women, and titles, so that they could be on the executive committee." So that the women's division, if that is indeed true, was a stepchild to start with. So that there could be leaders, but with nothing underneath to really work with, and maybe that's what I felt. So, what I was trying to do, was to create the body that would do the work.*
- Chall: You wanted women who would do the work under different auspices?
- Eliaser: Banners. I tried to get some glamour--there's very little glamour in the Democratic party. This operation, which you will read about, had a lot of sex appeal.
- Chall: This wasn't the key women thing, was it?
- Eliaser: No. I gave you some of that stuff. I did a lot of that too. That was under the aegis of the party, and it was a good organizational thing. It worked for a long time, and the women loved it. A lot

*See also pages 280-282.

POLITICAL ACTIVITIES , 1952-1962, of ANN ALANSON

- 1952-1956 Member San Francisco Democratic League
 1956- 1962 Member Democratic State Central Committee, 21st AD Club,
 Democratic Women's Forum of San Francisco, SF YDs,
 Golden Gate Democratic Club, Commonwealth Democratic Club.
 1956 Chairman, Small Contributions Campaign, SF Stevenson Committee.
 '56 Director TASK (Teenagers for Stevenson-Kaufver)
- 1957 Chairman, Democratic Party Night, Northern California
 '57 Chairman, Teen Dems, Northern California
 '57 Coordinator, Women's activities, Democratic National Conference
 '57 Finance Chairman, CDC, Northern California
- 1958 Coordinator, Dollars for Democrats, Northern California
 '58 Statewide Finance Chairman, CDC
 '58 Co-founder Golden Gate Democratic Club of SF
 '58 Director, "Sweep the State in '58" fund raising program.
 '58 Area precinct chairman, 22nd AD.
- 1959 CoChairman, Dollars for Democrats, Northern California
 '59 D Day advisor, Democratic National Committee
 '59 Chairman, Women's Legislative Conference, Northern California
 '59 Press coordinator, CDC
- 1960 CoChairman, Dollars for Democrats
 '60 Alternate Delegate, Democratic National Convention
 '60 Area precinct Chairman, 22nd AD
 '60 Co-founder, John F. Kennedy Democratic Club of SF
 '60 Press coordinator, CDC
 '60 Panel Chairman, Democratic Women's Workshop Conference
- 1961 Women's Chairman, Morrison for Supervisor Campaign
 '61 Chairman, Democratic Women's Legislative Conference, Northern Calif.
 '61 Founder Commonwealth Democratic Club of SF
 '61 JFK Dinner Program coordinator
- 1962 Finance Coordinator, Attorney General Mosk Campaign
 '62 Chairman, Press and Public Relations, CDC
 '62 Chairman, Democratic Women's Campaign Workshop
 '62 Treasurer, Key Women
 '62 Chairman, Commonwealth Democratic Club
 '62 Finance Committee, O'Connell for Congress Campaign
 '62 Women's Committee, Foran for Assembly Campaign
 '62 Finance Committee, Richardson Campaign
- 1962 CANDIDATE FOR NORTHERN CALIFORNIA WOMEN'S CHAIRMAN,
 DEMOCRATIC STATE CENTRAL COMMITTEE

Eliaser: of women just loved it. But what we did with this Bay Area thing, was put on such events, and such substantive programs, that it just had a lot more sex appeal than what was happening in the party.

Chall: Was it confined only to the big luncheons where people had to come to San Francisco?

Eliaser: It was in the Bay Area. Not out of the Bay Area.

Chall: But, even in the Bay Area, did they have to come into San Francisco?

Eliaser: Mostly San Francisco. Clara [Shirpser] took over the World Trade Club, the big club overlooking the water. She got that for us and we gave something for Tom Lynch, and Gene McAteer, and Pat Brown down there--for men and women. It was sold out. Did a lot of things for men, too. It was a body with which to work. It stopped when I lost the energy or became national committeewoman and could no longer do all of it.

Chall: So, some of these activities, including leadership of the party--whether or not they're successful--depend on who is the leader?

Eliaser: And how much of yourself you can give to it.

Chall: And during those years Roger Kent, and Libby Gatov, and Jane Morrison gave a tremendous amount.

Eliaser: Oh! Their whole lives!
##

Responsibilities as Chairman of the Women's Division, 1962-1965

Chall: Let's talk about your election to head the women's division--north of the Democratic State Central Committee in 1962. Was there any opposition? I haven't checked the newspapers.

Eliaser: I don't think so. I don't remember if I ran against anybody. I know the second time there wasn't any. I don't think there was. I don't recall any anxiety associated with the race.

Chall: You knew you were going to be put up as a candidate?

Eliaser: I guess so. Well, one generally puts oneself in, I think.

Chall: And for those two years, you worked with Roger Kent? [vice-chairman, northern division]

Eliaser: Right.

You Are Cordially Invited

To Participate in a Conference on the

“Status of Women”

Friday, February 7, 1964

Di Maggio's

Fisherman's Wharf, San Francisco

12:00 NOON—LUNCHEON

A report on the President's Commission on the “Status of Women”

By

Esther Peterson

Assistant United States Secretary of Labor

Director, Women's Bureau, U.S. Department of Labor

Executive Vice Chairman, President's Commission on “Status of Women”

Special Assistant to President Lyndon B. Johnson for Consumer Affairs

2:00 P.M.—PANEL DISCUSSION

“Status of Women — At Home, On the Job, In the Community”

Sponsored by Women's Division, Democratic State Central Committee

Conference Co-Chairmen

*Jane Morrison, State Women's Chairman
Democratic State Central Committee*

*Ann Alanson, Northern Women's Chairman
Democratic State Central Committee*

Congressional District Co-Chairmen, DSCG

Muriel Appenzeller, San Rafael

Margaret Livingston, Auburn

Virna M. Canson, Sacramento

Marge Freitas, Fairfield

Joan Finney, San Francisco

Marie D. Bruce, San Francisco

Ruth Boyden, Berkeley

Eulalia Anderson, Castro Valley

Kimiko Fujii, Hayward

Edith Freidenrich, Palo Alto

Doris Eisan, Pacifica

Minnie Coyle, Monterey

Annette Koch, Pleasant Hill

Marion O. Pease, Stockton

Shirley Gibson, Fresno

Gladys Anne Sheerin, Visalia

Conference Coordinators

Jeanne King, San Francisco

Marianne Weigel, Berkeley

Discussion Panel

Moderator: Nancy Swadesh
Mill Valley
Member, Democratic State Central Committee

Panelists: Esther Peterson

Elizabeth Gatov
Democratic National Committeewoman

Ann Diamond
Attorney, San Rafael

Elsa Knight Thompson
Director of Public Affairs
KPFA, Berkeley

Corinne Gilb
Research Associate, University of
California, Center for Law and Society
Special Consultant to State Legislature

Jackie Walsh
President, S.F. Joint Executive Board
of Culinary Workers, Bartenders,
Hotel and Motel Service Employees

Dr. Beulah Parker
Psychiatrist, Point Richmond
Lecturer, University of California School of Public Health
Author of "My Language Is Me"

Conference and Luncheon

\$5.00 per person

R. S. V. P.
Women's Division
Democratic State
Central Committee
212 Sutter Street
San Francisco 8
DO 2-7020

Chall: And what relationship would you have had then with Jane Morrison, who was the state chairman, women's division?

Eliaser: Jane and I always worked together. We were partners, really. As a matter of fact, during all those years I really was like Jane's slave. I don't think that's an unfair thing to say. She developed programs, and she's a very creative person. But Jane works full time at station KNBR, and always did, and worked very hard. She's the mainstay of the financial support of her little family unit, because Jack was always in and out of work between his political races. And so she would develop programs, and I would carry them out. I was the full-time person who actually got the job done. And I think that's the role I still play--generally, politically, within even the leadership framework.

If you were to compare your conversations which you are having now with Carmen--or will have, and Libby Gatov particularly, you will see them as the creators of programs, or dealing at legislative levels. But you will see the Marianne Weigels, and Ann Eliasers, and people like that, as implementing them.

Chall: Do you bear any resentment for that?

Eliaser: No, because that's what I do well.

Chall: So you just, apparently, continued to do what you'd been doing. Was there much of a change because you had a position, or a title?

Eliaser: None.

Chall: And did you have to work any closer with Roger Kent, than you had before?

Eliaser: Oh, we were all together, and--yes, I saw more of him. But, Roger was, and remains today, as much as his health permits, an inclusive person. There is never a problem with Roger Kent, up here in Northern California, about anyone who is willing to work being included. He was marvelous. The lunches, the dinner, the cocktail hour--where the decisions were actually made. The free-for-all discussions--I was always invited.

Chall: Once you got into this position.

Eliaser: Even before. Roger was marvelous.

When I was in a position of not being able to afford to do certain things when there was an admission charge--a \$100 dinner, let's say--Roger always saw there was a ticket at the door for me. He was fabulous.

Eliaser: He encouraged people. He epitomized what I consider to be true leadership, which is to include people in the very beginning of your thinking and your program, to keep them in all the way to the fruition of same, so that they will have learned, and experienced, and be able to go do it themselves the next time.

Chall: I see. That is real leadership.

Eliaser: It was Bob Coate shortly thereafter. Bob had a problem about giving women a voice. Bob, who was one of my closest friends until his death this year, had a terrible problem--about sharing.

Chall: Was that a problem that he had about sharing--

Eliaser: --Decisions?

Chall: --or sharing with women?

Eliaser: Sharing with women too, to a degree. Knowing his wife well, knowing that she was totally unaware at his death what he was involved in, where anything is, still. His secretary left him in the middle of all of this political stuff that he was doing, because she felt that she wasn't included and couldn't stay on top of what were her business responsibilities, because he didn't take the time to tell her what he was doing. I don't think when men are this way it relates to only one corner of their lives.

Chall: And you think that corner had to do with women?

Eliaser: Women, or something that we're all guilty of, to a degree: we're in a hurry, we want to achieve. Being inclusive takes so much time. And so much consideration--whether it's men or women is not important. Taking the time to share takes a lot of talent and effort. Very often too, the professional person that the chairman entrusts with the daily management of the office has the responsibility for including or excluding. And I think many problems rest there.

Chall: And that was Don Bradley?

Eliaser: Yes.

Chall: Do you think that professionals have a different approach to volunteers?

Eliaser: In the early days professionals, like Don--and I don't single Don out--were men. The women who were paid, as well, had a way of excluding volunteers, both sexes, except at the top leadership. Had nothing to do with being a woman particularly. Professionals had a definition of their own role and their own power.

Chall: The second time around in '64 when you were reelected, you were working with Leo Giobetti, as party vice-chairman of the northern division. Was that any different?

Eliaser: Well, Leo lived in Merced. We were talking about this at lunch, before your arrival--the need to always run somebody from the Valley to give the rural areas representation.

His participation was limited by geography. We saw him at the state committee meeting, but rarely saw him in the interim.

Chall: So that the work was still carried on by Roger Kent.

Eliaser: Oh, at all times. Yes. And Leo was delighted with that. He was very close to Roger, admired and loved him. No problems.

Chall: Now, Jane Morrison somehow leaves the scene about that time, and Trudy Owens, who is from Southern California, becomes state chairman of the women's division.

Eliaser: She's Carmen Warschaw's cousin, and protegee.

Chall: And because of the north-south--well, just geographically the problems--did you have anything to do with her activities?

Eliaser: She and I were friends. Jane continued to work as hard as though she held office. In our group up here, Libby, Roger, Jane, and others, we didn't quit because we didn't have a title. We always worked, and we cared, and we always put forth a large effort. It didn't matter.

Trudy's daughter used to stay at our home when she traveled. We were good friends.

Chall: Most of your work was with the Democratic Women of the Bay Area, but I have other material that you've given me that has to do with the women's division, as such. Can you recall anything special about the women's division?

Eliaser: No.

Women's Division Leaders of the Democratic National Committee

Chall: Did you work with Margaret Price?

Eliaser: Oh, yes. I knew Margaret very well up until the time of her death.

Eliaser: Margaret had an assistant at the Democratic National Committee from the time of her designation to office by Jack Kennedy. Her assistant was a woman named Elizabeth Abernethy--A-B-E-R-N-E-T-H-Y, who came out of the Mennen Williams regime. Also, you knew that Margaret came from Michigan, and held office there, I think. She came with the Williams operation, because of this vice-presidential nonsense. And because of Michigan's power, generally, Williams was put into the State Department in the very beginning of the Kennedy administration. He was the head of the African desk, mainly.

John Abernethy, Liz's husband, was his administrative assistant and legal advisor.

Liz was also very political, and she was a Michigan delegate to that '60 convention. So she went into the national committee as Margaret Price's administrative assistant. She visited California. Liz Abernethy is today my closest friend. She just flew out for my fiftieth birthday.

But we saw a lot of Margaret, anyway. Roger Kent couldn't be bothered with her. It wasn't only the idea of having to bother with women in high places, that men are not even yet used to, but that Margaret had some mannerisms which were very unlike Roger Kent. Roger's the most natural guy in the world, and the most unpretentious; his socks are always hanging down, and his car's never washed, and his sleeves are a little bit frayed.

Margaret Price was very elegant, with white gloves, and chic, and with lots of airs, which I'm sure were not airs to her, but things that bothered Roger and the guys around here pretty much. After going through the formalities with her, he always used to say--even before I held office or anything--"Ann, take care of her. Get her to dinner, do anything." So, Lionel and I would take her to Trader Vic's--take her almost anyplace, just to get her away from Roger. But, I liked her; she didn't bother me, and I think I understood her. I worked well, and she was functioning within the traditional role for women as outlined in those years, and that was okay.

She was very bright. I remember putting a press conference on for her, because I did a lot of press work in those days--and of course still do for women--and inviting largely women's-page people from the Bay Area to meet with her on one of her many visits. But, because Carolyn Anspacher was a close friend of the family, I think I asked Abe Mellinkoff of the Chronicle to send Caroline to that press conference, and wow, was that a mistake!

Chall: Oh, yes? Why?

Eliaser: Well, Carolyn is one tough lady, and she's a city-side reporter, and she's not in the least interested in women's news, unless it's Patty Hearst, which you know she'll probably win a very large prize for doing. And she walked out on Margaret Price!

I was horrified! I saw her to the door--left one of the girls who was working with me, at the press conference--and I said [very distressed], "What is it? What is it? Did she offend you?" She said, "Never have me to one of these women's things again! This is not what I do!"

Chall: And you didn't, I'm sure.

Eliaser: No. But, Margaret dealt strictly with the women's jobs, women's positions, what women can do in politics. Unfortunately for her, at the time, things were just beginning to simmer, and women were moving from the traditional roles as envisioned for us by men. And so, if she had national programs, I was the person in California who carried them through lovingly, and I think, somewhat effectively.

I started going to Washington to the annual things that she put on, and I have to admit that I said to Liz, "Let me out of here. I can't stand this. One day out of four is all I can take of these women's conferences."

Chall: What were they designed to do?

Eliaser: Oh, tell you how to organize. Tell you how to give a party. How to raise nickels and dimes, when you should be raising hundreds of thousands of dollars. How to design workers manuals, you know.

Chall: At the same time, I understood that she was also very much interested in getting women into political positions.

Eliaser: She was fighting her personal battle, which was a terrible one, through other women she thought were competent. In other words, she was closed out. At the top corner of where she was, when the decisions were made, she wasn't included, and so her way of dealing with this--which was intelligent--was to start pushing for other women, and to improve the position of women all over. Oh, she suffered terribly!

Chall: You're talking about politically?

Eliaser: Well, John Bailey was then the head of the Democratic National Committee, and he had his own way of operating, which was pretty closed. And though he respected her, and they were good friends, she didn't go over to the White House, and wasn't involved in any major decisions, I promise you.

Chall: Do you think any woman would have, except India Edwards, maybe?

Eliaser: I don't think India would either, though she says she did.

Chall: And Katie Louchheim?

Eliaser: Not at all.

Chall: So, at that time, women just weren't invited.

Eliaser: I worked with Katie, very closely for a while. I think she's one of the most brilliant women that I will ever know. She's a very creative human being. Very with it. And the thing that was good about Katie is, she didn't resent her exclusion. Instead, she moved within the territory that was permitted her, and did well with it, and by doing that earned the respect of men and women. In a sense, she moved that way, not from bitterness or struggle, but from an understanding of what she was allowed to do.

Chall: But she had a major place in her own social sphere, which may have given her a certain kind of place.

Eliaser: True. Intellectually, also. She was a very talented person.

Margaret was part of the deal that was cut with Mennen Williams, so it was political, and it had a lot of other things happening.

India, I got to know very well, although she was, initially, before my time. When Margaret became seriously ill, and was moved from Washington to the Columbia Presbyterian Medical Center, with cancer, which went on for a long time, she did not relinquish her post. India, very generously, came back and filled in. And it was then that I really got to know her well, and to like her so much, and work very closely with her.

Chall: With India?

Eliaser: Yes.

Chall: She's living here.

Eliaser: Oh, I know. I've seen her.

Chall: You've known quite a few of the women at the top spot in the women's division. I don't know who's there now. Do you?

Eliaser: Well, Carter will name somebody.

##

California Democratic Council Endorsing Convention, 1958

- Chall: I'd like to go back and pick up the threads of some political and candidate activity. What do you recall of the 1958 CDC endorsing convention?
- Eliaser: Clair Engle! Oh-hhh. That was fascinating!
- Chall: That was Engle and Odegard?
- Eliaser: Yes. I remember that. It was my first exposure.
- Chall: What do you remember?
- Eliaser: Paul Ziffren running up and down stairs in the California Hotel in Fresno, so he could address all the caucuses on behalf of Clair Engle! [laughter] It's very visual!
- Chall: And did you, at that point, have any interest at all? You didn't come committed, did you?
- Eliaser: Oh, I probably was. I spoke to my caucus, to my great shock and surprise. I spoke to my caucus on behalf of somebody in the congressional endorsement thing, somebody I didn't care about and I really wasn't for, but they were foreclosing the possibility of his even having someone speak for him. Somebody who's dead now. Almost everybody is! It was procedural.
- Chall: You weren't, then, taking the stand of the liberals, as they called them in those days, the more liberal of the CDC people who were more interested in Odegard than they were in Engle?
- Eliaser: Oh, I knew Peter Odegard. It had nothing to do with whether I was liberal or not, because I guess I was far more liberal on issues than most people who were for Engle. It had to do with winning. I knew both of them. I'd known Peter for years or I'd known about him, through various circumstances. I did a lot more homework at the time.
- Chall: Did you like those CDC conventions--the endorsing conventions--were they fun for you?
- Eliaser: Oh, I suppose. Sure. You make new friends, social aspects of it. The making of the friends at the conventions, you see, means that at the other end of the situation, in two months, when you're organizing something or putting together a program, those men that you were drinking with that you never met before, and women, you telephone and they're your friends. Otherwise you're calling into a void. You have built a base on which you can operate.

[Interview 5: January 6, 1977]##

Chall: I thought we'd start today with the Democratic National Convention of 1960. Now, I saw a picture of you in the paper with Marianne Weigel, both of you apparently going as delegates, but you weren't a delegate, were you?

Eliaser: I wasn't. I was an alternate.

Chall: That's what I thought. I wondered whether you had been made a delegate, but I only saw you as an alternate on the list.

Eliaser: I went as a delegate on the last day to vote for vice-president. The rules change, as you know--momentarily, annually. That year, you were alternates by congressional district, and in case someone didn't show or had to leave for some reason, you were seated alphabetically within the congressional district. So, in my case, then-district attorney from San Francisco, Tom Lynch, didn't want to attend the last day, and my name was Alanson, so it was my turn. That's how it was done then. I have no idea how those things are done today.

When we went to Chicago, for example, we were all instructed to allow alternates to sit in whenever possible, to exchange badges, to give everybody a chance to participate on the floor, but that changes each time; it's hard to say.

The Democratic National Convention, 1964

Eliaser: When I was at Atlantic City, I was delighted to give my badge at the Johnson convention to anyone who wanted to go. I went, and sat in. There was nothing of substance that we ever had time to vote on.

Chall: What about the Mississippi Freedom Delegation?

Eliaser: Well, that was voted before California got out of caucus. We were privately voting within caucus as to a California position, and we fought so, that by the time we got there, it had been decided.

Chall: But I understand that the California delegation had decided, prior to going, that they would vote as a unit to seat the entire Mississippi Freedom Delegation.

Eliaser: They voted with President Johnson, with me in the lead opposed to that position. Did I not tell you that story?

Chall: Well, no, because we usually take most of this in chronological order. But you have brought up a subject that I want to follow-through on.

Eliaser: That's, I think, the first time I really moved out as an independent person, away from the people who had nurtured me in the early years in my political career. I just couldn't stand the compromise.

Chall: I see. So you wouldn't vote for the compromise?

Eliaser: No. There were threats, you see, we were told.

Hubert Humphrey is an old personal family friend. We were told that Hubert would not get the vice-presidential nod from Johnson if we didn't accept this compromise. The president had laid the responsibility of it upon Humphrey, and he had instructed the California leaders that for his sake, we must do this.

We had, on the Credentials Committee, Verna Canson, now running the NAACP office here, I guess, but who was then from Sacramento in their consumer office. So, Verna recommended the compromise; she suffered deeply. The pressures put on her on that Mississippi situation were just horrible. She was torn, but finally ended up going with the leadership and asking for the compromise, which, as I recall, was to seat the Mississippi delegation--the red-neck delegation--with three members of the uprising group, so to speak, and the rest of the people being guests in some semi-honored position, somewhere in the hall.

I found it totally unacceptable with tutelage from nobody. Dr. Martin Luther King telephoned my hotel room and asked me to vote with him.

Chall: Which was for the compromise?

Eliaser: No, certainly not. He was there battling for the new people, the new delegation to be seated. I listened carefully to him as I did to everybody. But the compromise seemed to me to be setting us back a decade in politics, and we were not moving ahead on any issues. The whole convention was so pre-set.

So we caucused in the early evening, at the cocktail hour, in a room in our hotel in Atlantic City that was set aside for California, for such meetings. It was the only caucus of any depth. Governor Brown was on the platform; Don Bradley, who was professionally running everything; other staff members; Verna Canson, who was going to present the resolution. Tom Carvey was the secretary of the delegation that year, and was one of my oldest and closest friends, and remains so.

Chall: He was still president of the CDC?

Eliaser: I don't remember.

Chall: I think he was. [1961-1965]

Eliaser: But he was secretary of the delegation; he must have been. Libby Gatov, and I'm not sure about Alan Cranston, whether he was up there or not.

I was seated in the front row with some friends with whom I'd had a drink, and everyone told us what the procedures were. Then Verna Canson moved for the compromise, someone else seconded it; the governor spoke for it. Jimmy Roosevelt got up and spoke for it, which shocked me! I didn't realize that the deal was cut for him to go to the United Nations as an appointee of President Johnson.

At least two urban congressmen, as I recall, spoke against it. One was Gus Hawkins, naturally, of L.A., who was also a black community leader. Pierre Salinger was the Senator then, Senator-elect, and he was for the compromise.

In any case, they then told us that the procedure would be that we would vote by alphabetical roll call. Orally we would be called by name, and that an "aye" vote was for the compromise as moved by Verna Canson; a "no" vote was against the compromise, which quietly was told to us was against Johnson, against Humphrey, and the whole scene. So the first name on the roll call was Mrs. Alanson, and I said, "No." And there was a lot of scurrying around on the stage and whispering on the platform, and so forth and so on, like "Maybe she's had a couple of cocktails or possibly she doesn't understand,"

The secretary, Tom Carvey, looking directly at me said, "For the benefit of those delegates who may not have understood the motion--" Well, only one person had voted, so it was very amusing. "We will re-read the motion and re-do the instructions." And they did, and they said, "Alanson." And I stood up, and I shouted, "No!"

Now, many women and all urban congressmen, with a couple of exceptions, voted against that compromise, but in those days they did not make up anything but a token in a delegation.

Chall: I see. Well, the final vote was 114 to 49. Another account, though, gives the minority figure as 54.

Eliaser: Well, that tells you what I just said. There we were! [laughs]

Chall: It's interesting, though, to find out about your vote, because the only names that I had known about (I guess I got these from Carmen Warschaw's clippings) who voted against the compromise were Carmen Warschaw, Jesse Unruh, and Jerome Waldie. Apparently--from other clippings I have--Roger Kent carried a feeling of hostility out of the convention and on into later months, against Warschaw and others who had so voted. So how did he treat you?

Eliaser: He is today one of my closest friends, but he never forgave me. And I didn't handle it correctly. We walked out of there, and the hostility from my closest friends was so evident immediately, and it was a very new experience for me. I'd never taken the brave, lonely first step. We went on to the convention, and I walked over with Tom Lynch on one side, and Senator Eugene McAteer on my other arm, down the boardwalk. They were my close friends also, and had voted on the other side, but they held me up. We walked on to the floor, and the vote had just been concluded.

Chall: In the convention. Oh, yes, that only took a couple of minutes.

Eliaser: Yes! California never went on record! As usual, California wasn't there, and it was all done.

As I recall, Tom Lynch, and McAteer, and I had trouble getting in. The guard said, "The convention's in session. You're guests." The guard had known us. I'd never say no to the late Eugene McAteer; he was one tough Irishman. And then he looked a second time, and said, "Okay, you can come in." I stayed for a while and went back to the bar. We had a special lounge for California delegates, and I was pretty lonely; nobody was speaking to me. And I went in, and I sat down with Phil and Sala Burton for perhaps the only time in my life, and Bill and Joan Roth.

Chall: What had their votes been?

Eliaser: I don't know how Bill voted or Phil, but at least I was welcome.

Chall: They spoke to you.

Eliaser: They spoke to me, that was about it. Don Edwards came in later and patted me on the shoulder, and said something like, "You're a good girl." And that was the end of me; my personal friends all were someplace else.

The session was over, and it was traditional always to go to Roger Kent's suite afterwards for drinks and talk. Obviously, I was not going to be invited.

Eliaser: Now, I think my friend the late Bob Coate voted with me. In fact, I know he did. But he had considerable more maturity than I, and he went up to that suite, he later told me, and knocked on the door, even though he had not been asked, and drank with everybody and picked up the pieces. I was always taught unless you're invited someplace, you don't go, so I kind of sat by myself or with those folks who would speak with me, and then went to my room. I was glad that I had done what I had done, but I was very sad, because the hostility was very evident.

The next day we did work in various meetings in the morning, mechanical meetings were held, training sessions, and so forth, and I had late lunch with some friends from the Valley. I think we probably had a couple of glasses of wine with lunch; we got up to go to some kind of session, and we walked by Roger Kent's table and I said, "Hi! Leader," very lovingly. And he said--I hate to do this on your tape--"You dumb shit-ass!"

Chall: Oh! [startled] He was angry!

Eliaser: I was overwhelmed, and I was very tired, and had had some wine, and the tears started to come down, and I started to cry! I kept on walking toward the elevator; I had better sense than all that. Following me were not my Valley friends who had taken me to lunch, but Gerald Marcus, attorney at law, and I guess Mel Ury, who was a Marin County resident and a political activist-contributor, and they said, "We've got to get you up to your room. There is no question about that." And these two men took me to my room, and said, "You need a nap;" all but locked the door behind me.

At that point my telephone rang. It was a friend from San Francisco, whose name is Naomi Lauter, and she's a leader of the Jewish community. She presently works with the Jewish Community Relations Council here for Earl Raab, but was a volunteer, political activist, and Jewish leader at that time. She said, "Ann, I'm calling to ask that you vote against the compromise." And I said, "Naomi, that was last night, and I did." And I wept, and I told her what had happened, and that none of my friends would speak to me. By then, I was able to articulate why I did what I did. It was three hours later in Atlantic City, which I wasn't conscious of at that time, and she was in the middle of dinner when she called me, but I didn't realize that. So I told her all of my reasons for why I had done it; that I felt that we hadn't entered into our century, and somebody had to, and so forth. This was at a pretty spiritual rather than political level--the conversation. Then I did sleep after that; I was able to sleep. I was really distressed.

Chall: Were you rooming alone?

Eliaser: Yes. I got up afterwards. There was a California delegation cocktail hour given, I think, by Gene McAteer honoring Tom Lynch, who was shortly afterwards appointed attorney general. They were my dearest friends, so I got up and showered, reduced the swelling of the eyes with ice, and put on my best dress, and went down. And by then a couple of friends like then-state Senator Hugo Fisher of San Diego, who's now a judge, came to my side and he said, "If you need a drink," he said, he'd throw one at me, "to get your eyes unswollen!" [laughs] I guess I didn't look as wonderful as I thought!

Anyway, the convention went on, and was over the next day or something like that, and we all went our separate ways.

I came home. I'm trying to think. The Jewish New Year occurred while we were still East. I met my husband and daughter and one of her friends, and we spent Rosh Hashonah in New York and Cincinnati, but we came home for Yom Kippur. I was sitting in temple, and the rabbi was speaking about politics, and brotherhood, and I sat there, and I had the most terrible case of *deja vu*. I thought, I am losing my mind--there is something that I don't understand about this sermon. And afterwards, I went up to him and I said, "I've heard what you said before." He said, "I was at Naomi Lauter's when she called you."

It was just the weirdest experience! And I feel it was one of the great turning points in my career, not because of the Mississippi compromise which turned out to be just a small item on our large agenda, but my personal ability to move on my own, and not feel I needed to be loved every minute. It was a very harsh experience, and it took a long time, but it was perhaps a good lesson. I know it was.

Chall: When you came back to work, you were women's chairman?

Eliaser: Yes.

Chall: And you were working under Roger Kent?

Eliaser: I had a hard time getting in the Johnson campaign after that. There was no desk for me when they opened. They had no women's chairman of the Johnson campaign, they didn't want to be bothered; it was an unnecessary structural situation. Tom Saunders was managing it, but Roger was there every day, and everybody else was. And they just weren't going to let me in the front door to work for President Johnson.

Eliaser: Well, I didn't need the recognition, but I felt that I had something to contribute. Marianne Weigel was working with me and so forth. I finally just hung in there. Maybe Tom Lynch gave me a little help, I don't remember. In any case they made room for me. They gave me two desks, and two chairs, and one telephone, and I structured the women's activities at that time for the presidential general election. But it was a hard fight to get in. I was unwelcome. Your information is correct; that was a wound that took a long time to heal.

Chall: What else can you recall about the convention?

Eliaser: First of all, we were seated right behind the television platform. Perhaps Carmen or someone told you that?

Chall: No. I haven't talked to her about this convention yet.

Eliaser: You do your trade-offs or they do. They toss a coin as to which hotel you get, and where you're seated in the auditorium, and/or sometimes it's how much money you've given or how many votes you produced. They have a new formula every minute.

In any case, California drew what they thought was a marvelous seating assignment up front, except it was right behind the television rises, and you couldn't see anything. So, I was one of the few fortunate ones; I had a working TV in my hotel room. I further had some extra telephones that had been put in for work that I did on the side, which perhaps I didn't tell you. That convention, I represented the San Francisco Chronicle and the Oakland Tribune for the women's side of the news. They could not afford to send a reporter. The Examiner sent Mary Stanyon to do fashion, women's issues. The kind of thing that they don't do any longer--"what Mrs. Brown wore to the dinner in her honor" kind of news.

The Chronicle arranged that I could call them collect. I wasn't paid for any of this, but it didn't cost me anything. I did the Oakland Trib and the Chronicle, calling in what you might call the more personal or social side of the convention news. For that, I needed an extra telephone, because it's well known that at convention hotels you never can get in or out of the switchboards. So, a month in advance, additional phones were put in my room. Also because of my role as a party leader I was entitled to that.

The Alan Cranston Senate Primary, 1964

Chall: What about the other parts of that 1964 campaign, as long as we're on it--that's the Salinger-Cranston primary, and the Salinger-Murphy general election? Those were more important in terms of winning than the Johnson campaign, because I think he was considered a shoo-in.

Eliaser: Oh, of course.

I had worked full time in the Cranston primary. I traveled with Mrs. [Geneva] Cranston full time; I did her scheduling--even had a paid assistant. I was not paid, of course, but I had a paid assistant. We scheduled Mrs. Cranston, and we scheduled all incoming celebrities who appeared on Alan's behalf--congressional people who were willing to go out on a limb for him and so forth, or entertainment personalities, whatever. We scheduled all extraneous personnel--if you can talk about wives and congressmen as extraneous. And set up a speakers bureau. I was in the headquarters full time. I operated as a professional, but I think I always did. And when Mrs. Cranston was in the field, I went with her, because the approach was that there was so much territory to cover and she was so articulate, that Alan should be at one end of the state and she at the other, so that we saw everybody. I did a lot of press work with her, and without her.

She lived in our home in San Francisco, when we traveled together. The only time she went to a hotel was if she and Alan ended up in the same city at the same time. Then they were together.

Chall: That was a hard campaign.

Eliaser: It was terrible.

Chall: And you were chairman of the women's division and still you were working for Cranston, is that right?

Eliaser: Yes. I guess I was chairman of the women's division. I don't remember my personal chronology.

Chall: That didn't seem a problem, then. I never know whether people at the top party level are supposed to be neutral during the primaries.

Eliaser: There was a time when we said, yes, you should stay neutral till the general election. But then if you were the person who felt otherwise, you changed the rules.

Chall: [laughter] Yes. Well, that's the way it seems to be, I guess.

Eliaser: But that was tough. It was my whole life for those months, and I presided with Libby Smith Gatov over election night in the northern Cranston headquarters, because Alan was, of course, in Southern California, and you don't abandon either your professional or your volunteers ever.

It's a fight I still have, that everyone tends to go to Los Angeles because of the media coverage, and because that's where the celebrities are election night. I feel that it's just almost criminal to abandon people who've given so much of themselves up here, to be in the limelight. I always stay and take the lead. And I remember on that occasion, I ran the headquarters; I brought in dinner and cocktails for everybody--my treat. I just did it all myself--got it there.

When it appeared that Alan was losing and Libby, of course, as the real leader, was called upon to go on television, I went with her. I didn't want her to go alone, and we had someone to drive. I walked in, and standing to be interviewed on Salinger's behalf was the late Joseph Eichler. Joe was very angry at both of us. There is always this hostility that becomes personal.

Chall: For coming in?

Eliaser: No, about our role for Alan. Joe, you see, had been for Stanley Mosk. And Joe brought up some old episodes which he held us responsible for, of a very personal nature regarding Justice Mosk, and laid that whole situation on Libby and me--which wasn't to the point. We will let it go at that. It was very unpleasant.

Chall: He didn't lay it all on you at that moment?

Eliaser: Well, at that moment, while Libby was in front of the camera as the loser going first, and Joe going second as the winner, he was standing at the curtain with me. And yes, he did lay it on me that we were responsible for pulling Stanley off [as a candidate for U.S. Senate]. He claimed Stanley would have been elected and so forth. That he would have been elected, I think was correct.

After that I, as I recall, contributed to the Salinger campaign. Again, people carried their bitterness over. There wasn't room for me in the general election; it wasn't that I was not available to help.

Chall: You picked the wrong side twice.

Eliaser: I wasn't asked. This happens over and over again. Carter learned not to do that, which was impressive. The McGovern campaign perhaps had the greatest guilt in this kind of situation. I wasn't involved

Eliaser: in that campaign, but I gather that when people went to Florida to the convention which nominated McGovern, the people who had been supporting him approximately two years went around with little buttons that had lettering on it that meant "For McGovern, Before New Hampshire." It was meant to imply that if you weren't in that club, you were a second-class citizen.

Some campaigns continue to behave this way, and not open their arms to people who may not always have been on their side. If you want to win, that's very foolish. If you're a paranoid, it's marvelous, you can develop your disease.

The Democratic National Convention, 1960

Chall: Back to 1960, which was your first convention, and you were an alternate.

Eliaser: I had to fight to be an alternate.

Chall: Let me ask you first, did you attend the caucus where delegates were presumably selected?

Eliaser: Yes. Oh, certainly.

Chall: And you were one of those selected?

Eliaser: No, I was not.

Chall: Out of the caucus?

Eliaser: It was prearranged that I would not be. These things are always dominated by given interests, but it takes a long time to be sophisticated enough to know that. You go as an innocent, thinking you've earned it, and get lining up some votes. I was nominated by Naomi Lauter, I think, but Charlie O'Brien had cut a deal with the Burtons and somebody else. It's such old history, I don't remember; but I didn't appear on any slate.

Chall: Which means that the ten or so who were working in the chapel in Carmel picked you as an alternate.

Eliaser: That's right.

Chall: Did you do anything to insure that you might be picked?

Eliaser: Well, after the caucus, which I thought I had carefully arranged for, there would never be any question of considering the degree of my participation. My husband went with me. I had talked with Don Bradley regularly, and he said, "Look, you just have to go." I said, "I don't have that many votes personally lined up, it's just that I think I deserve to go." He said, "That's not good enough. You have to spend the rest of today, you and Naomi, getting your votes lined up." So I did the best I could, but I was humiliated. I had never asked for support for anything ever in my life. I was embarrassed, it was terrible. So we went, and they voted, and I didn't come far away from the top. I don't remember where I was on the list, but in any case, it did not look good for me. There was no question that I would not be a delegate; the alternates, I think, were left to the discretion of the group in Carmel.

In any case, Don Bradley came home with Lionel Alanson and me that night. And he had some drinks. My husband, who was very anxious on my behalf and very proud of what I was doing, expressed enormous distain for the proceedings; disgust, disappointment for me, to Don. And Don kept pouring drinks for himself and saying, "Don't worry. We'll get it figured out somehow. She's done all the right things. If she hadn't gone, we couldn't move on her behalf. But, since she did mechanically everything correctly regarding the caucus, something will come out of it." And it's only at the very last minute, as I recall, that I became an alternate. Don, always reassuring us that I would be, but publicly it was never so till the very end. I don't know how that happened anymore, if I ever knew.

Chall: There must have been a great deal of shuffling around with respect to delegates and alternates, because they didn't take everybody who was picked as a delegate anyway. San Francisco was combined into the fourth and fifth districts which allowed them to pick a few more than the two generally promised each caucus.

Eliaser: There was hanky-panky in San Francisco. I think in the end, as I recall historically, they threw the San Francisco recommendations out in Carmel.

Chall: Well, you can see why they might have had to do that, but even Philip Burton was an alternate, rather than being a delegate.

Eliaser: He's working his way to that exalted position again.

Chall: There were, let's see, only twenty-four women out of the total 160 delegates. And there were, I think, about either nineteen or twenty women out of the total number of alternates--about 15 percent who were women.

Eliaser: I roomed with three women, we were four in a room. And I was the only alternate allowed in the hotel, I recall that.

Chall: What hotel was it?

Eliaser: The Hollywood Knickerbocker Hotel was allotted to California. What the national committee has never understood, is the amount of space that California really requires. People bring a wife and occasionally children, or husband and children; the size of the California press corps is large and it has to really be with its delegates; and add to that the amount of staff it takes to serve the largest delegation in the United States, and you've got hundreds of people. They never give us large enough space, though they're learning!

And so Don got the Hollywood Knickerbocker, and had to take a motel nearby--I forget the name of it--and all alternates and peripheral people were put in the motel.

The Hollywood Knickerbocker then was the oldest hotel in the world. Now, it must be the oldest hotel in the planet!--if it's still there. In any case, there was one room which would take four people. Well, there are no four men in the world at a convention that are going to room together. Right? So, Don took it upon himself to house four women. I was the only alternate, the other three were delegates, I think, but I'm not positive. Elizabeth Reginatto from Redding.

Chall: She was a delegate.

Eliaser: Betty Lawrence from San Jose. One other person. That's a lot of years to even remember that much.

Chall: Oh, that's pretty good. I've been impressed with your memory, so don't give up.

Eliaser: And we had a rule. There was one wall bed. Last one in got the wall bed.

Chall: [laughter] I'm sure you were all scrambling for it. [laughter]

Eliaser: No. Most of them stayed out all night. I was the first one in every night. Literally, the first one in, and the first one to get the bathtub in the morning.

Chall: There are advantages!

All right, having been selected, were you in on any of those pre-convention maneuvers with respect to what the vote would be?

Eliaser: I don't remember.

Nomination Maneuvers

Chall: Did it matter about the alternates, whether they were for Kennedy or Stevenson?

Eliaser: Oh, once we got down there, yes! Beforehand, off the top of my head, no. Once we got down there and my leanings toward Adlai Stevenson became known, I was again shuffled off to the corner. And I was told, even though I was alphabetically first, they might find a way not to call upon me in the case of a vacancy unless I would swear allegiance to John Fitzgerald Kennedy, immediately.

Well, I was actually torn, because at a pre-convention dinner in Pasadena, a couple of nights before the convention, Tom Carvey and his wife were invited and took me with them. It was a house that had been rented by Agnes Meyer, who was then the owner of the Washington Post--Katherine Graham's mother--who was entertaining in honor of Adlai and two of his three boys. And so I sat with Adlai for a while, because we were old friends, and I asked him about it, and he said, "Ann, really I don't want this." But, I'd known him well enough by then to know he did, and he didn't. The story of all of us.

Chall: Of all of us who know about Stevenson?

Eliaser: No. The story of all of us about things in our life. I think that's a human trait. We know, and we don't want to know. We want to be someplace, but maybe we don't. There is no clear-cut answer. Honestly. If you deal with every level of the consciousness.

But anyway, having had this long, heart-to-heart--on a lawn, in the evening, in comfortable circumstances--it was difficult for me. But I believed that I would never be in a position to be called upon to have to make a public announcement one way or the other anyway, which turned out to be the case. Didn't matter. No alternates, at least from our delegation, as I remember, went to the floor for the vote on the president.

Also, I had gotten involved in the Chester Bowles movement.

Chall: Oh?

Eliaser: Yes. I went to a dinner, just because I was an old admirer of Ambassador Bowles from way back, and I was curious. And I went to a Bowles kind of caucus-dinner one of the first nights.

Eliaser: I got down to L.A. very early. What I did, and I continue to do this, is travel with the staff or go with any early groups, so that I can get the lodgings straightened out. If you are planning to work, or make any contribution to the convention, beside drink and eat, you should get in and set about your business, which you really can't do when you're moved in en masse with millions of people off chartered planes, and so forth. It's always been my habit to go ahead, and to get set up, and to help other people get moved in, and get the real work of the convention going.

So, on one of those early evenings, there was a Bowles caucus without Chester. And if I'd been interested at all, just seeing those people, and seeing what they hoped and dreamed for, was such a laugh, that I got over that. I went back to the hotel and met with Phil Burton, as a matter of fact, and John O'Connell, and numbers of our legislators, and sat around with them for the evening laughing about it.

There was a half a vote in California for Chester Bowles, on the first ballot. It was Bart Lytton, the late Bart Lytton of Beverly Hills.

Chall: It was a half vote?

Eliaser: We had half votes that year.

Chall: Yes. Are you talking about the half vote when--

Eliaser: The first roll call. Yes. There was. I thought the governor would die!

Chall: The first real roll call? Oh, you mean on the California delegation? Well, I wonder if we'll ever straighten out what the California delegation vote ever really was. I have seen several different tallies.

Eliaser: Clair Engle was for Stuart Symington. For Bowles it was Bart Lytton. I think that's pretty accurate. People couldn't get too angry with him, because he was such a big contributor and, in fact, entertained the entire delegation and press corps at his Beverly Hills layout! I'd never seen anything like that before. We were all brought there by bus! And we were entertained at a brunch! Hundreds of people!

Chall: As an alternate then, you really--

Eliaser: I didn't participate till the final day, when I went to the floor and voted for Lyndon Johnson [for vice-president].

Chall: And who was it, you told me, who brought you onto the floor?

Eliaser: I think I replaced Tom Lynch, I'm not sure. But I remember the rules were you had to be replaced within your own congressional district, which was confining, but intelligent.

Chall: I think I read somewhere that Paul Ziffren and Richard Richards, from the Los Angeles area, left the floor and allowed their alternates to vote for Johnson as vice-president, because they didn't want to vote for him.

Eliaser: There was a move from Mennen Williams, on the floor. I was present. Tom Carvey was involved, sort of in it, not really. We have good friends, who were then from Michigan, in the delegation, with whom we communicated. Which didn't mean we agreed, but we talked.

Clair Engle got wind of this, and got just furious! And came up to me, and said, "What are all your friends doing over there, talking to Michigan? This delegation is going for Johnson." And I said, "Senator, I'm voting for Johnson, and I'm not aware of any votes other than that." And he said, "Well, they're over there talking to Williams!" There was a last minute move on behalf of Soapy Williams.

Chall: Were you aware at any time that much of the pro-Stevenson activity was really anti-Kennedy, pro-Johnson?

Eliaser: Ah-hh. No. Although I had been invited, the night before everybody else went south, to a dinner that George Killion gave up here for Lyndon Johnson. I presume the whole delegation was invited. I think it was a night or two before. [telephone ringing] Excuse me, both phones are going. That usually means there's an emergency. [telephone interruption]

Chall: You were telling me about the George Killion.

Eliaser: Well, I know that George Killion was doing something honoring Lyndon Johnson, and I have to say, I probably was new, and thick enough in the head not to think of it, other than that Killion, who was an industrial leader here, was honoring one of the leading members of the United States Senate. I don't think I ever regarded him seriously as a presidential candidate. Though, of course, I know he was, or saw himself in that light.

Chall: I guess there has been some such information that came out, not too long after the convention. Even some people during the convention suspected that much of the activity for Stevenson, by people like George Miller, who had never been for Stevenson before, was really a way to keep Kennedy--

Eliaser: Off the first ballot.

Chall: Yes.

Eliaser: I would suspect that Engle's activity on behalf of Symington could even more clearly be an indication. In fact, Symington had no strength, and Engle was so closely associated with Johnson. There's no question about it.

Chall: What about the big demonstration for Stevenson? What were you doing during that time?

Eliaser: I was in the balcony. Getting into the area was terribly difficult because the demonstration outside was even greater than that inside. I was certainly cheering, and emotionally involved. There wasn't much one could do. I was rather sure that Kennedy had it, as soon as the vote was taken. I didn't even wait for the speeches.

I went back to the California bus, and just sat there. I was not altogether overwhelmed by democracy in action. [laughter] This had been my first convention! And I just sat there till everybody else came, because the bus wasn't going to take off with just me and two of my friends. So we waited, and we went back to the hotel.

The next night, Kennedy was to appear at the Los Angeles Coliseum, as I recall. The last night, instead of addressing the convention hall--the convention was, in fact, adjourned--he was going to make a large public address there which would be open to the public, with a special section for delegates. Most people who go to conventions look for any excuse to stay an extra day anyhow.

But, a friend of mine, who had business commitments up here, and who had a car down there for some reason, was going to drive home that afternoon--just wait for the heat to subside a bit; it was awful! It was one of the hottest summers in Los Angeles, ever. I had never made the drive up the Valley. I had always been a flier or train-taker or whatever, and he asked if he could drive me--he was going straight through. And I said, "Sure, I'd just love to get out of here!" I'd had it! I'd been in at least three days earlier than everybody else, helping the staff, doing guest tickets, all the odd-jobs that your paid staff would need help with.

So, we took off without going to the Kennedy speech, which we heard on the radio in car. I've never driven through such heat in my life! Over the Tehachapis, into Bakersfield. I had a beautiful silk dress on, which was just pure water by the time we got to Bakersfield from Los Angeles. By the time we got to Fresno, we wanted to stop.

##

Eliaser: We got to Fresno for dinner. I didn't know how to drive, so I wasn't much help, except to talk and keep the driver awake. And he said, "Can't we go to a motel? I'll treat you to a room. I can't go any further." I said, "Bob, you promised we'd get home tonight. We are going." And we drove into glorious downtown San Francisco, at about four-thirty in the morning, at which time he discovered he had a flat tire! [laughter] And nothing was open. We got up to Nob Hill to one of those garages, and it was open. I guess people stay open up all night near the big hotels. And the man wouldn't change the tire, but he showed us how to do it, and where the air pump was. We got that done, and Bob drove me to my house at five in the morning, and said could he come in and call his wife Margo, to say he was here so she wouldn't be frightened. So he called Margo, and said he'd be home in six or eight minutes and left.

I went upstairs to our bedroom, and there was a body in my husband's bed, but it didn't look like my husband, but then it was in the middle of the night, and I didn't know, and I was awfully tired. I sniffed around, and I wasn't sure, so I went into the guest room; I didn't even undress, I took a blanket and rolled up in it and went to sleep. And about six-thirty, quarter to seven, I heard someone in the bathroom in the other room, and I went and looked, and it was my husband. [laughter]

Chall: It was? [laughter]

Eliaser: I was awfully tired! [laughter] Didn't have any sleep!

Chall: I take it you weren't a Kennedy fan. Did you ever become one?

Eliaser: Yes. More or less. Not really. I don't think any of us, sadly, had the opportunity to see Kennedy develop his potential, because he was dead before he had that chance. He was not the world's greatest Senator. He was not the world's greatest intellectual. He was a diligent, ambitious, rich young man, and he had great promise for us, but who knows. He won, and I think that's something I've learned to look at a little differently in my later years. I'm a pragmatist now.

The Campaign, 1960

Chall: Did you work in the campaign at all?

Eliaser: Oh, very hard! Oh, yes! I was doing the Dollars for Democrats drive. So, I was down in Roger Kent's office on Sutter Street, which was a block away from the Kennedy headquarters. We all got together for lunch and dinner, and for the evenings, but the campaign was run out

Eliaser: of one Sutter Street office, and the rest of the Democratic procedures out of another. And I again ran the Dollars for Democrats drive. That time, it was for the whole state. And I was up there every day. And, in fact, at that point, your university trusted me so much, that they upped my interns for my program, from one to two, to five.

That year, I had five interns, all young men, interestingly-- out of the graduate program--in the Dollars for Democrats program. And right after the convention, Bradley took me to lunch, and he said, "Lookit Ann, you've got five kids and I don't have anybody in the presidential campaign. Can I have one?" Well, what are you going to say? Reg Watt and I had it so programmed that we had real roles for each of these five people; but I said, "Sure, which one do you want?" And before I said it, I realized that was a mistake. That I should have just given him one. He said, "Well, Bernard Teitlebaum is your best kid, isn't he?" And I said, "Yes." So, he said, "I'll let you tell him he's making the move."

So, I took Bernard Teitlebaum to Sam's for lunch, and he was unused to living that well. He didn't clean his fingernails in those days or comb his hair. And I said, "Bernie, Don Bradley has particularly asked that you be his executive aide in the Kennedy campaign." He said, "You're not serious. I don't want to go." I said, "What do you mean, you don't want to go. It's the opportunity of a lifetime to run a presidential campaign in this state, and have the responsibility that's going to be given to you!" And he said, "Don Bradley doesn't like me." I said, "How can you say that? He singled you out?" He said, "He doesn't say good morning to me when he walks in the office." I said, "Well, when he says good morning to me, Bernard, you will be the first to know." And so there's a bit of the story of Bernard's career. Now he's running city hall in San Francisco; is world famous. So there you are.

He was just six months short of receiving his doctorate at that time. I was upset, a little, about his progression in politics. I think he flunked his German. Something went wrong, a very small detail that he had to recover, and that was it.

Chall: Did he get it?

Eliaser: No. Never has.

Chall: Were you aware at all of the Catholic issue in the 1960 campaign?

Eliaser: Oh, sure. How could you not be? Particularly, coming from the center or one of the centers of the Jewish community, as I do. I resented the Catholic thing so terribly, because I said, "How

Eliaser: could Jews, of all people--persecuted for centuries, take this view of another religious group." It just killed me. I saw it slowly evaporate that year; it was marvelous, because I could see it from its beginnings.

The thing that hit me more seriously was the issue of his health. Mind you, I was not married to a physician at that time. Much was rumor. Much turned out to have been very true. But that was the gossip, really, that was the most destructive, I felt. Anyone who is anti-religion or anti-something of that kind, is doing more damage to himself, than the candidate in the end. But the health thing was very dangerous.

I loved the way that Kennedy handled the religious issue, anyway. Because it's been my practice, just in a personal way, without ever being, until recently, totally conscious of it, or approaching these kinds of difficulties frontally, in my own life. Just go right out and say it. That's what he did. Wasn't it a Baptist convention in Texas?

Chall: Yes. Something like that. Somewhere in the South.

Eliaser: You got to lay it on people, and then see what they do.

Chall: Well, what was your general feeling after the Democratic convention in 1960, which was your first, and still considered to be, by some, one of the more exciting ones of the decade?

Eliaser: I was disappointed, because of my great love for Adlai Stevenson, and more important for those ideas which he had articulated by then for so many years.

He came up to San Francisco after the convention, and Ben Swig assembled a small group of friends for drinks in his honor. Ben moved out of his own suite and gave it to Adlai at that time.

Lucretia Grady had been lobbying all of us to be sure to get Adlai to be secretary of state. And Adlai at that time suggested he would be very interested, but he said, "You know Ann, they're going to offer me the ambassadorship to the United Nations, and I don't want it; and I will never take it."

Chall: Is that right?

Eliaser: That was a lesson in politics also.

Chall: Well, probably he was never going to get the other post anyway. It was just dangled in front of him.

Eliaser: Right. There was nothing much I planned on doing about it anyway. I was a very low level person, and understood where I was in the structure.

Chall: But you did go to the Ben Swig party?

Eliaser: Oh, I was happy to see Adlai, and almost went anyplace I was asked where I could see him till the end of his life. Except the last time he was here. I think it was the United Nations reception out at the Legion of Honor where I was invited to be one of the many official hostesses. I didn't want to be a part of the mob scene I knew it would be, and I asked if my daughter could represent me. I remember Mary taking my best dress out of my closet without my permission, and putting it on. She went out there. And how in the world she did it, I wouldn't know, but someone assigned her to Governor Stevenson. She stood at his side throughout, and received. I have a photograph upstairs someplace, of my daughter with Adlai for this entire reception--in my best dress--and a little note from Adlai.

People were given a floor plan of the Legion of Honor, when they came in, as to where the receiving was, where the refreshments were, and so forth. And Adlai had taken one of these from somebody, turned it around, folded it over, and written me the most loving note of how much he missed me, and how he felt about my daughter. I still have this. And he was dead two weeks later.

Reelection of Elizabeth Gatov as National Committeewoman, 1964

Chall: Back to the 1964 convention, just enough to find out what your position was with respect to the Carmen Warschaw-Elizabeth Gatov election for national committeewoman.

Eliaser: Oh-hh! That was painful. The governor's office ran that.

Chall: Yes. I've seen the letters that he wrote to all the delegates.

Eliaser: But his staff, who were ostensibly paid by the taxpayers to run the business of the state of California, ran that. It was really run out of the governor's office, and all the delegates were contacted with great frequency by state staff on this matter. There was really never much of a problem. I didn't feel that it was the world's greatest challenge, although it was very busy, and it kept people excited. And there's nothing that politicians, and Democrats--I only know Democrats really--adore more than a little good bloodshed. And there was lots of it.

Eliaser: I watched it, and I observed something they'd overlooked. I said, "No one's contacted any alternates for Libby." The governor's office just pretended that alternates didn't exist. They said, "We don't have the staff or the time for it." Jane Morrison and I noticed this collectively. So we volunteered to take over the job of contacting all the alternates on Libby's behalf, and to do something for them, because alternates are such second-class citizens anyway. Nobody ever wrote to them for support or suggested they were anybody. Particularly at these pre-convention caucuses, delegates are away. It's a time for people to be in Europe, or on their annual vacation someplace, and you've got to seat alternates. For example, in the fight for national committeeman, between Paul Ziffren and Stanley Mosk, I was an alternate, but I was seated to vote for Stanley Mosk.

Chall: Something I overlooked asking you. Good. Tell me.

Eliaser: It was made clear to me that my commitment had to be known first. And it was Martin Huff, who was then treasurer of the party, now the head of the state franchise tax board, or someone like that, who said something to the effect, "We want to seat you. You are for Stanley Mosk, aren't you?" I had no problem about that.

In the Libby-Carmen thing, it was even more tightly controlled. Carmen never had a chance. And I don't think any alternates had-- I don't know how many alternates were involved. What bothered me at that time was not the Libby-Carmen fight, which I had no problem with, but the fact that I had once been an alternate. That I had felt left out of lots of things. That alternates deserve to participate even in a battle like that.

Jane and I opened up a hospitality center for alternates on Libby's behalf, at the Hilton here. And we communicated with all of them by letter and telephone, and we just did a job. I don't know if any of them ever voted or not. That wasn't the point. They were included.

Chall: I see. Yes.

Eliaser: My father died the week of that caucus. It was something I was grateful happened, because he was very, very sick. He was relieved of great pain. I wasn't in the world's best shape.

Chall: You never, then, had the strong feeling that Carmen Warschaw had in fact been promised by Eugene Wyman, that he would vote for her?

Eliaser: Oh. I'd believe anything. I don't know. Probably.

Chall: It didn't matter.

Eliaser: But, I'm so provincial, I'm a Northern Californian. Anything can happen down there. Their battles were so bloody and so protracted, I think they'd be so sad not to have had them.

An Era Passes, 1965

Election of Ann Alanson Eliaser as National Committeewoman

Chall: Let's talk about your election to the national committee.

Eliaser: I remember that so well.

I had become tremendously concerned about the status of women, generally, by then. Having nothing to do with me or the national committee or any such nonsense.

Libby had come to see me about a year before that. I forget why she'd come to see me--Oh! We were going to Pierre Salinger's swearing in. I don't remember the chronology, what year that was, but she was very unhappy about that, because she's such an Alan Cranston person, as was I. So she said, "Could we go together?" And we had breakfast at my house. She drove in from Marin, and she said, "You know, Ann, when I leave this post, whenever it is, I certainly hope that you will take it." I think she went on to imply that if I continued working as I had been that I could fill the job. That was all. It was just two sentences between us. The end. Nothing more was said.

Meanwhile, I'd gotten very active in the various informal status-of-women groups that were forming around California. Even worked nationally. Met with Esther Peterson, and so forth. There was a concerted effort to have a California Status of Women group, and I worked with Madeleine Coddling, from over your way [Alameda County]. (She's now Madeleine Mixer; Regional Western Director, United States Department of Labor.)

Chall: Madeleine Coddling?

Eliaser: Well, that's not her name now. She's remarried. And I guess I consulted or just went to everything. I was never a formal member, as I recall, but I really was concerned.

I was in Sacramento, and I can't tell you what month, at a meeting that the governor ostensibly called, of women leaders, to talk about the formation of the California State Commission on the

Eliaser: Status of Women. A group of us went up together, or I may have taken the Greyhound, I still didn't drive, and we were seated in that reception room. Jerry's [Governor Edmund G. Brown, Jr.] redesigned the office a bit, but in those days, it was the big formal, front reception room, which also served for press conferences, and so forth. And Governor Brown came to the podium, and greeted everyone in the informal way he always does, and then he said, "Oh, hi, Ann. When this is finished, will you come to my office? I need to talk to you about something." And I thought, oh gosh! Now, what do I do? I don't want to be on this commission; what is this all about?

So, then he left; the meeting was going to go on for sometime. The women took over. He'd said his few words, and went back to work. Someone next to me went like this [elbow gesture] with an elbow, and said, "Maybe it's more important for you to go see what he wants, than to sit and listen to this." I thought that was sensible, and I went back, and he took me in right away.

He said, "Ann, this isn't for publication, but this afternoon I'm going to announce the appointment of Al [Albert] Gatov to the Public Utilities Commission of the State of California, and there may be discussion that Libby's role as national committeewoman is in conflict of interest. He said, "You and I know her to be the great woman of honor she is, but I think it's time for her to resign. She's wanted to go on your behalf for a long time anyway. Can you mount a campaign for yourself to do this?" And I thanked him, and I said, "Sure."

Carmen held some role at that time I felt she was, at least temporarily, satisfied with.* Not positive. But there was an executive committee meeting of the state committee coming up within two weeks of this little discussion, or within a month of this. A very short period of time. So what Pat Brown was saying to me was, "In this short period of time, can you put this together, because you are my candidate." And I said, "I see no problem. I'll wait till you announce Al's appointment. Then maybe I'll call a couple of key people, and I'll let you know." And he told me the people with whom I should speak in his office: Winslow Christian, now judge of the Court of Appeals here, and somebody else, maybe Hale Champion. I don't remember.

Anyhow, I went home, and I called Al Gatov at five o'clock that evening, and I said, "Congratulations." And he said, "For what?" I said, "Well, I met with the governor this morning. He told me your big news." He said, "I don't know any big news." And I said,

*Vice-chairman, Southern Division, Democratic State Central Committee.

Eliaser: "About the Public Utilities Commission!" He said, "That's not going to be announced for two days!" And I said, "If that's not typical of Pat Brown! I'm so glad I called you." I said, "I'd better tell you what transpired." So I did. He said, "Well, I don't know anything about that. But Lib's in Washington, and this is the number where you can reach her. I think you should not speak to anybody till you speak with her." Well, thank heavens for this very good advice.

So, I called Libby in Washington, and she was quite shocked. The governor had not told her this. I think she knew Al was being appointed, but she wasn't aware that the governor felt she should resign, even though she had said a year previously, that she was ready to move. So she said, "Please don't do anything till I come home." And I said, "Fine. The governor's given me two weeks to put this together, but I defer to your judgment."

So this went on for quite a while; Don Bradley tried to block it, and I'm trying to think why. I think they were going to change the national committeeman at the same time.

Who was before Gene [Wyman] and then I can reconstruct it?*

Chall: Stanley Mosk. [1960-1964]

Eliaser: Yes. I think that what the governor's staff people felt--Champion, Don Bradley ex officio, and maybe Winslow, who isn't really that political, felt that they wanted to do the whole changeover at once. And did they want to do a man first or a woman first? Or was I weak or wasn't I weak? And the thing got so bloody complicated. It was so terrible, and became so fraught with emotion and political difficulty, that I was practically destroyed. Here, the governor, who was the leader, said to me, "Ann, do it. I want it done in two weeks. I trust you and want you." And someone says, "Be quiet." Someone says, "Go ahead." And it was terrible. I don't know how long it took, whether it was that state committee or the one immediately following, or if they called a special meeting, and they may have.

Chall: It was a regular meeting in March. But, from what you tell me, one of them must have passed--

Eliaser: Yes. I think it was January, I really do, if Libby was East--that he asked me to do it January, and it passed. And as it passed, it looked to me like I was being dumped by the pros in the governor's office, and by Don Bradley. It was a terrible, terrible thing to

*National committeeman, 1964-1968.

Eliaser: deal with! Not with the votes, which I had. But with the people surrounding the governor, who thought their judgment was better than his, and they made a big thing out of something which really wasn't very important at that time.

Johnson was president of the United States. The national committee didn't function. It was a nothing. Because Libby had always told me that in times of power, when you have a president in the White House, the national committee has little to say or do. The time the national committee assumes a major role is when the president is from the opposite party, and you are therefore the spokesman of your party. So, it was all very silly, and fortunately I had some sense of proportion about it. It was uncomfortable, and it was horrible, and upsetting. One governor's aide would tell you one thing, and Don Bradley would tell you another. And finally, I got tough. I got very tough. And I said, "Okay, you guys--"

I called Nancy Sloss, who is one of my closest friends, with whom I grew up, and she was the governor's appointment secretary. By that, as you know, I don't mean schedule, I mean appointment of judges and commissioners. And I said, "Look, Nancy, I've had it. I'm washing out! If a decision isn't made by this evening (this was in the morning), then I'm gonna run at the March meeting--or whatever meeting. This has to be gotten over and done with. I can't deal with this any longer, because it's not being honestly done, and it is not altogether that important to me." And so Don Bradley immediately called me back, and he said, "There was some inference in your conversation with Nancy, that I was trying to block this. I'm not; I'm all for you. I just want to be sure you have the votes. And of course the governor wants you to go immediately, and we're here to help you get elected at that meeting."

I had called it. But that took a lot of guts.

Chall: Well, what about Mrs. Gatov? What was she doing in the meantime?

Eliaser: Well, she was always very supportive, but she was playing their game. I was her candidate, but they were up to some shenanigans, and I've never fully understood it. Carmen was not ever considered in this, so far as I know. They weren't sure they wanted me, but I know they didn't want Carmen.

Chall: Who was--you mentioned his name a little while ago--Gerald Marcus?

Eliaser: Gerald Marcus is an attorney, and I think was at one time the president of one of the San Francisco bar groups, attorneys club, fund raiser.

Chall: So, he wasn't in line for anything special?

Eliaser: No. He's looked for judgeships on and off at the federal level.

Chall: Was he ever considered, as far as you know, for the position of state chairman in place of Roger Kent?

Eliaser: Oh, yes.

Chall: Rather than Bob Coate?

Eliaser: At the time of the Coate situation, both Marcus and William Orrick were approached. And this all was happening at the same time, and that's part of what colored it.

Chall: And Marcus didn't want it?

Eliaser: I guess not. I forget now. He was my attorney at one time, and I did know, but I don't remember. And William Orrick certainly didn't want it.

Chall: I guess what Carmen Warschaw wanted in 1965, when this switch took place, was that Trudy Owens would get the position of national committeewoman.

Eliaser: It couldn't happen. Even if the governor had wanted her, the votes simply were not there in terms of her work. In other words, I had worked full time in the entire state. I had traveled regularly, when I held no office, on behalf of candidates, speaking, organizing in every county in the state, including the Valley, which most people discounted always--didn't bother with the Valley early on.

I always bothered, mostly 'cause nobody else would go. But, I knew how important that Valley was in the makeup of this state. And when you get down to counting votes, whether it's for an election or in the state committee, that's where it's at. I had to try and teach Jimmy Carter a little bit about that, taking him to the Sacramento Bee for editorial conferences, and so forth. Never overlook the Valley.

I'll tell you what happened. Carmen did, as you know, try to block my election at that meeting, whether it was for Trudy, or for whomever, by approaching the congressional delegation, which Harvey Aluminum owned. She worked with the seniors of the delegation, wired them, not in any sense against me, but to postpone the vote. Tried to stop the vote. At this point, the elderly southern congressmen, who were her friends, got up and said, "Who is this Ann Alanson anyway? We really don't know her," which wasn't true. Phil Burton, who loved that said, "Yes. You're right. We should wait." Bernie Sisk of Fresno, who was nothing really in my life except that I had worked very hard in his district for

Eliaser: years, not for him, but on various legislative matters, and organizing women, and for Kennedy--I'd gone back and back to Merced, and Modesto, and Fresno, and Bakersfield--said, "Oh, you know who she is. She is the one who does thus and so, and thus and so, we mustn't pass her up, she's willing to help all of us." Just from nowhere! I really barely knew the man! And this is the recitation Jerry Waldie or somebody gave me. And that's how it happened, they voted against Carmen's request.

They did wire. Somebody sent a wire saying that the congressional delegation requested postponement, but that did not reflect the vote of the entire delegation.

Chall: They weren't there, were they?

Eliaser: No.

Chall: So they just requested the postponement.

Eliaser: Yes. Somebody sent the wire.

Chall: Well, the vote finally was a hundred and one to thirteen, but Carmen Warschaw felt that she had been railroaded. Isn't that the time that she wore a little railroad hat?

Eliaser: Railroad costume, a little scarf. Right.

Chall: I think she was then southern division chairman, and she really wanted to keep that position, according to the press. I haven't talked to her about it. So perhaps the following year [1968] she could be national committeewoman, and that's what--

Eliaser: How it ultimately went.

Chall: Breaking it up into half-term sort of fouled up everybody's plans.

Eliaser: Yes.

Chall: Now, was there, or were you in any position to know what else was going on, when Eleanor Fowle replaced you? I think I read somewhere that there were a number of women who might be in the running. Of course, the press always picks just about everybody's name.

Eliaser: She ran and was elected the same day. I remember that.

Chall: Were there other people?

Eliaser: I can't imagine anyone running against Alan Cranston's sister.

Chall: Let's see, the press claimed that Joan Finney Brann had been a prospect, March Fong, Mrs. William Lawrence, Mrs. Alan Parker.

Eliaser: Gee, they've all gone. That's interesting, that list.

Chall: That's a press thing.

Eliaser: What's happened to them? Joan Finney Brann--you know, Frank Brann committed suicide this year; the Parkers are divorced. Who else? Mrs. Lawrence, who is the one I roomed with, wife of the postmaster from Santa Clara county at that time.

Election of Robert Coate as State Chairman

Chall: Now, can you tell me about what went on for the election of Bob Coate? Was he appointed--one, because others weren't interested, or was he really the top choice?

Eliaser: He actively sought it, and there was no question that he was the best for the job. And again, the people around the governor, including some of our own friends, weren't sure of Bob. He gave his whole life to that job, raised money, developed the organization to its finest point. But the traditionalists didn't know him, and they really wanted to go back to one of the old timers or someone they knew better, like William Orrick, who'd been around. Or Jerry Marcus. It was no way personal. It was just a question of doubting something you didn't know about.

Chall: In 1968, he didn't continue on. He became state chairman for approximately a year filling out Roger Kent's term, then he was northern division chairman, but then he never went on again as state chairman. In '68, Roger Boas took that position.

Eliaser: Yes. Bob ran for lieutenant governor in the primary against Alfred Alquist.

Chall: Oh, that's it. I couldn't remember what it was.

Eliaser: Politics really went to his head. Very tragic. Destroyed his life, personally, in terms of his financial condition, his business, his family. It was awful. It's something from which he was just recovering when he died so suddenly last year of cancer of the pancreas.

Chall: Financially, he was just beginning to recover?

Eliaser: And just his self-esteem. There were heavy problems.

##

Chall: Wouldn't it have been possible for people in the Democratic party to have assisted him financially in some way, or for the party organization to have assisted the party without his having to have done this?

Eliaser: He felt, not incorrectly, that people are willing to go as far as the leader. I feel that too as a professional fund raiser. If I put on a fund-raising meeting, people will go as far as the chairman who says, "Ann, here's my check for a thousand dollars." Then he goes in the room and asks the other people for money. But if he just gets up and asks you for your check and hasn't made a gesture himself, the money will be hard to come by. And Bob understood that always.

Chall: But he didn't have any money.

Eliaser: He had no personal resources, right. But he always gave, or borrowed to give, or saw that it was given. He was very unselfish; made some terrible personal mistakes in terms of his own life and family in providing for his sons and so forth, by what he gave in terms of his time and money, and just total resources, to the Democratic party.

Chall: Now, do you think he was ambitious for himself politically?

Eliaser: Yes. But also just ambitious to do the best job. I think he was bitten by the Potomac Fever bug, if you will, later on in the game. That came a while later. Also, it didn't hurt here on the periphery of the finance world in your business interest, to make it with the big givers of the Democratic party.

Chall: And he was doing what? He was a stockbroker or some such thing?

Eliaser: Oh. He did a lot of things. He was an investment person. Starter of new deals. I really was never close to that. My first husband was involved and did invest with him, as I recall, on a couple of things. Bob made him money. It was profitable. He never lost anything.

I remember seeing him shortly after his campaign because Lionel Alanson and I, in those years, rented a house at Lake Tahoe every summer for a month, and the Coates had a place--still do, on the American River which was an hour away. But we asked them always for weekends. They had a young son who was still with them, and I always had children around of all ages. Collection of relatives and neighbors. So they'd come over, for that month that we were up

Eliaser: there, on a Saturday or a Sunday, for a weekend. And Bob was still holding onto that candidate-itis syndrome. He had not yet let go. He'd stand on the deck of our house over the lake and pontificate the way candidates do. It was a slow process for him to leave the role of candidate. It must have been very hard on Margie, his wife.

Chall: At one time during the Vietnam War he went over to Vietnam and came back enthusiastic.

Eliaser: Oh, he was all for it. Yes.

Chall: It seemed quite a statement. Something about, I'm safer in Vietnam than in the streets of San Francisco, which I think alienated many of his friends who were opposed to Vietnam by that time.

Eliaser: He really believed it. But it didn't bother the money people who mostly never dealt with the war at all.

Chall: So it was not an issue in terms of--

Eliaser: It was only an issue with the rank and file.

Oh, he became very close to President Thieu. He invested. Took his investors into South Vietnam, brought home a Vietnamese child for Margie to bring up.

Chall: Oh, did he?

Eliaser: Oh, he was totally into it!

Chall: And what happened to the child?

Eliaser: I don't remember, but there were all kinds of school problems, sibling relation problems. Oh, God! It was awful.

Chall: But as a chairman he did well?

Eliaser: Oh, I think so. He was creative, worked hard at it, cared deeply about doing a good job.

I can see actually what happened to him going over there, because at a similar time or maybe a little earlier, Lionel Alanson and I had occasion to go to Asia with then-Attorney General and Mrs. Thomas Lynch who were then our really closest friends. Their son was working for the airlines Bob Six--Continental, I think--and he met a girl while he was doing graduate work in Europe, who followed him to Asia and was working in the American Embassy in Bangkok. He was north of Bangkok in Laos.

Eliaser: But in any case, after this long distance romance and following one another all over the world, these youngsters decided to get married and invited Tom and Pat Lynch out east to the wedding. They decided that Bangkok might not be all that wonderful for a wedding, and they scheduled the wedding in Hong Kong because they thought that would be more desirable for everybody. Mrs. Lynch hadn't been well at that time. She had had a slight coronary, but she was willing to travel, and they were anxious not to go alone so we agreed to go with them.

And I said that we were not in the position to spend a month in the Orient and not see something else besides downtown Hong Kong for a wedding. The Lynches were free and willing to go; Charles O'Brien was running the attorney general's office pretty well in those days, and so we went for a month. We went from here BOAC, overnight and into Honolulu; directly to Tokyo. We had eight days in Japan, which were never enough, to my great regret. We flew from Japan to Bangkok where we met the children. Their son was just out of a hospital with pneumonia or something like that, and he looked ghastly and shocking. I hadn't seen him since he was a child. We met the bride-to-be and her mother from Seattle. We spent four really gorgeous days in Bangkok and then we all flew over separately to Hong Kong where we stayed for ten days for the pre-nuptial celebrations, the wedding, which I ended up putting on, and so forth.

During the period in Bangkok and generally out in that area of Asia, flying over Vietnam twice, it was very easy to be brought into the thinking that the American presence was critical--that we were the great saviors.

Mrs. Lynch today still is a great social person--a talker. She just goes up to strangers and meets them. There were of course top brass military personnel in the Erewan Hotel where we were put up with all the trappings of a high state official. We met a lot of people by accident and on purpose, and she talked to all of them. I entered into some of those conversations, and I have to admit to coming home feeling a little bit more the way Bob Coate did than I had. Particularly since we had the misfortune of hitting Hong Kong during those original riots out there.

We had the wedding. The youngsters had a honeymoon of a day or two at that marvelous hotel around the other side of the island--that old Repulse Bay English hotel.

At the wedding itself, about ten gorgeous young men of various ages, and their wives and girlfriends, came from all over Southeast Asia, converged upon Hong Kong for this wedding. The bride's mother wasn't able to cope and I, therefore, became Jewish mother and did the wedding, and the reception, and everything for her.

Eliaser: We came home after that. And as I say, I came home with a somewhat different idea about Southeast Asia, and being with these youngsters even contributed to that drama of the American role.

IV DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL COMMITTEEWOMAN FOR CALIFORNIA, 1965-1968

[Interview 6: February 3, 1977]##

Learning Voice Control

Chall: You were saying that you had had vocal cord surgery.

Eliaser: Somewhere, maybe half or three-quarters of the way through my political career, I developed nodules on my vocal cords, and I lost my voice mid-speech or mid-statement. And my regular ear, nose, and throat man, which I guess all families have, suggested I have voice therapy. But I was so bad, finally they had to remove those nodules, and for almost a month, I whispered. I had a part-time secretary to help me answer the phone, and I wrote notes.

But after that, I went to a woman who is connected with the University of California Hospital, and what was then Franklin. Her name is Dr. Lucy Lawson. And she told me many of her patients, aside from aphasics, and so forth, were religious leaders, educators, and politicians--not in that order--and that we use our voices incorrectly. Our use of our vocal cords reflects stress. She handed me a Bible one day, and a book of poetry another day, and she just made me read till she got me to the proper pitch.

The ENT man said he never wanted me to speak again without a microphone, because of what had happened. But, I found in traveling that you can't always ask for that, and it didn't matter, because I've always had control since that experience. Not because of the operation, because I know people who have had it two and three times, but because of the way Dr. Lawson trained me to use my voice.

When she told me, because she really doesn't look the right age for it, that she had worked with Hubert Humphrey, way back in Minnesota, I was fascinated.

Chall: Taught him how to breathe? Is it mostly breath control?

Eliaser: Well, she talks about breathing, but with me she did not. She said my breathing was perfect. That it was the tone or octave, or whatever the correct expression is; she brought me way down. I was up here, and always sounded terrible, like that. [speaking in an artificially high voice] Really. You never hear me that way, unless I'm very excited.

First Experiences in Washington, D.C.

Chall: Today I want to go through the years 1965 through 1966, maybe into '67, starting with the fact that you were elected as national committeewoman, which we covered last time. One of the first things that you did, I recall from your newspapers here, was to go to Washington with Governor Brown. Got some marvelous press.

One thing I'd like to know first, is what did you conceive the role of national committeewomen to be? The role that you would assume?

Eliaser: A disciple of Libby Smith Gatov, for starters. My goal was to emulate her, and her achievements as much as I could--knowing as I say that to you, and I still feel it, that I never could. She accomplished so much, and was so helpful in decision making. I thought that if I could do that, it would be marvelous. But, I already understood the differences between us, and I think I've said this to you, that I was more of a technician--good at mailings, fund raising, setting up events, moving grassroots people, which is a kind of thing she has never professed to do. She was at a policy-making level.

And, so far as I could make a contribution to issues and policy, I was happy to do it, and wanted to. But, there was a history that I brought with me, of hard work at detail stuff, that I was unwilling to let go of, and which I still have not let go of, as you could hear just now. [a political campaign planning session just prior to the interview]

This was one of the early months of the year, I'm vague on it.

Chall: It was March.

Eliaser: The CDC had its annual convention either the same month, or shortly thereafter, in Sacramento. Pat Brown called me, and said he was going to Washington, for the--oh, what's the dinner?

Chall: Gridiron.

Eliaser: Gridiron dinner. And Bernice was going with him. Would I like to fly with them? That would give me the opportunity to meet with the Washington leaders.

I had already worked with the congressional California Democratic caucus a good deal, and I said, "Certainly. I'd love to."

Some airline company, a private one, that was trying to sell a jet to the state of California, had offered this trip to the governor. Pat flew customarily in The Grizzly, which was a propjet or an old plane. I was invited as the extra passenger, along with the press secretary, and maybe somebody else--the governor's regular secretary.

So, we all piled onto this plane. I left the CDC convention early, and flew East. But, it was weather like we're having, a stormy, extra-heavy winter, even though it was spring. And the wings started to ice up about Omaha, and they didn't have de-icing equipment.

So, we landed in Omaha, just to get cleaned up and refueled, but by the time we were over Chicago, it was decided it was unsafe to go further. They radioed the Chicago tower, because Governor Brown was late for the Gridiron dinner, and a number of other things. And they held up--I think it was the United flight from Chicago to Washington--for over an hour for us, though the passengers were unaware of it. The weather was so terrible, I presume you could have told them anything. They just flew or drove our little plane up to the entrance that was set up for us to this United flight (or whichever airline), and we all traipsed on--were pushed on. Our baggage miraculously went with us.

We got into Washington; we were about four hours late, but we were alive. We were met, or we took cabs, I don't remember, and went to the Madison Hotel, which is the enclave in Washington for Californians still.

The governor immediately dressed to go to the Gridiron dinner, and I had dinner upstairs in their suite, with Mrs. Brown. The staff went their separate ways, and she and I ordered a drink, and some kind of dinner, and went to bed very early, and just collapsed.

Then I kept that schedule that you allude to, afterwards, which was set by the Democratic National Committee, largely; not by California. There was a very fine press secretary at that time, a PR person at the national committee--her name was Ellen Oshins, and she set up that press conference. And then there were a number of things set up for me which were personal, and more social.

San Francisco Chronicle
3/6/65

Committeewoman Selection

Demo Action Up in Air

By Earl C. Behrens
Political Editor

Sacramento

California's 23 Democratic Congressmen may have thrown a roadblock into the scheduled election today of Ann Alanson of San Francisco as the party's national committeewoman from this State.

The congressional group voted yesterday to ask that the election of a successor to Elizabeth Smith Gatov be postponed until the June meeting of the executive committee of the State organization, instead of at today's sessions here. Mrs. Gatov's resignation becomes ef-

fective during the current meeting.

State Chairman Roger Kent who has placed the election of the national committeewoman on the agenda for today, said, "It will be up to the committee to decide if we are to go ahead. Personally, I would favor going ahead with the election." He indicated a postponement probably would result in a party squabble later.

EXPENSE

Kent said he had talked by phone with one of the Congressmen and had explained that many of the executive committee members would be put to the expense of coming here and that the matter should be settled now.

One report around the capitol was that the Southern California committee members want the election delayed.

From Washington came a report that the Congressmen were irked by a letter from Mrs. Gatov urging their support for Mrs. Alanson as her successor.

WORKER

Mrs. Alanson is chairman of the Northern California Women's Division and a long-time worker in the party. She has the support of Governor Edmund G. Brown and Kent.

Her election to the post seemed assured until the Congressmen stepped into the picture. Her only opponent, Trudy Owens of Palos Verdes Estates, chairman of the Southern California Women's Division, withdrew saying she did want to "stir up a big battle."

The committeewoman post was vacated when Mrs. Gatov of Kentfield resigned after nine years, because of "increasing personal and family responsibilities."



ANN ALANSON
Chief contestant

FIGHT

It is expected that a sharp contest will develop for Mrs. Alanson's chairmanship if she is named committeewoman.

At the dinner caucus of Northern California members of the executive committee last night, five prospective candidates were discussed. They were Joan Finney Brann of San Francisco; Mrs. March Fong of Oakland; Mrs. William Lawrence; Mrs. Alan Parker and Elinor Fowle, all of Santa Clara county.

Neither Brown nor Assembly Speaker Jesse M. Unruh will attend tonight's executive committee meeting. The Governor will be in the Sierra, meeting with Nevada's Governor Grant Sawyer on problems of the Lake Tahoe region. Unruh has a speaking engagement in Southern California.

Attorney General Thomas C. Lynch is the only State officer scheduled to address the meeting.

The Evening Star
3/24/65

Peace In Party Sighted

Committeewoman
From California
Pays Flying Visit

By RUTH DEAN
Star Staff Writer

She's been in the job only two weeks, but Mrs. Ann Alanson, California's new Democratic national committeewoman, demonstrated yesterday that she combines political savy with feminine charm.

When she heard Gov. and Mrs. Edmund ("Pat") Brown were coming to Washington for the governors' dinner at the White House earlier this week, she wangled a ride on the plane, "so I could meet the California congressional delegation I'll be working with and the people at (Democratic) national headquarters."

So in a few days' time she accomplished her mission plus holding a press conference which she squeezed in an hour before plane departure time back to the Golden State.

Convincing

She breezed through it with flying colors, and deftly fielded questions in such a way that she gave a very convincing impression Democratic Party unity is just around the corner in California and Gov. Brown will walk away with the next gubernatorial election.

Running like a thread through the conference was her constant emphasis on party unity.

She said the Democrats' defeat at the polls for state and national offices was "unrelated" to the landslide vote for President Johnson, but that it did indicate "we should have worked harder."

If the Democrats are going to win at the polls in 1966, she said, "we must start working now — yesterday — for party unity."

Communications is the real problem, she said. "We're not informing each other enough on what each is doing."

The tousel-haired committeewoman buoyantly declared "there are signs that the feud between California Democrats



MRS. ANN ALANSON

—Star Staff Photo

California House Speaker Jesse Unruh is ceasing."

When challenged that this could be questioned in some quarters, she maintained the governor will declare himself a candidate for re-election and will "win handily" over any Republican candidate, including Sen. Thomas H. Kuchel if he chooses to run.

Mrs. Alanson said she didn't think his defeat for a U.S. Senate seat hurt former White House Press Secretary Pierre Salinger's chances for a political future.

"He developed a huge base during the campaign, and brought in loads of new people who are young and dynamic," she declared, adding: "He may not necessarily seek office again. He could assume party leadership."

California Republicans will put up former U.S. Treasurer Ivy Baker Priest (now Mrs. Sidney Stevens of Los Angeles) for the state treasurer post.

Mrs. Alanson praised the work of women Democrats in California and said they are urging passage of a compensatory education bill for culturally deprived children. She said "it ties in with the administration's 'Operation Head Start' program."

The \$30 million program is aimed at all grades from the pre-schooler through high school, she said, and is directed to children whose educational needs are so great "they don't know what a pencil looks like, nor have they ever read a book, much less know what the form of a

- Chall: You had just been elected as national committeewoman over protests of, I guess, almost all of the California congressmen. Did you go to meet any or all of them?
- Eliaser: Oh, I had breakfast with them. I met with all of them.
- Chall: And smoothed over--
- Eliaser: There was never a problem. It was precipitated, as you know, by Carmen Warschaw. And the people in that delegation, which she and her family--Harvey Aluminum had taken care of over the years--they had to answer that obligation. But none of it was ever meant.
- Chall: There was no hard feeling?
- Eliaser: Not at all. We still are friends, those that are left. I found no problem, no hostility, except over the years from Phillip Burton, who is my congressman or my peripheral congressman, and that's a whole other story.
- Chall: Yes. And that goes back to--
- Eliaser: A hundred years, right. It had nothing to do with Carmen. He does not answer to Harvey Aluminum.
- Chall: Well, with respect to the press coverage, and press relations in general, I guess already you had enough exposure so that that may not have fazed you. On the other hand, it was a little different.
- Eliaser: It did! I haven't thought about it, until I see that clipping in front of you.
- Chall: I have quite a few, but they all are about the same.
- Eliaser: I have really forgotten about it. It was a very challenging experience. I knew to be very careful, because I have a tendency--which you may have noticed--to just tell all. You can't do that, because with the press, it's irretrievable. And I was trying to be cautious, but still to be the person I see myself as, which is warm, honorable, and informative, if that's the right word. It was very difficult, and I was a little shakey. I got better, as I usually do with these things. Five or six minutes elapse, and I became more comfortable with it; but I was scared. There were a lot of people there. All the California news services were there.
- Chall: And you were new, and you were from California, and apparently that's always an interesting state to the press.
- Eliaser: Right. And their questions were like yours, a moment ago. They were still looking for trouble. They were asking me to recite all these negatives, and in my mind, seriously, they didn't exist; they

Eliaser: never did. I was really happy with what had happened. I didn't believe them to be real. It was Carmen's kind of move to protect the territory for herself or her chosen representative. And in no way did I ever believe it would affect my work, and that was correct.

Chall: Then there were questions about the Unruh-Brown feud, and you felt that was going to be a nothing within the next few months.

Eliaser: Is that what I said? [laughs]

Chall: No. Those weren't your words exactly.

Eliaser: It turned out to be quite a something!

Chall: Yes. I should say. [reading] "The signs of the feud between Governor Brown, and California house Speaker, Jesse Unruh, is ceasing," and various things of that kind, most of which turned out to be incorrect. But then, I think that's true of almost everybody who speaks about politics in California a year before it all happens!

Eliaser: Well, I, to be honest, probably would have said that anyway, in a press conference. I could not say that there will be open hostility. I'm sure I didn't think so then. But if I had, I wouldn't have said it. That opens wounds further. Precipitates premature reaction. I would try very hard, always, not to do that.

Getting to Know Southern California

Chall: Now then, once you got established as national committeewoman, did you work primarily with the state committee in the northern part of the state, as Elizabeth Gatov did?

Eliaser: No. I went south immediately. I recognized that as a weakness of the Roger Kent, Don Bradley, Libby Gatov axis. All my close friends, as they are today. But, they were definitely a northern bloc. That bothered me, because we are one state, and in those days, we had one national committeewoman, and one national committeeman.

So, I asked friends of mine to help me to come south and to build a base from which I could work in Southern California. And to that end I was helped by Stephen Reinhardt, who has subsequently been a national committeeman, is a well-known attorney, represents a

Eliaser: lot of labor interests; Leon Cooper, who became state chairman somewhere in there--that period of time;* and Tom Carvey, who probably was still president of the CDC.

Chall: No. He had just gone out.

Eliaser: They put together a three or four day schedule for me in the general Los Angeles area. As I recall, I did not go to San Diego at that time. And I did not feel I had to, because I had worked in San Diego always, even as northern chairman of the women's division. I may have said to you, San Diegans in those days thought of themselves as northern Californians. They wanted nothing to do with the hierarchy in L.A. So, I had many good friends there, and I worked there, took vacations there. It was just part of my whole life. So this concentration of three to four days was totally in the San Fernando Valley; southern L.A. county; north, middle, Beverly Hills. Concentrated speaking, social, official Democratic schedule, right off the bat!

Chall: Did this in any way upset Eugene Wyman?

Eliaser: I wouldn't know. But he wasn't--and this is vague--he was not present at any of these. And I'm sure he was asked to all of them.

Chall: And Carmen Warschaw?

Eliaser: I'm not sure she was asked. She wasn't present.

Chall: Then you were beginning to work with a different group of people?

Eliaser: Activists. Another level. There were very few finance people, in my vague memory of that time, that showed.

At Steve Reinhardt's party in his own home, I think there were some very heavy givers present, and along the way in other areas I met people who turned out to be fund raisers, and what have you. But largely, I would say, that these breakfasts, lunches, and dinners, were set up with people who worked very hard in the Democratic party, but didn't have a huge amount of money.

Chall: They were CDC people, by and large, do you think?

Eliaser: No.

Chall: So it was a different group?

*Vice-chairman, southern division, 1968-1970.

Eliaser: It was a total meld of labor organizations, party officers from the state central committee, CDC. Just people who cared. I don't think one could categorize them fairly.

Chall: What were you hoping to do?

Eliaser: To get to know people. To learn what their wishes and desires were, in terms of party structure, in the state of California. And in terms of what they expected in Washington, in that I could be the messenger of those wishes, and perhaps help to effect whatever it is they needed.

Chall: I see. You were stepping just a little bit out of the usual path then.

Eliaser: The story of my life.

Chall: [laughs] Did you know it? I mean, you knew it!

Eliaser: Oh, yes. I was terribly worried, because Lib had been national committee for two and a half terms, or something like that.

Chall: Nine years.

Eliaser: And I realized that it had never been done. And we always jokingly said the Tehachapi--that was the barrier, and we were separated whether we believe it or not. And I really attempted to defy that rule. It was conscious.

Chall: How did it work out?

Eliaser: Fair.

Chall: You found yourself able to do it?

Eliaser: Right. And I find presently, that much of that work continues to bring fruit to whatever it is I am trying to do.

Chall: Did you think that Eugene Wyman was not serving the wishes and desires of these people, or that you could not cooperate in your liaison between California and Washington? Did you have any working relationship with him?

Eliaser: He and I worked at different levels, usually. He was a superb high-level finance person and much of his political work jibed into his law practice. He served political candidates from other states as well as Californians (a practice with which I was unfamiliar until about 1970, when I too began to contribute and raise funds for other than Californians). I don't think he activated in the issues

Eliaser: area unless it had directly to do with a client as in the "Percodan Case." The State of California was trying to put safeguards into the prescription industry as related to habit forming drugs as addictive and dangerous. The attorney general's office (Mosk) and much of the legislature were for heavy safeguard legislation. Wyman argued against it as the representative of Endo Corporation, the manufacturer of Percodan.

I have never been a super-finance person. I regard myself as a good "middle finance" person, raising funds from one dollar (idealistic money) up to maybe \$5,000--after that it's a struggle and I'm rarely successful--whereas Wyman was only in the big money-raising department, and therefore was involved with special interests at a political and professional level--as opposed to my taking up issues and groups interested in issues on the merits. We had no vested interests except beliefs. Of course, those money days are behind us--I think.

To finish this question, Wyman and I always cooperated and had a good but distant relationship. I think he believed that I didn't have enough money or influence to matter--but he was always kind and considerate and we worked in harmony.

Chall: With respect to the national people, were you put on the executive committee of the national committee?

Eliaser: No. Seems to me that came up at one point. I'm vague on it, but it's nothing I ever moved for or particularly cared about. Libby, as I recall, was on it, and it occurred to me that maybe that's something that I should attempt to do. And there may have been some play on that, but not so that it's firm in my memory, or was anything I thought I was especially equipped to do, or cared about.

White House Connections

Chall: With whom did you work at the national level? I don't remember who the chairman was at the time.

Eliaser: John Bailey.

Chall: Oh, John Bailey was. How did you--

Eliaser: I didn't work with him at all.

Chall: You didn't have to? Or you didn't want to?

Eliaser: Margaret Price was still there, and she and I were good friends up until her death.

Chall: When did Geri Joseph come aboard?

Eliaser: During that period, and I never knew her well. I really knew her through my personal friendship with Hubert Humphrey, rather than through her role at the national committee.

However, during the Johnson presidency, and this is the period we're talking about, there was a western desk in the White House. And there was a gentleman named Irv Sprague, who ran it. And it became a rule of thumb, at least for me, that going to the national committee was just a superficial gesture one made as a member; it didn't count for much. The minute I checked into the hotel, I'd call Irv Sprague at the White House, and that's where I went to do my real work.

Chall: What was your real work?

Eliaser: Whatever it was that was relevant to Democratic party activity in California, and what was important to President Johnson--an issue, special election.

I can recall very clearly talking with them about the Shirley Temple Black congressional race in San Mateo County, and my feelings on that. Whatever was current, and important.

Chall: Would you go back only at the time of a national committee meeting?

Eliaser: Well, there were lots of them at that time. Lots more, I guess, then there are now, and I went to all of them--all those that were in Washington, at least. But I had many good friends, and my mother lives in New York, as you know, so that I would make a lot of eastern trips.

My mother wasn't well during some of that period, as I recall, so that there were some necessary eastern trips, which would hook me over into Washington, as long as I was there.

Chall: Did you get to know President Johnson at all?

Eliaser: Yes. I knew him when he was vice-president. He came to a Democratic state convention in Sacramento, as vice-president--I can't remember the year. But, I met him at that time, and went to all the private gatherings in his honor, and met his plane, and so forth. I spent some time with him, at his invitation.

Eliaser: As I think we mentioned in the last interview, I had started the Democratic Women of the Bay Area, and invited Mrs. Johnson to be the speaker. She was fantastic, and a great help.

The national committee, being as manageable as it was in those days, 'cause it was small--we didn't have democracy (small "d") then--was invited to the White House, usually every meeting. In other words, at the end of "x" Democratic National Committee sessions of a weekend or a period of time, the bus would drive up to a given hotel where we were meeting, we were all loaded onto the bus, taken over to the White House for cocktails or a meeting with the president, or to have our pictures taken--whatever!

The State Dinner

Eliaser: Also during my tenure, my husband and I were invited to a state dinner at the White House honoring the then king and queen of Nepal. I knew my husband would say, "This is ridiculous, it costs a lot of money; we shouldn't go." I gave it a good deal of thought. I was recovering from major surgery at the time; couldn't do a lot. But I thought, this is an experience of a lifetime. There will be no time--little did I know [laughter]--that we will be asked to such an event again!

I owned no evening long dress, so I just called Saks Fifth Avenue, and said, "My daughter will be down to pick out five things, and she'll bring them home, and she'll bring them all back the same day; I'll keep one." They trusted me, and they allowed me to do it. I called my husband, who was playing golf and couldn't come to the phone, and left a message in the pro-shop, to say that we would be going to Washington in ten days or two weeks; there was a telegram that I had already acknowledged. He came home, and said, "How can you do this? It's two air fares, and a hotel room for a couple of nights," and so forth. I said, "Have you been in Washington since the war?" And he said, "No." I said, "There's an awful lot we can do at the Smithsonian, and other places. We have many good friends, and we ought to go." And he debated, but his tux was cleaned, and so we went. We got, finally, the real invitation, engraved with the little admission card from the secret service.

I spoke with people who know more about these kinds of things than we would ever know, about how you get to the White House. Because when I had gone previously, when I was alone, I'd cab more or less, back and forth. And you can't do that when you're in your best clothes in the middle of the winter. And so we hired a limousine for that night, to drive us up and meet us, which is

Eliaser: evidently how you do all of this. It's all very important! [laughs] And it was great fun! It was a great thrill! They always do a good mix. We were lined up by the young marines.

You're brought in up the stairs, as you've probably heard from everybody.

Chall: No. This is my first state affair.

Eliaser: Well, you walk in through the limousine entrance, or carriage entrance, into the White House. The press isn't allowed often to go the whole way, but the ladies are there on the bottom floor in their evening clothes, with their legal pads or their little notebooks. They interview you, I guess, so you say what you have on, or something dumb like that, or why you're there. Then you walk up a stairway. But then, you're already in line if other guests have preceded you.

I'm so sorry that my memory name-wise is escaping me, because right behind us was a black minister from Philadelphia and his wife, and they had never been there, nor my husband. But I had been there a few times by then, and I was relatively comfortable.

Chall: In the White House.

Eliaser: Yes. And they weren't nor was my husband. So we were all kidding around. This was a man who has been very, very big in black employment and in organizational programs nationally, subsequent to that meeting. His name probably will come to me as we talk. Anyway, they were awfully nice.

And we got up the line. Now as you get up the line you give someone at a desk your name, and you're handed a card, and a marine officer takes your arm, walks you in the room, and announces your name! And you die! With rumbles and flourishes. And you walk in and then a waiter comes--I had long, white gloves on 'cause I thought that's what you did in those days with evening clothes; I'm not sure I own any anymore. Someone offers you a cocktail, which they won't do in this White House. But in the Johnson White House, they were doubles! I took it and I had to hold it with both hands! I was so scared. I was trying to be sophisticated.

But the other times, you see, when I'd been there I was working. I never thought of being scared or nervous, because I was there with what I considered to be a real purpose and had no sense of insecurity. But, going with these people all beautifully gowned and so forth, it seemed to me a bit superficial. I didn't know quite what to do. And as Eugene McCarthy had said to me the week before when we had dinner out here, he said, "Ann, if they really knew how

Eliaser: you felt about the war in Vietnam, they'd roast you and serve you for that state dinner." So, I guess all of this was playing in my subconscious, if nothing else.

So, we got there and we didn't know anyone in the room-- at least right off--so we reunited with this couple that had been behind us walking up the stairs, and had a drink, and it was all very lovely. I'm embarrassed I can't remember their names.

When you're brought in the marine officer tells you that when the President and Mrs. Johnson, and the king and queen come downstairs, you are to assemble under the picture of George Washington or whatever it is. You're supposed to go in semi-alphabetical order, and there'll be people there to help you.

So, we drank with this couple and "Hail to the Chief" and something else happened, and the four of them with their aides walked in and formed a receiving line with the appropriate State Department people. Justice and Mrs. Goldberg--Arthur Goldberg, were at that dinner. We saw him at a dinner party the other night, and I reminded him that we had been there. Morris Udall, I think. There were cabinet people and congressional leaders. For example, my husband was seated at a table with John Sherman Cooper; I with Ted Moss of Utah as dinner partner.

Anyway, we were summoned, and we got in line alphabetically and rid ourselves of our nasty cocktail glasses. And because we were alphabetical, we were with Marian Anderson. And close by, the man who was one of the great founders of Planned Parenthood and birth control from Baltimore, who has since died. But it had to have been close to us in the alphabet. And we went through the receiving line.

The President and Mrs. Johnson receive you and you go through the amenities with the king and queen. And someone slows you up so that your picture is taken with all this nonsense, which is still around someplace. And there is an aide behind to whisper in the president's ear as to who you are, evidently. And then you have your number.

Bess Abel was the head of protocol in the White House or whatever that job was then, and I saw her after that and I thanked her so much. I said I was sure it was due to her goodwill and kindness that we were invited. And being as wise as she is, she said, "No. It was all the president's idea." [laughter]

I went to my table and there was Ted Moss. At White House dinners--and it was a good lesson for me because I do it even at home now--I learned that at each round table one person is asked

Eliaser: to be the host, and that he or she introduces you to the other guests and sees that all your needs are tended to, and that you're comfortable as a group, perhaps with people who've never met before. There was a Mr. Lehman from New York at our table, with or without a wife. I don't know, because I was with Ted Moss and I'd known him and campaigned with him, and worked on the Western States Democratic Conference with him for a number of years, so I was enormously comfortable with him and someone knew that. Which is what interested me--that it was so easy for me because we were good friends.

And Lionel was with Senator Cooper and maybe Marian Anderson was at his table. No, Marian Anderson was at the next table with the President and Mrs. Johnson, and the king and queen, and she had to leave early, I recall, to do a concert someplace.

In any case, we went through the state dinner, and interestingly the wines were all California wines. I noticed that. You're given a menu along with your place card. And during dessert, the president toasts the king, and the king gets up and toasts the president. And in those days, coffee and cognac were served in many drawing rooms. You did not have coffee at the dinner table.

Chall: And they separated the men from the women?

Eliaser: No.

Chall: Oh, they didn't?

Eliaser: As a matter of fact, the man--not Marvin Watson who was treasurer, but the treasurer of the national committee who immediately followed Marvin, whose name escapes me, came up and he said, "Annie, for God sakes, Lyndon's alone with the queen, and he doesn't know what to say to her, will you get over and talk to him. He wants to talk to you. For heaven sakes rescue him!"

So, I left Senator Moss, took my little demitasse and proceeded to one of the small rooms where the president was indeed fidgeting and alone with the queen of Nepal. He said, "Oh, Ann! I'm so glad to see you!" He reaches in his pocket--I'll never forget it. He was so huge that he overwhelmed you and frightened you strictly by his physical size, and he used it, as we all know now, for his own purposes. In any case, he took out a kind of green lined 3x5 card, he said, "I have these statistics on my rating in California against Nelson Rockefeller and they're so marvelous!" And I wanted to say, "Lyndon, what the hell does this have to do with anything considering where we're at now." But he didn't see, evidently, and he was so proud of the fact that he was doing so marvelously in whatever this poll was which somebody handed him to make him happy through dinner. And I looked at the numbers and we made cordial conversation.

Eliaser: At an appropriate time, you're called in for an entertainment after the White House dinner. And one of the famous contemporaries-- Charlie Bird, guitarist, was the entertainer and he was superb! It was a remarkable performance! Really the most memorable part of that evening.

I would say there were a hundred and thirty to thirty-five guests. Thirty to forty of them were Nepalese, the rest were guests of the White House. And they always do a combination of sports, entertainment, Democratic party, givers, cabinet, court-- they mix it all up; I hope they always will. It was a good group and they all thought Charlie Bird was great. After that the marine corps band, or navy, or whatever it is, breaks into music for dancing which goes on all night. The king and queen excused themselves immediately after the entertainment, because they had just arrived, and they went across the street to Blair House. But the entertainment went on and everyone danced except the president, who was already into his thing about not dancing because of the war.

Chall: Oh, I didn't know that.

Eliaser: Oh, yes. He stopped at some point because of the poisonous, but correct atmosphere, in terms of the American attitude to the war in Vietnam--he stopped dancing in the White House. And he did not dance. During that period, two or three times at least, he sought me out to chat again. Out of the hundred or so people who remained, he would come back and get me to talk about political things. And then he went upstairs and got his grandchild and brought the baby downstairs for everyone to see. And at that point, Lionel and I left. Rushing out we noticed--trying to be as inconspicuous as possible, that a couple of cabinet people were leaving. The dancing and the baby were still going on, but we had reservations for a nine o'clock plane to California the next morning, which meant getting up awfully early to get out to that airport. So, that was that. It was interesting.

Chall: How did Mr. Alanson respond to that experience?

Eliaser: Considering his initial rejection of going at all, it was tremendously affirmative. He enjoyed our visits to the Smithsonian Aerospace exhibitions, The National Gallery, and our meetings with personal friends. He never stopped talking about the State Dinner for the rest of his life and kept the official White House photograph of our formal introduction to the king and queen by the president above his desk at his office.

The National Committee and the Vietnam War

Eliaser: Going back, during a period of a national committee meeting. Maybe we covered this when we were together last. It may have been my first one of many there, where a Vietnam resolution was presented by Geri Joseph. Did I tell you about that?

Chall: No.

Eliaser: During one of those meetings, we went in and had a stupid morning session dealing with, I can't remember what. Then we were all excused for a long lunch--alcoholic lunch--and we came back in for resolutions on various issues. I guess they figured if they gave you enough to drink nobody would listen.

In those days I think I was about the youngest member of the national committee because it used to be the burying ground for politicians after they'd been through their state chairs or given their years of service. You got that job which didn't amount to a heck of a lot and you were aging. I was fifteen years younger than I am now, which was terribly young for the mean age of that group.

In any case, Colonel Jacob Arvey of Chicago and Geri Joseph were cochairmen of the resolutions committee as I recall. I'll be vague on title, but basically correct about the presentation. They got up and read a resolution regarding the correct posture--he did, Arvey--of the war in Vietnam. The correct posture of the United States on that war. And before vote was allowed, Mrs. Joseph, who was at his side, asked to amend--obviously this was all pre-planned. I'll be able to tell you who really wrote it for them in a minute. Her amendment read that we also praise President Johnson specifically, and Vice-President Hubert Humphrey for their behavior in the augmentation of this program in Vietnam.

So, what this did was force a vote. In parliamentary procedure, you have to vote on the amendment first. Right? So you were voting on the behavior of your president and vice-president, and how could any member of that group vote no? It was a terrible trap. Because if they had left the vote on Vietnam open, there would be at least a little dissent. But what she was basically asking for on the amendment, was a vote of approval for the president and vice-president! It was terrible. Cleverly contrived! Fortunately I hadn't had anything to drink and I saw it, and I also knew that I was totally alone. I had a few less guts than I did later in my career. And so, a vote was called, and there wasn't a "nay" in the--I didn't vote; I said nothing. I would not vote on any of it. But everybody else kind of drunkenly raised their hand or sleepily raised their hand--nobody really cared. And I left very unhappy after that.

Eliaser: That meeting--I think it was that meeting--we were all put in a bus and taken over to the White House afterwards. And we were told it was just for cocktails. People had not been previously informed that this was on the schedule; we were told the same day. Well, many people were going home; I was staying in town because a friend was having a small dinner of eight or ten people in my honor. But a lot of people--I'd say more than 50 percent--left. Those of us who were left were put on a bus, trucked over to the White House, where Lyndon and Lady Bird received us and we went to one of the smaller drawing rooms where each of us was photographed privately with President and Mrs. Johnson. And then into what we thought was cocktails when we got there--the most gorgeous buffet was laid out! In other words, the world was put at the feet of these people! They expected us to stay at the White House indefinitely.

And so everybody partook of drink and everyone was told, when you're hungry to take a piece of roast beef, or turkey, or whatever. I was just shifting from one foot to the other, holding a drink I wasn't drinking, to be polite, because there was a dinner in my honor to which you are not ordinarily late. But I called my hostess and told her there was a snag and I asked her to proceed without me, that I'd get there when I could. And the president, I remember this specifically, asked the waiter for another Scotch and went to a small mike on a rostrum and was going to give a speech. Well, I darn near died! 'Cause I was already thirty minutes late.

He starts in on the war and how the people don't understand him, and he's so glad all of us are there because he knows we love him. But this is an endless thing--evidently with a couple of drinks under his belt at least. It was obviously going to go on and on. Jack Valenti was standing next to me and I whispered to him. I said, "I've got to go. I'm mixed up about--I've only been here a couple of times--the doors. I've never been in the front door before! [laughs] How do I get out of here?" And he pointed. I said, "My coat's, I think, downstairs. Where's that?" And he told me. Then he whispered, "You shouldn't go. He won't like it." I said, "I have to go. There's a dinner in my honor." He said, "Then I will take you." This is all in the quietest whispers.

So we got out and he took me down and handed me my coat--got it from the maid in the check room. And he said, "How do you plan on getting out of here?" I said, "Oh, I'll get a cab!" He said, "Here?" I said, "I'll walk across the lawn. I'll get a cab." He said, "Have you ever been in the private offices here?" And I said, "No." He said, "Tell you what; I'll get a White House car to take you. It'll take a few minutes to get the driver and the car, but it'll still be better than what you plan. And then I'll give you a tour of the Oval Office." So he called a White House car, and gave

Eliaser: me the tour of all the offices, plunked me in the White House limousine with a driver, and I went over to my friends, who were then in Arlington, for dinner.

I just hoped everybody was looking out the window when I drove up in a White House car! [laughter] Except it was a big brick apartment and there was no one but the doorman, who couldn't have cared less!

I got up there and it was Dave and Ann Broder, and people like that. And they were three sheets to the wind waiting for me. And so I tried to catch up with them in a hurry, and I said, "You know David, at today's meeting that Vietnam resolution, I've got to tell you, bothered me a lot." I think basically, and we're still awfully good friends, I'm a lot more liberal than David.

Chall: Oh, he was then writing for what, the Washington Post?

Eliaser: Well, he moved from the Post to the New York Times, and back. And I'm not sure which of his tenures he was in then. In any case I said, "If I'd had my guts about me and my head on, I would have stood up and said, no. But I decided that every television camera in the nation was in that room." Really.

Chall: Were they always that well publicized?

Eliaser: No. In this instance, this was an orchestrated meeting. I said, "Every camera would have been on me and had I been then asked to answer questions, I'm not sure I had the strength of character to do it. But I have to tell you, that, living out my fantasies, I would have voted no." He said, "Ann. That would have been an honorable thing for you to do, and terribly self-defeating, because you would have been the only one and nobody would have understood. And you would indeed have your picture in every front page tomorrow morning for having done so, and you would have accomplished nothing." In retrospect, I think that's not true.

The California Democratic Council and the Vietnam War

Chall: You think this was one of your early meetings. In California at the time, the [Simon] Casady speeches and his approach to the Vietnam war had or hadn't surfaced about that time?

Eliaser: Oh, yes, they had. But we looked upon him--my friends and I, as being irresponsible. I never looked at him as being immoral as many people accused him, or unintelligent, because he was brilliant,

Eliaser: and a moral man from his position. But he couldn't deal with it correctly. Perhaps there was no way, I don't know looking back. He insulted the presidency. Not just the man in it, but the office.

He was totally destructive, and was unable, I think, to bring people along with him. The true test of an idea and leadership is to bring people along with you who will put that idea into being, and Si Casady was a failure in that respect.

Chall: I was just trying to think of what it would have meant had you spoken your piece about the Vietnam resolution at this prestigious Washington meeting, at the same time Simon Casady was doing the same in California.

Eliaser: He was about a month or two later. Good question. Silent. I didn't vote, but that was not recorded which was also interesting.

Chall: But at that time, you'd already taken a position against the Vietnam war?

Eliaser: Not publically really.

Chall: But, you had. I mean, you were opposed to the war?

Eliaser: Totally decided and I had conversed with people who shared that view.

Chall: Which in 1965 was just the beginning of the public protest, wasn't it?

Eliaser: I really didn't approve of what Si Casady was doing to the Democratic party because I ultimately saw the party as the vehicle to end that war politically, and he was just waving all kinds of ways. I'm not critical, because he was morally correct. But, procedurally incorrect.

Chall: Were you still a member of the--well, you said you were only an unofficial member of the CDC board. Did you remain as such during that year?

Eliaser: Oh, yes. Oh, I think so, as long as they would have me.

Chall: Did you attend those several board meetings at which the whole Casady problem was aired?

Eliaser: Yes. Some of them I think.

Chall: Do you recall the activity of the so-called Majority Caucus which ultimately worked toward his resignation?

Eliaser: No. The last thing I remembered where I was actively involved with anything to do with Si Casady was a CDC convention in Bakersfield, and I'm not sure chronologically where that fits into what we're discussing.

Chall: That was at the time that he resigned--was forced to resign.

Eliaser: And I was there for that. Not playing an active role, but as an observer, and I could have been called upon except that I wasn't, which is fortunate.

Chall: Were you a delegate from a club?

Eliaser: Was I national committeewoman?--automatically a delegate, then.

Chall: Did you vote for his resignation?

Eliaser: Yes, I did.

Chall: We might as well go along with that whole thing with the CDC. There were many reasons given as to why he was a divisive element at that time. The Vietnam war was probably just one.

Eliaser: He was never a leader.

Chall: Did you feel that he was responsible for whatever might have happened--the so-called demise, if one could consider it that, of the CDC?

Eliaser: Not at all.

Chall: It had been building up before that?

Eliaser: I see him just as a person in the transition of Democratic politics in California. Just another guy, with a strong moral position which I basically supported. I didn't understand why he ever wanted to be president of the CDC, except to move an issue, because he was not an organization person at all.

I think what happened to the CDC was inevitable in the evolution of politics in this state and with the accrual of power!

Chall: It was having, apparently, some severe problems organizationally at the time he took over.

Eliaser: Right. And with the legislative objection. The real power being on the side of the law at all times, there was never a chance. It had little to do with him.

The Party Debt, the Vietnam War, and Other Concerns

Chall: You had about three years as national committeewoman. During your first year you tried to get acquainted with the Southern California people.

The entire state was severely in debt as a result of the Cranston-Salinger election.

Eliaser: Debacle.

Chall: Yes. We haven't, I think, discussed it in any way yet.

Eliaser: We not only haven't discussed it, I'm not sure we've recovered from it! [laughs]

Chall: There was a \$500,000 debt and there seemed to be some concern about how it was to be paid off. I think some state officials felt that this should be picked up by the state central committee, and Carmen Warschaw, who was then Southern California chairman, felt that it wasn't a responsibility of the state central committee. I suppose she felt that the various wealthy people and financial backers should find ways of easing that debt themselves, which I suppose they ultimately did. I was wondering where you were in that whole matter.

Eliaser: If you have fifty years, I'll be glad to debate that question on both sides.

Chall: What position--?

Eliaser: I don't remember that I took a position, I really honestly don't, but I certainly could debate both sides of it and I think be correct.

##

Chall: Now let's see, we were on this matter of the debt. In your work, then, you didn't assume any responsibility for this debt?

Eliaser: I imagine I did, frankly, but I really cannot recall it at this time. Wherever it was assumed, I'm sure I participated because I can't remember that I ever turned my back on any project however it was decided. I may not have debated it fervently, but I'm sure I helped.

Chall: There was quite a bit of controversy over it.

Eliaser: I remember it, but only vaguely.

- Chall: And the Wyman and Warschaw forces were divided in Southern California.
- Eliaser: Wyman wanted the party to pick it up and Warschaw wanted it privately picked up, or did it go the other way around?
- Chall: I really am not positive, but I think that Wyman did want the party to pick up at least the general election debt.
- Eliaser: Well, I wasn't invited to either, so you could tell me anything and I would believe you. Because I live in San Francisco and that's like saying you live in Anchorage, so it's okay.
- Chall: I don't know why in the north it wasn't such an issue.
- Eliaser: I'm sure we debated it because you strike a familiar chord. But somehow I didn't take it so seriously. But knowing from what you have just said and my own background--if the two of them were involved there had to be a terrible battle over it!
- Chall: Did the Wyman-Warschaw and the Unruh activities with respect to the party--were they in any way a problem to you at the time that you were national committeewoman?
- Eliaser: Not at all. I find, looking back on my career in the party, and generally also the pattern of my life since I was a small child (and this has to do somewhat with religious training, too), that I try to rise above those kinds of problems in order to achieve something; dealing with them only as I have to in the most ceremonial fashion or something that really isn't important; I can't find the right word talking to you. But I always see the real job that has to be done and I deal with those things only to get them out of the way. I don't allow those kinds of warfares to dominate my life. Anybody who does that, whether it's in your personal life or your political life, would get killed, ultimately. You can't do it.

To analyze it a bit further, I think a lot of people go into politics because of their need to release hostility and that this is a good place for them to do it. Carmen Warschaw certainly has demonstrated that through her very useful and generous career. She loves to fight. It has something to do with her makeup. I hate fighting and I think it's because I came from a very sad childhood where I saw nothing but fighting in my family. My adult career has been dedicated to non-participation whether it's a war in Southeast Asia or a family fight; I don't want it.

Edmund Brown, Sr. Reelection Campaign, 1966

- Chall: One of the problems behind the scenes was how Pat Brown was going to run his third campaign, because apparently there was no question but what he would. This was generally accepted.
- Eliaser: Sought after.
- Chall: And so what was your role, first of all, in this matter of the primary between Brown and Yorty?
- Eliaser: Oh, I never looked upon Sam Yorty as a serious person. I always saw him as a threat because he had a certain vote-getting potential. But I never looked upon him as an honorable person. Remember he's the one who wanted to just drop heavier bombs on Southeast Asia and end all this nonsense. Let them know how important we were. But aside from that I looked upon him as a kind of slovenly political person--nobody that I would ever take seriously even though he was mayor of Los Angeles those many years.
- Chall: But when he did decide to campaign against Brown in the primary he did extremely well.
- Eliaser: Yes. But he always did.
- Chall: Did well in Northern California, according to one of my sources. So when that campaign ended, were the Democratic party people concerned that Brown was really in trouble?
- Eliaser: Oh, yes. But I felt that he was in trouble from the day he decided to run for the third term. I never felt it had much to do with Sam Yorty.
- Chall: Why did you think he was in trouble?
- Eliaser: I thought he had lost hold of his position as a winner largely because of the good things he'd done over the years--legislatively, policy-wise. He'd been a superior governor. I think history will show that he surrounded himself with brilliant young men who brought this state into the twentieth century. But to do that you have to become extraordinarily unpopular with your own establishment and with people who maybe feel they're being pushed aside by your efforts of progress. That Sam Yorty came in was an additional destructive force, but not a major one.
- Chall: I see. So the major problems were there all the time. Why didn't other people see this as well as you, and if they did--?

Eliaser: I never had that strong a voice.

Chall: They didn't ask you, I assume.

Eliaser: No.

Chall: And those they asked may have wanted to hang onto their jobs.

Eliaser: To protect their own place. There's no question. But if we had had sense we would have looked for a candidate that represented the best interest of California and everybody here. A new person--who, we didn't know--to do that. Sam Yorty was never the real threat. It was our wish to hang in and hold onto ours.

My first husband was a navy officer and they had a saying, "Pull up the gangplank, I'm here."

Chall: What did you do during the general campaign? Did you have a role?

Eliaser: I don't remember clearly, very honestly. I remember that I was awfully involved in fair housing. That was simultaneous to the third. Was Prop. Fourteen?

Chall: Prop. Fourteen was 1964.

Eliaser: It was not in the third Brown?

Chall: No. There were other issues but that was not one of them.

Eliaser: It seems to me there was a very relevant issue simultaneous with the gubernatorial campaign that brought Brown down. Something honorable that he did that did not set well with the voters. The death penalty had passed us by then.

Chall: The death penalty was one of them, and that apparently had caused him all kinds of problems.

Eliaser: Well, we're going to face it all over again--if that gives you a good case of *deja vu*.

Chall: Yes. And also there was a problem with the John Birch Society and Reagan.

Eliaser: Well, Reagan. There were some problems. Let's go back to the primary a minute and Reagan.

I remember participating in a luncheon in Sam's Grill--early in the primary--pulled together by Don Bradley, attended by Roger Kent, Libby Gatov, Mrs. Eleanor Fowle (Alan Cranston's sister who replaced me as women's chairman), maybe a couple of other men, me.

Eliaser: And the discussion was whether we were going to go for Christopher [George] or Ronald Reagan. And Don Bradley brought up that old saw of the Christopher milk scandal, which was so old, and so boring, and ineffectual--I couldn't stand it. He decided Ronald Reagan was a nobody and was no contest, and we were somehow going to resurrect the Christopher milk scandal, and anything else that could be got on George Christopher, to get rid of him so we could deal with this nondescript movie star in the general election.

Well, Mrs. Fowle and I were the only two people in the larger meeting to object. She was pretty vocal; I was terribly loud. First of all, I thought it was immoral. George Christopher's a decent human being and those charges were proved invalid years before this. It had nothing to do with what we were about. I always feel that that kind of politics backfires on you. I don't care if it's about Ronald Reagan, or George Christopher, or Joe Blow. Anything you do which is against somebody, and cruel and dishonorable, comes back and hurts you. It's a proven rule. But it was decided above Eleanor Fowle's and my objection to proceed with this policy--that Christopher was to be done away with to leave Ronald Reagan up there. The rest's history.

Chall: Yes. I see. Yes, this was a choice they made.

Eliaser: Oh!--a conscious choice!

Chall: It has been said that there was, in the Brown campaign, poor and inept organization and inappropriate handling of the issues.

Eliaser: Don Bradley and Fred Dutton fought throughout, as I recall.

Chall: That's what I understand from some occasional newspaper articles.

Eliaser: Fisticuffs! Not just small fights but really, honest-to-goodness physical altercation.

Chall: Why would Pat Brown have brought Fred Dutton back from Washington to head his campaign? Do you have any idea?

Eliaser: No. Same reason George McGovern made the same mistake and brought Fred Dutton into his. Fred Dutton is not a good campaign manager. He's a brilliant issues man. Very able in limited areas. Not an overall campaign manager; he never was. But he manages to ingratiate himself with candidates, because of a very real brilliance and an understanding of certain issues, which have nothing to do with day-to-day mechanics of a campaign.

Chall: Don Bradley was a proven campaign manager?

Eliaser: Yes. But he had some problems of his own, none of which I know for a fact and hate to be on record discussing. But the fact that having been with the governor that many years had gotten him into many of the Southern California money people's lives. He was indicted, and so forth. Again, the trappings of power tend to corrupt.

Chall: Did you say that Bradley had been indicted?

Eliaser: Well, Bradley was not only indicted, but convicted, and got off with a fine. It was an internal revenue situation, I think, which came long after that, but had to do with that period of time. Everybody was wrong and everybody was right. I can't sit in the judgment seat. It was a very bad show.

Chall: Except there was this kind of--

Eliaser: Internal warfare. Everyone wanting to hold on to what was a big win and was a giant loss. Now I think they compromised the governor on several of the issues. It's funny I thought that fair housing was one of them, but I'm not sure.

Chall: Well, it's true. You're right. Proposition Fourteen was not on the ballot but there was concern about the fact that Proposition Fourteen had won. That is, the people who wanted to invalidate the Rumford Act had won.

Eliaser: That's right. It was the negative Fourteen. That's it!

Chall: And then the Supreme Court of the United States had ruled that the Rumford Act was a constitutional act and therefore you couldn't rule against it.

Eliaser: But someone advised Pat that it was dangerous and it would mitigate against his reelection. So, somewhere along the line he compromised and appointed some kind of blue ribbon committee to make a decision to take it off his back. And I remember my friend Tom Saunders, who cared very deeply about that issue, after we lost saying, "We were going to lose the election anyway. It's too bad we couldn't have gone down with our flags flying." I'm sure he felt, as do I, that the public has perceptions which are sometimes undecipherable, related to honest positions on the part of candidates and campaigns-- and they almost always know when we are "fudging"--better to be judged as honest and take one's chances.

Chall: His plan to appoint the blue ribbon committee was stated at the state central committee convention when this was his attempt, Brown's attempt, to get rid of--

Eliaser: Take it out of the convention.

Chall: Take it out of the convention and he was not allowed to. Apparently the convention, by loud voice vote, voted to uphold the Rumford Act. And I guess this created dissension--a considerable amount among blacks and probably Mexicans.

Eliaser: And me! [laughter] Wherever you want to put me!

Chall: The sources don't mention Ann Alanson, but they do mention that the blacks were quite upset about this, and that Brown apparently didn't do himself any good by making this proposal.

Eliaser: He was just kind of hedging where he pleased. He hurt himself badly.

Chall: Do you recall the Vietnam issue at that convention as well? There were attempts to have two kinds of resolutions, one against the Vietnam War, one supporting it; neither one of which got onto the floor, but I guess the maneuvering was important.

Eliaser: At three in the morning. Two, three in the morning. I was rarely present; even when I was younger I had the sense to retire at some sensible hour. I was of the mind in those days that only the crazies stayed up till those hours of the morning--all night--to fight that issue, those issues. In retrospect there were some crazies; but mostly they were highly dedicated people, who really cared, and who probably went for the single purpose of arguing those specific issues.

Chall: Yes. Those were several very important issues which, I guess, didn't help to mend the dissension that was rife in the Democratic party that year.

Eliaser: We still do it and there's nothing the matter with that. I think that the Democratic party historically has represented an umbrella for people of all colors and all color of thought. But making it possible to debate, without malice, is a whole other matter. We haven't resolved that.

Chall: The John Birch Society issue that the Democrats did use once they had Reagan as an opponent--which is what they had hoped they could do--backfired. I'm wondering in terms of the leadership whether they were using the John Birch Society issue in the same way the right wing used the communist issue against the Democrats. Were the leaders and the issue people of the Democratic party really as concerned about the John Birch Society as it would seem they were?

Eliaser: I can't tell you. I wasn't. I didn't like them. I thought the speech that Howard Jewel wrote for Stanley Mosk way back, on the little old ladies with tennis shoes, was very apt, but I felt that

Eliaser: they had their corner of our society in California--a very strong one. They were indeed a threat, but not one that ought to have dominated us at that time.

Chall: I see. You felt that it might have been raising a false issue the same way that Yorty raised the communist issue.

Eliaser: Oh, to a degree. Although I remember traveling with Mrs. Cranston during Alan's first Senate race when he was beaten by Salinger, when the John Birch Society made a very heavy effort go get rid of Alan Cranston. They must have seen him as a potential winner and an enemy once he was established in the United States Senate, which many years later he certainly is.

Chall: I see. And that was in '64 when the John Birch Society was just getting strong.

Eliaser: Way back! But they certainly made a big effort. They saw Salinger as a light-weight, which was correct, and that he was safer for them. And it was a brilliant judgment.

The Contest for Party Chairman, 1966

Chall: Now the other problem of dissension in the Democratic election that year had to do with the internal politics of the party. What can you recall about the election of Charles Warren over Carmen Warschaw, by four votes, for state party chairman?

Eliaser: I remember Don Bradley cast the governor's vote. I remember that! I saw him go to the ballot box and drop it in.

Chall: He had his proxy. You don't know what he put down, do you?

Eliaser: I leave the guess to you.

Chall: I'll guess.

Eliaser: Alan Cranston was among the leaders of the Charles Warren chairmanship fight and I was put in charge of a large segment of the Northern California vote at that convention. Those go back to the years when I was having severe voice problems that we mentioned earlier. I remember Alan just whipping me. Calling me at terrible hours of the night in my room when I was trying to rest my voice, and saying, "What have you done? Give me your vote count. What is your report?"

Eliaser: I was given a large segment of the Valley because I had worked very hard over the years of my career in the Central Valley. Most people who live in San Francisco won't be caught dead in Madera, and Modesto, and Merced, if they don't have to. I went, not because I had to, but because I enjoyed it. I felt that there was a growing population and growing strength for the party and for our society in the Valley. And I went often, willingly, and lovingly. And therefore, since Alan recognized this, I was put in charge of those votes and many others. Some of the Bay Area ones he thought I could count.

Chall: For Warren.

Eliaser: Charlie Warren. And Alan, as I say, would call me and say, "Give me your count! Did you meet with so-and-so? When did you last see him or see her?" And I had meetings in my suite, I remember, of the group that I was responsible for, repeatedly. But there got a point in the night where I could no longer speak, and shouldn't have, and where it was all pretty silly.

Carmen was called away, I recall, because the wife of Congressman Augustus Hawkins died during that period. He was a loyal friend of the Warschaws, and Carmen left there. She can confirm this in case I have my chronology mixed up. Ask her about it. She was really very elegant and honorable, and left the convention in the middle of a close vote-getting situation and flew to Los Angeles for the funeral, and came back to be voted out.

Chall: What was the reason for this? Hindsight is great, but without Carmen Warschaw's assistance in that campaign--maybe even with it--Brown would have lost. But certainly without it, it didn't help him any.

Eliaser: He'd have lost anyway.

Chall: But why, for example, would you have been on the side of Cranston, and I guess Glenn Anderson, and Roger Kent, and those who were working to keep Carmen Warschaw out of that position, when presumably the governor said that he was for her?

Eliaser: He never asked any of us to be for her--ever, that I'm aware of. That was a commitment he ostensibly made to her--highly publicized certainly, but never expressed to anybody that I know. And there were none of us, over our years of hard work together, in close cooperation, that found Carmen constructive up here. Northern California leadership almost to the man or woman found her a destructive force. Every effort was made to keep her out of taking the next step, always. Because of a degree of meanness.

Eliaser: I found her a woman of tremendous capacity. Anything she said she would do, she did twice as well as she had to. And she was quite remarkable. But she was indeed destructive in terms of inter-personal relationships, in those things that are required to keep people working well together. Forgetting her capabilities which are superior, for a moment. She doesn't do well in the healing situation, or in terms of what, let us call for lack of a better word--and it's wrong here--a social situation. She was a very painful person to be with and politics has to be the art of getting along together. And I've never seen Carmen that way.

She was a threat--not to me, as I think we said earlier, in terms of my own race. I never personalized my relationship with her. But the men saw her as a threat, which brings me maybe to where you arrived today in the middle of the lunch--maybe Carmen was a woman before her time.* I never thought of it till this minute. Maybe she understood the real role of women earlier than the rest of us and she was beaten down because of the fact she was a woman. Think about that a little.

Chall: Because she played the game like a man, you think?

Eliaser: Yes. And because she had lots and lots of money. People who have less aren't ever happy about that. They tend to say, "She's richer than I am and that's why she's where she's at," which is silly. She could have done anything with that money and she chose the Democratic party.

Chall: Of course, she was allied with Unruh, and he was considered a threat, too.

Eliaser: Right. Well, his image was always questioned in terms of what we wanted our party to represent and those things in which we believed.

Chall: So it was just all a part of the divided Democratic party.

Eliaser: Right. Just a choosing-of-sides kind of situation, looking back.

Chall: Some people attempted to make it out as a liberal-conservative election, but actually, when you analyse it, it couldn't have been at all.

Eliaser: Not at all.

*Early planning for the National Women's Political Caucus Convention to be held September, 1977 in San Jose, California.

- Chall: But it was a very close vote, 447 to 443; I guess achieved because it was a closed ballot.
- Eliaser: Oh, yes. The first time in my experience--at least that I remember--that we were asked to line up by congressional district. One district at a time lined up and placed ballots singly into a ballot box, and after, let's say, the sixth district voted, we were seated and then the seventh was called up. Or the odd and the even. Whatever was the orderly way of doing it; but there was no way of a mistake being made.
- Chall: My, it was crucial.
- Eliaser: It really was. It was intense. I remember that morning so well. And as I say, she just flew back in time to make a very gracious speech of defeat asking the party to unite behind Charles Warren. She was marvelous! No one expected it. She was swell.
- Chall: That wasn't recorded in the press.
- Eliaser: Of course not. Why report harmony? That's not newsworthy.
- Chall: Yes. Although they claimed that she was angry and bitter.
- Eliaser: I'm sure she was--back stage and to the press personally--but before the body of that convention, she was very gracious.
- Chall: I see. In one press release Roz Wyman claimed that she got four people to switch to Warren.
- Eliaser: Well, I wouldn't know.
- Chall: Those four. Those necessary four.
- Eliaser: Oh, it's like my friend Congressman Leo Ryan telling me that he personally had Phillip Burton defeated in his congressional battle of a few weeks ago. That he got Ryan's vote. Well, who's to know how anyone voted on a secret ballot? Marvelous afterwards to say that.
- Chall: But he would have lost no matter what, Brown?
- Eliaser: I think. Absolutely. Well, maybe Carmen by her lack of support had something to do with it. I can't really believe that.
- Chall: Well, one would hate to blame it all on her.

Eliaser: Look at the movie star syndrome. Look at what the control of television on the population is today as opposed to every other form of media or communication. Look at the possibility of the next gubernatorial race being between Jerry Brown or another liberal Democrat. It isn't important. And a selection of Ronald Reagan, let us say like Ephraim Zimbalist, Jr. It's scary. I see many similarities. Though I think Jerry Brown's current popularity is still on the up-curve--not to be compared to his father's third term.

But that kind of opposition has been proved effective from the Republican side. The popular vote, that middle American vote, who doesn't attempt to understand the issues except to interpret them as they relate to his pocketbook and his life-style, knows more about movie stars and television stars.

Chall: Well, what about the fact that there had been a riot in Watts, and the students were certainly making life uncomfortable for Pat Brown and everyone else, on the Vietnam War. These were all issues that one could really feel or be made to feel, and Reagan seemed to have been able to take the issues and use them.

Eliaser: Oh, well--deliver something the people wanted to hear. To give them some kind of peace of mind in terms of what his leadership would be. Where Pat Brown, by taking correct positions, here and there, while compromising on others, attempted to remain honorable, and being honorable is very often unpopular.

Chall: Were you in on any other policy meetings during the final campaign like the one that you talked about with respect to George Christopher, that you can recall?

Eliaser: Oh, I remember being in the huge debate over the negation of the Rumford Act. Yes.

Chall: That would have been during the convention?

Eliaser: Whenever. Hours on that. And probably some others; I'm not sure. I see that whole period as very negative. One where I was sure we were on a downer. I'm reminded of Senator Tunney's defeat recently, where from the beginning I saw that as happening. And where the paid professionals and the elected political leaders told me--even those from Los Angeles who lived where the voters are--told me I was crazy. Absolutely predictable.

Chall: And you felt that he was predictably going to lose and they felt he wouldn't?

Eliaser: Absolutely. I never had a question.

- Chall: So, all you remember is that you were probably just doing what you needed to do during the campaign?
- Eliaser: Right. And because I deal so much with--I did then and do now--with the mechanics of an operation; arranging for a fund-raising dinner, doing a schedule, setting up speakers, travel schedules, press releases--you name it. That I just did the best I could with those jobs that were given to me and I never felt that I was an instrument of change.
- Chall: You may have arranged then for, I guess it was Robert Kennedy coming through. But apparently he didn't make much difference.
- Eliaser: No. I didn't as a matter of fact.
- Chall: Well, do you have any recollection of what you did right after that, in 1967? (We have a little time on our tape.)
- Eliaser: When Ronald Reagan became governor?
- Chall: Yes. You were still national committeewoman and there was a campaign coming up in the next year. LBJ was supposed to be the candidate, I guess.
- Eliaser: Oh, sure.
- Chall: But that was early. I mean we're talking now, let's say, about January '67 looking forward to '68.
- Eliaser: So there was a whole year before we even arranged the Johnson delegation, is what you're telling me.

The Unforgettable Year: 1968##

[Interview 7: February 14, 1977]

- Chall: 1968, being the kind of year it was, I suspect that there might have been some undercurrents in the state of California as well as nationally. Have you any recollection about--not whether Johnson was going to run or not--but what the anti-Vietnam War people might have been doing and what, it was thought, this would do to the party both in the state and nationally?
- Eliaser: Let's start in California, which I ostensibly knew best--was supposed to. I think we were aware, even before 1968, of the activities of the anti-war people in this state including a large segment of the

Eliaser: Democratic party, the CDC particularly, from the time of Si Casady up through their endorsement of Eugene McCarthy for the presidency, as I recall, in early 1968. Is that correct? Sure it is--he was their candidate. Jerry [Gerald] Hill was the president and Senator McCarthy had done a great deal of work in California--or his surrogates. And he was the only outspoken national leader directing himself toward the presidency.

Eugene McCarthy in the Bay Area, 1967

Eliaser: I'm trying to think. I handled a trip of his out here in 1968. And I'm trying to think--but he was not then running for the presidency that I was aware of--he had not announced. So it could have been '67. Did we discuss that in the last interview? I had Gene McCarthy out here for some fund raising I was doing. So let us say it was the Democratic State Central Committee--for Bob Coate. We were always deficit financing, and I tried to share with him, in whatever little ways I could, the financial problems of maintaining our joint offices.

Gene McCarthy had become a close personal friend over the years of our political work, and it seems to me I invited him out, in the fall of 1967, to do a \$50 or \$100-a-head dinner at Trader Vic's, for the benefit of Bob Coate and the Democratic state committee. I had some minor surgery before that and it was really my first appearance out. I was really directing my recovery to being able to handle Gene McCarthy's visit. And there were some other people involved in this scheduling, always largely Jerry Eller, who remains today his administrative assistant.

Chall: What's his name?

Eliaser: Jerome Eller. E-L-L-E-R--who has been his alter ego for many, many years.

Chall: McCarthy's?

Eliaser: Yes. And they flew out and we went directly from the airport to my house, had lunch and discussed the rest of the schedule. We were going on to the University of California where he was booked in to a speech at one of the large buildings--I don't know your campus as well as I should. I had sent kids out ahead to be sure there was an audience for him. It was a schedule-filling day. It had to be in September or October. It was late fall--mid to late fall.

Eliaser: We then were going to go, once we left the auditorium, back to the student union, or whatever it was, for tea, and answer questions with people who wanted to see him more seriously. I was then to take him back to the Fairmont for rest, ostensibly. Then he was to be picked up by Jerry Hill, who was to get him to Trader Vic's for the fund-raising dinner. Then I think I was relieved of the schedule, I'm not positive.

In any case we went to Berkeley. This auditorium was enormous, and they were in the aisles. At that point, I will tell you, I personally became aware of the anti-war feeling on campuses and in this state. It was well covered by press, which I hadn't realized till I walked in there. And as national committeewoman and a Johnson loyalist at that point, I remember pulling the jacket over my head [laughs] saying to Van Dempsy, "Don't let any of those reporters see me here!" [laughs] 'Cause Van was driving us. I did not drive in those days. I remember that so clearly!

He gave a spectacular speech to the students, and whoever else was there, on the subject of the war, and other things in the economy, and the national interest. He got as close as possible to announcing for the presidency there. I said to him afterwards, "Gene, how could you do this to me!" He all but announced his candidacy. It was a huge audience! And people stamping in the aisles for him--it was a spectacular turn-on event. We went on from there to the student union, or whatever it is, and answered questions for awhile, mostly dealing with the war.

Then I took him back to the hotel; we dropped him. Jerry Hill had asked for permission to deliver him for the dinner so I went home and rested. But what he did was see appointments of his potential supporters during that period. I since heard that Dr. Robert McAfee Brown, Jerry Hill himself, and other leaders of the anti-war movement, and ultimately leaders in this state, of the campaign for the presidency, met with him. I didn't know it at that time.

We went on to the dinner, where he spoke, and he was absolutely dead. It was a nothing speech--to a nothing audience--as opposed to his spectacular appearance of the afternoon. But he'd fulfilled his obligations to us, of sending the ticket, and whatever else. I'm quite sure we didn't take him back to the hotel, because I'd been restricted medically to the number of hours that I could spend that day. Somebody else then took him back to the hotel where they did more of his personal political stuff.

I think it was that year--it was shortly thereafter, like the next month or within that month--that we went to the White House State Dinner. I think I did tell you about that in the last interview.

Eliaser: 'Cause I remember Gene saying clearly to me that day as we were driving, "Ann, if the president knew how you really felt about his war, he would barbeque you and serve you for dinner." At that State Dinner!

So I think I had, if not factually at least emotionally, a sense of what was happening with a large segment of the population. If I didn't realize what happened that day, I would have had to be blind.

And then we went into the following year where we did not take the CDC seriously, and I think have good reason still not to have, at that time. What we weren't looking at clearly is that the feeling transcended that particular organization. That it was the national mood. We've always said California is the bellwether. And the campuses certainly were united as one in this, and the population, generally, from housewives to businessmen. We had an active businessmen-for-peace movement by then, as you no doubt know.

I had a responsibility to the Democratic party. Libby Smith Gatov, whom I succeeded as you know, had always said to me, "Ann, there are no prescribed rules for being national committeewoman. I've never seen them if they exist. But one of the rules is that if the president--if the White House belongs to your party, you are loyal to the president. I took that seriously; took it as a marching order. I was extremely discreet--embarrassed, incidently--about that McCarthy visit, after the fact, though I enjoyed it a lot.

I was moving more and more personally into the anti-war column where I guess I'd been for a long time but couldn't articulate it. And in meetings of state leaders I would be the one who would ask the questions, but I got a turn down. Bob Coate, of course, was so much pro-South Vietnam, and so highly informed in terms of his many business visits there, that I was in the trap of being looked upon as a woman, as being looked upon as an emotional woman, as a woman sympathetic with kids, and all the things one could say.

Delegate Selection for the Democratic National Convention

Eliaser: We were then going into forming a delegation. I'm reminded, because the children are upstairs, that they were married on February 15, 1968. [Mary Alanson and Millard Rosenblatt, Jr.] I put on a very intimate wedding for about 535 of our friends!

I planned to go to Los Angeles the next day with Tom Lynch, who was the nominal head of the Johnson delegation. Pat Brown was no longer governor, though I think he saw himself as the leader; he

Eliaser: really was not. So Tom was named through the White House. Tom Lynch was and is today one of my closest personal friends. Mr. Alanson and I had traveled with Tom and Pat to the Orient; we had this work relationship where we confided in one another, and in retrospect I think he was very dependent on my personal support in political matters--as I was upon him.

So, we planned the next day to travel to Southern California-- I think on a four or five o'clock plane--to meet with northern and southern leaders at the Los Angeles airport, at a motel where we would indeed select the delegation to represent the president, but nominally under Tom's name. The White House was so distrustful that Irv Sprague--and I think I gave you his name last time--sent out the former governor of Kentucky to regulate our behavior and our choices.

I was pretty tired and pretty saddened, because of what had happened to a woman with whom I had worked many years ago in the book business, who had been marvelous to my daughter and given her jobs over the years. The day of the wedding they brought her son's body home from Vietnam. I was so tempted to leave Mary the day of the preparations for the wedding, because I did have a hired car most of the day, and run out to be with them. I couldn't break away, and I didn't know what condition that would put me in. I was highly selfish and I didn't go out to be with them at any time. But, even through the wedding and this joyous celebration, I missed my friend and her absence and had a heavy burden, emotionally, of what that was about. It was after that awful time--

Chall: After Tet.

Eliaser: Yes, right. That was it. That's when they lost their boy. So we went to Los Angeles under that shadow, not personally, but as responsible leaders of our country in a general way. But it was not reflected, I can assure you, at any time.

Tom Saunders told me, going down on the plane, that he was responsible. He'd been hired by then by Walter Shorenstein and other leaders to run Northern California's delegation. Saunders was the professional who was going to open headquarters, hire staff, and run the presidential campaign in Northern California. He may then have had responsibility for the south too, that early, but I doubt it.

I remember Tom Lynch had his limousine state car pick me up at home, then we went back to the State Building and got him, and we went in the pouring rain to the airport, met Tom Saunders and the others from the north--the officers who were going with us. I saw Walter Shorenstein on the stand-by. And I said, "What's he

Eliaser: doing? Is he waiting to get on this flight?" And the attorney general said, "Yes. He may not make this flight, but he will be joining us." I said, "Why? He's not an elected party officer. Why is he going?" And he said, "Because he has agreed to finance, at the least, the cost of the Bay Area share of the delegation, or to raise the money, and therefore he wants a voice quite properly in who will be named delegates and alternates from the Bay Area. If he's got to ask for the money, he's got to be sure the people with money or some of them are on that delegation." And, he did get on that plane.

And on this same flight during this hour Tom Saunders said, "By the way, we've put you in the biggest suite we have because it has the largest entertainment facility, and so for all practical purposes, you are the hostess! And I said, "Tom, how can you do that to me. I am a skeleton of my former self. I'm a zombie. I'm so tired from yesterday. You were there! You should know it." And he said, "But there are two bedrooms in it and we should put no one else in the suite and you can be in the farthest one and anytime you need rest just go, somebody else will take over." He had two or three secretaries with him, and it turned out not to be a problem, although I attempted to do what was expected. The other people were Mrs. Fowle.

Chall: Couldn't she have been the hostess?

Eliaser: I think she would like to have been. George Miller. Senator Miller, I think was on that selection committee.

Chall: Who was the state chairman at that time? [Charles Warren]

Eliaser: Bob Coate from up here as northern vice-chairman. Then there were two congressmen. They were Congressman Miller [George P.], now retired from the East Bay. He must have been close to eighty then. And in Southern California--I don't think it was Gus Hawkins. No, it was the chairman of the delegation. One of the older men.

Chall: Holifield?

Eliaser: Yes. Chet Holifield.

Chall: And what about southern party leaders?

Eliaser: Well, Gene Wyman, Carmen Warschaw, Trudy Owens. They all held offices. A representative of Mayor Yorty--the woman who ran his office for so many years. Quite impressive and she brought an assistant with her. That was a battle fought, whether to give him a voice or not. Pat Brown from Southern California and so forth. It'll all be reflected. Jane Tolmach from Ventura, who was southern division women's chairman or something. It was the first time it was an expanded committee.

Chall: Yes. This is larger than most.

Eliaser: It was an enormous long table and numbered, just guessing, would be thirty.

Chall: I see. Usually, before this, it had been only nine or ten.

Eliaser: Yes. The legislature, and the congress, the party leaders, and the presidency were represented. Because Irvine Sprague, who was head of the western desk of the White House, couldn't be there, he sent former governor whoever from Kentucky--very gentle man--who showed up that first Friday evening that we were there, for cocktails and dinner with the northern group. The southerners didn't come in till very late because the meetings were to commence on Saturday morning. We went in Friday night, just for togetherness, and to be ready for a nine or ten o'clock meeting. It was stormy, and winter still, and that's why we went down at five o'clock. But we stayed up terribly late in my suite as I recall. I finally excused myself and did go to bed. I don't know who closed down that night.

But, the next morning I was up very early and I went to breakfast in the coffee shop and Tom Saunders was already up so I joined him. "Tom. You have to tell me. Walter Shorenstein was so ungracious to me last night and it was so awful! I was so embarrassed!" Tom said, "Don't you know?" And I said, "No." He said, "You mean nobody has told you?" And I said, "Well, last night as I said goodnight, Mrs. Fowle walked me to my door and said, 'Darling. Don't pay any attention to Walter Shorenstein. Whatever he said to you, I'll explain to you tomorrow and it doesn't mean anything.'" Which exacerbated my concern. And Tom said, "Well, then I may as well tell as long as she's going to tell you; you might as well hear it from me. Of all the political leaders in the state of--Northern California, he was the only one who was not invited to your daughter's wedding."

And I said, "Tom. I didn't make up that list. That wasn't my wedding. I paid for it. The children made up that list, and if there were political leaders there, they were there because they were friends of my children." My son-in-law was at that time--up till almost that time--Cyril Magnin's political assistant those many years. So Cyril is almost a relative as well as coming in. The children had a combined list. Mayor Alioto was there, who had gotten friendly with my children. We had great arguments over the wedding list. Doesn't every family? But his name didn't even come up!

Tom said, "Well, everybody he knows was there and he started getting paranoid and checking with everybody to find out. And at last he even called a meeting--a finance meeting at five o'clock,

Eliaser: which was the hour of the wedding--and called everybody and each one said, 'How can you have a meeting? Aren't you going to The Wedding?'" They didn't say whose wedding--the wedding as though they would accept it. He said, "As a matter of fact," he said, just this morning he had a meeting with Cyril Magnin about financing the delegation and Cyril said something about The Wedding to him. Walter said, "Don't talk about it. I wasn't invited." And Cyril--meaning to be helpful said, "Walter. I'm sure it was an oversight on Ann's part, because everyone knows you send the best presents!" [laughter] Anyhow I didn't have anything to do with the invitations. These things happen, regrettably.

And so Mrs. Fowle reiterated all that Tom said and I only tell it to you because there is a more business-like aspect of the story we are concerned with here.

We went into meetings after breakfast. I was the freshest of the bunch 'cause I'd gone to bed at a correct hour. It was clear from the beginning that Tom Lynch was not going to be assertive and that Pat Brown, even though he didn't have the gavel, was going to try to take a leading role. We had the traditional arguments. We made selections by congressional districts. I think we tried to alternate--let's say take the First Congressional District, and then we'd go south and take a district down there.

It may have taken us a half a day to devise the system of fairness so that Mayor Yorty's secretary, for example, didn't have to sit there all day worrying about people from Eureka. So there were a lot of technical problems that we worked out. The governor of Kentucky sat through it all. People would occasionally leave the room, obviously reporting to the White House. I really hate to cast aspersions on tape, and I will be as discreet as I can, but Pat Brown took an unusually aggressive role, which was distressing to me for Tom Lynch. It didn't bother Tom, so I guess it was all right.

It was obvious in many of these districts that the delegates had been predetermined--in fact on Saturday morning, Mr. Shorenstein wasn't there. At lunch break I asked the attorney general--since Walter flew down--why wasn't he there when we were having the discussions? He evidently had made his feelings known about the Bay Area delegation privately, Friday night, and at breakfast with some people, and left. His son was being bar mitzvah that day in San Francisco and he had to get right back. It was to be held at Temple Emanu-El and a subsequent reception at the Fairmont Hotel.

Anyway he wasn't present, but when we came to the Fourth and Fifth Congressional Districts, which I think were the San Francisco districts then--we're five and six now--there was obviously nothing

Eliaser: to talk about and I wondered why we bothered. It had all been decided. And to some extent his imprint was made on most East Bay people that would contribute money to the running of the delegation.

I was very careful. It was the first time I had had a role in this meeting, and though it was important to me, personally, to be outspoken and to represent whatever constituency I thought I had, I was very careful to do a lot of listening. And try to see what had happened that I hadn't seen. Paranoia being a disease of politicians, it was very clear to me that much had been decided before we came into this meeting to make this so-called decision. So I decided to do a lot of listening and let things roll for at least a half a day.

I remember finally coming in and saying, "Now look. All of this, or a good deal of this, has already been decided." Women were distinctly under-represented. And they were still going on this terrible thing that they did for so many years, of doing one black from a metropolitan district in San Francisco, one person with a Latin background maybe. Or they'd take somebody from San Jose to make up for the fact that they didn't from San Francisco, 'cause we had to have a Chinese. There was no recognition of contribution, participation, anything else. It was so superficial as to bother me terribly, and I was able to articulate it a lot better than I am at this moment. Women were the great neglected. They're not a minority, but they were, in Democratic politics.

And as I say, I did voice it, but not until I'd listened and could see that so much was required. One of the things I noticed was Pat Brown, who said, and I'm quoting exactly, "I just called"-- (this is after the luncheon break) "I just called Jack Factor and asked him to go on to the delegation and he's just thrilled. He'll give you a lot of help financially, and he was just delighted to come on." Well, I gasped for a lot of reasons! One is that it was presumptuous of former Governor Brown to ask anybody, when the committee hadn't considered the name. But furthermore that the chairman of the delegation was Thomas C. Lynch, the chief law enforcement officer of the State of California, and that legally Mr. John Factor--who is a marvelous philanthropic, great man today--was an ex-felon out of Illinois who had not, at that time, I think, had the prerogative of voting or of full citizenship rights restored. They have subsequently been given back to him in a later presidency. I'm not sure how.

Nobody at that table moved or said a word to the effect that the governor had done this on his own and he was one of thirty of us, or that anyone had any consideration for Tom Lynch. There was never, I think, a question about Mr. Lynch's reputation in law enforcement. He was a good cop and he was clean. And I thought, oh my God!

DEMOCRATIC PARTY

List of Candidates for Delegates to Democratic National Convention

Candidates expressing no preference

THOMAS C. LYNCH (Chairman)

Hon. Thomas C. Lynch	Mrs. Eleanor Fowle	Richard E. Sherwood
Hon. Charles Warren	Alan A. Parker	Gerald J. Conway
Robert L. Coate	Mrs. Lillian C. Maylard	Steve Edney
Hon. Edmund G. Brown	Clarence E. Heller	Charles W. Walker
Hon. Joseph L. Alioto	James J. Twombly	George W. Smith
Hon. James Roosevelt	Gerald D. Marcus	Antonia C. Tejada
Charles Luckman	Ernest H. Norback	Charles N. Chapman
Gregory Peek	Mrs. Marion Robotti	Eric A. Lidow
Lew R. Wasserman	Morgan Flagg	Burt Kleiner
Edwin W. Pauley	Joseph J. Crosetti	Robert William Prescott
George E. Johnson	Jim R. Orton	Jack M. Ostrow
Eugene V. Klein	Mrs. Jane McCormick Tolmach	Joseph L. Alperson
Sigmund Arywitz	Lyman R. Smith	Skipper Rostker
Hon. Billy G. Mills	Mrs. Goldie Kennedy	Mrs. Shirley Goldinger
Hon. Jack D. Maltester	Hon. Alvin C. Weingand	Hon. Walter W. Stiern
Joseph J. Rodriguez	Hon. Jerome R. Waldie	Horace S. Massey
Nancy S. York	Minot W. Tripp, Jr.	Ross H. Boyd
Gilbert W. Lindsay	Russell R. Crowell	Gabriel W. Solomon
Henry L. Lacayo	Carl B. Frazier	Hon. Richard Nevins
Walter H. Shorenstein	Hon. John Joseph McFall	Mark S. Whiting
Arthur Henry Harwood	Joseph A. Barkett, M.D.	Edward A. Hawkins
Mrs. Irma Rohrer	Mrs. Margaret C. Blackmer	Richard H. Keatinge
Newton Dal Poggetto	Alan H. Strauss	Hon. Harvey M. Johnson
Everett A. Matzen	Hon. B. F. Sisk	Mrs. Ruby J. Stidger
Hon. Harold T. (Bizz) Johnson	Hon. Hugh M. Burns	Dorman L. Commons
Frank A. Galli	Hon. George N. Zenovich	Mrs. Margaret Ann Twombly
Laurence W. Carr	Simon Marootian	Pat Galati
Harlan D. Lundberg	Hon. Cecil R. King	Herman Leavitt
Hon. John E. Moss	Hon. Chet Holifield	John H. Snider
Hon. Walter W. Powers	Hon. Augustus F. (Gus) Hawkins	Norbert A. Schlei
Hon. Edwin L. Z'berg	Hon. James C. Corman	George Nye, Jr.
Virna M. Canson	Hon. Edward R. Roybal	Edwin J. Wilson
Hon. Robert L. Leggett	Hon. Charles H. Wilson	Nathan Shapell
Hon. Virgil O'Sullivan	Hon. Ralph C. Dills	David M. Kennick
Hon. Luther Earl Gibson	Hon. Tom C. Carrell	Hon. John P. Quimby
William Leshe	Hon. Alfred H. Song	Hon. Eugene G. Nisbet
Adolph P. Schuman	Hon. George E. Danielson	James L. Evans
William H. Chester	Col. John O. Gottlieb	Harry E. Reynolds
Cyril Magnin	Hon. Joe A. Gonsalves	Hon. Richard T. Lianna
Benjamin H. Swig	Hon. William B. Greene	Philip L. Anthony
James J. Rudden	Hon. Leon D. Ralph	Mark W. Hannaford
Charlotte C. Danforth	Hon. Edward E. Elliott	Daniel H. Ninburg, M.D.
Hon. John Francis Foran	Sam S. Ishihara	Richard J. O'Neill
Hon. Terry A. Francois	Lionel B. Cade	Charles G. Gant
Hon. Jeffery Cohelan	Leo M. Harvey	Nikolay S. Palchikoff
Hon. George P. Miller	Mrs. Carmen H. Warschaw	Sherwood Roberts
Hon. Carlos Bee	Joseph T. DeSilva	Hon. Lionel Van Deerlin
Hon. Wilmont Sweeney	Clarence D. Martin, Jr.	Morris D. Goodrich
Osborne A. Pearson	Mark Boyar	John Straza
Fred F. Cooper	Robert M. Brunson	Earl T. Pridemore
Richard K. Groulx	Allan K. Jonas	Irvin J. Kahn
Abraham Kofman	Abe F. Levy	R. R. Richardson
Kimiko Fujii	Mrs. Joyce A. Fadem	Hugh N. Wood
Peter J. Allen	Stanley Beyer	Abel B. Sykes, Jr.
Hon. Ben F. Gross	Alerico D. Ortega	Hon. John V. Tunney
Gael Douglass	Marilynn K. Hofstetter	Mrs. Henrietta B. Benson
Hon. Alfred E. Alquist	Mrs. Bella Berg	Dan A. Kimball
		Lionel Steinberg

END OF GROUP

Eliaser: Anyway, this went on. The whole thing had aspects of the ridiculous, considering what the country was thinking out there. It seemed to me that we were so ingrown. I understood about the war and was so bothered by it, yet at no time during that entire weekend, from Friday afternoon till the end of a long Sunday, did anybody say one word about Vietnam, or indicate any concern about the Johnson candidacy--in fact they took it for granted he would be the candidate with very little contest.

Chall: This was February sixteen, seventeen and eighteen. McCarthy was already running.

Eliaser: But we looked at it as a CDC candidacy during CDC's weakest time. And we didn't look outside this state. And I say we in the largest sense. I knew that Gene was meeting with leaders in Illinois, and all over the country, and was developing support within the labor movement, and the education establishment, and everywhere else. But we're talking about a meeting of thirty-some odd people representing the White House, and out of the California establishment, that had always seen itself as the Democratic power structure. It didn't realize it was about to be toppled.

I think I sensed it. I think that's perhaps another reason I didn't make more trouble about representation I felt women should have had, and the way it was conducted, which was not entirely legitimate. There was a set of rules, but there were rules made someplace else also. I didn't like it, but somewhere in my head I felt it isn't going to end up with this bunch anyway. I think I really felt that. So, why take a stand that antagonizes your position with long-time friends when it wasn't going to end up. I wasn't sure, but I had a sense of many currents happening in this country and abroad that it would appear nobody else in that room thought about at all. It was not the place to discuss it. But it was not the only time that I had felt alone, as I have recited to you on previous meetings, on this kind of thing.

So when I flew back with the attorney general we were having a drink on the plane. I said to Tom Lynch, "Tom. How could you allow John Factor's name to come in as an accepted fact on that delegation when you are the chief law enforcement officer of this state and the leader of this delegation?" He said, "What could I do?" He said, "Pat had already done it." And he said, "Don't worry, Ann. It will get taken care of elsewhere." I didn't think much about it except that he ought to know what he was talking about, and I know he was in regular contact with the White House and those people who were worried about Johnson and politics in the delegation, and I let it go.

Eliaser: The following day we met--either Monday or Tuesday let's say--in Walter Shorenstein's office to launch the delegation off. In other words to have Tom Saunders hire the secretaries, rent or get a place. And Shorenstein, evidently, gave them offices in a building that he owned or managed--Milton Meyer and Company, down on Mission Street. They were all set to go and Mr. Shorenstein announced that he had gone to the bank and borrowed \$100,000 for this effort. And he said, "Now, Ann, you're national committeewoman, here is the note. Ten of us have to sign. Why don't you be the first?" Well, I felt terribly intimidated but I didn't want to make further trouble considering that I had been informed by too many people that he was already offended because my daughter hadn't invited him to her wedding. I had never signed a note; didn't understand the ramifications; felt it was my obligation and I signed it! And I realized too late that Saunders was across the room signaling me, waving his hands, "Don't do it! Don't do it!" So, we went through this; the attorney general and others signed it.

We broke up and I went home and called Tom Saunders in Berkeley, where he then lived, and I said, "What did I do?" He said, "You signed a note for \$100,000, you dope!" I think Shorenstein didn't tell us the amount, as a matter of fact. He just turned up the side of the page for signatures. It was Tom who was the first one to tell me it was \$100,000. I'd signed my life away! I didn't have \$100,000. Furthermore, though you think you're only bound for ten, if ten of you signed, the law is that you are responsible for part and the whole. Pople in politics--on notes--belatedly learn that they don't just get responsible for a portion, it's for the whole thing. It was very distressing to me, but it was done.

Pre-Convention Preparations

Eliaser: I decided to take my responsibility as the leader of the delegation. Because once we got to Chicago, Gene Wyman and I were in charge by the laws of the national committee. Tom Lynch was the legal leader or was to be the legal or nominal head of the delegation, but nobody gets their badges or any credentials except through the national committeepersons. Or in those days you did. That was a huge responsibility and I decided to activate. I went down to Tom's [Saunders] new headquarters every day and worked with them. We decided that because California, historically, got the worst hotel, and the worst care, and the worst everything, from the national committee--that we would try to unify this group, maybe by a little newsletter. Try to raise money by letting people know what good care of them we would take. And so we decided to go to Chicago.

Eliaser: We called the people of the national committee who were already there putting the convention together and said we were coming.

##

Chall: Now, let's see. You were on your way to Chicago.

Eliaser: So Tom and I picked a date in March, that was mutually convenient, to go to Chicago, meet with the national committee people there; see if they couldn't house California better than they historically do at conventions; see what we couldn't dig up in Chicago to make Californians comfortable; come home and communicate all this via a newsletter. We'd say, in effect, "Here we are. Instead of your traditionally waiting till the last minute, this is how well you're going to be treated. Won't you subscribe to this newsletter and send money in advance, because it has been our experience that there is delegate cost involved to going." At conventions, in the early years, we tried to get people to subscribe early to their air ticket, to their room commitment, to their additional--what shall we call it--assessment, to pay for the running of the delegation--the business of it.

We knew we'd never get it, Tom and I, considering the uncertainty of the times, unless we could offer them something back. What we were doing by coordinating that early with the national committee was attempting to show these people that they would indeed go, this is where they were staying, this is what we'd be doing for them.

The national committee wasn't happy to hear from us and to accept this kind of pressure from California this early.

Chall: This was--?

Eliaser: March. Early March.

[interruption]

Chall: I just wanted to get some idea what you were all doing at that time because--

Eliaser: It was before the New Hampshire primary. It was a few days before the New Hampshire primary.

Chall: The New Hampshire primary was--

Eliaser: About the fifteenth of March.

Chall: [checking notes] Twelfth of March, okay.

Eliaser: That's a pretty good memory! [laughs]

Chall: Very good.

Eliaser: With no calendar in front of me!

Chall: Let's see, the twelfth of March; Kennedy came in as a candidate on the sixteenth.

Eliaser: Well, I'll take you back in terms of our activity. We did the Chicago thing. They gave us no satisfaction. Would not commit to California. They bought us dinner and figured they'd taken care of us, though we'd planned to spend two to three days there. Then I was going to meet my husband for a little rest in Arizona. But it was so unsatisfactory--the national committee seemed to feel obviously they weren't going to be the people to run the convention.

Chall: They felt that perhaps--?

Eliaser: Yes. It was just awful. So, I said to Tom, "I can't afford to stay here at my own expense. You're here at the delegation's expense. You ought to get back to work. I'll call the hotel in Arizona and see if I can come out a couple of days early and wait for my husband and cousins there." So that's what we did. We went to the airport together. He got on the first flight for California; I got on the first plane for Arizona and had TWA call the hotel and tell them I was going to be early and have a car for me.

So I was sitting at the swimming pool by myself and some man was there with a radio on tuning into the New Hampshire primaries. I heard all of it sitting in Arizona by myself, and was just overwhelmed! I think I was so happy at what happened, even though my legal responsibility--or extra-legal, was elsewhere--in terms of what I felt was correct. I was just thrilled! And while I was still there [in Arizona] I remember watching television and watching Bobby Kennedy come in. And I was so angry. I was so angry because I felt Gene had done all the ground work; had had the courage to test the waters, to take the beating he most certainly did from all over the country on this. And once it was proven that the national mood was ready for a change, then Bobby Kennedy came in. This is just a personal emotional response.

Resignation as National Committeewoman

Chall: Of that time.

Eliaser: Yes. And so I was very anxious to get home. But the little five-day vacation, or whatever it was, was set and I stayed there. At the next meeting of the delegation leadership--and then we narrowed it down to a San Francisco airport meeting--we were only eight or ten

Eliaser: people. Gene Wyman, and Pat Brown, and maybe one other person came up from the south--a professional, maybe Joe Cerrell; I don't remember who it was. Gene and the governor are the only ones I remember. And Tom, and Bob Coate, and I from here--with Tom Saunders. That was really a tight meeting. Irv Sprague flew out for it himself from the White House, which tells you something.

I submitted my resignation as Democratic National Committeewoman. I asked to be relieved of it; that I couldn't go on with this delegation, in light of the mood of the country and how I personally and morally felt about the war in Vietnam. And they wouldn't accept it. They told me what a good job I was doing and how much they needed me. I don't think that was it at all. I think they didn't want Carmen. They didn't want a forced special election for the national committee with all their other problems, and they just said, "No." That was it. Bob Coate said, "We all love you and we'll work it out. We're all friends. You're entitled to feel that way. None of us is happy." That wasn't it at all. It would have created great mechanical difficulties.

This delegation had to be filed by law--that night or the next morning.

Chall: April fifth.

Eliaser: Yes. So they were running around like crazy to get the thing finalized. It was at that point that Gene Wyman was dispatched. He left in the middle of the meeting to catch a plane before we finished. And so Tom Lynch was bringing me back into the city. I said, "What was that about?" And he said, "He was assigned to go call John Factor, to call on him personally. The president wants him off that list."

Chall: Taking all that time. Two months, almost.

Let's see. Did I read that you had contacted McCarthy? Oh, no. I see.

Eliaser: It was after.

Chall: That was after Johnson renounced. Right.

Eliaser: When was that?

Chall: Johnson renounced on the thirty-first of March.

Eliaser: So all of this that I've just told you happened before then. It all seems like an enormous spread of time. But it wasn't, obviously. These things happened relatively quickly.

Chall: Let me make sure that even before Johnson had renounced--

Eliaser: I offered to resign.

Chall: So you offered to resign, then, between the time that McCarthy won in New Hampshire and--

Eliaser: I offered before Johnson pulled out. It was just a moral commitment I couldn't deal with. I couldn't stay where I was.

It was very hard to do, I have to tell you. I worked very hard to be national committeewoman. I had given, by then, untold years to the Democratic party and I cared very much about it. It was not an emotionally made, quickly, shot-from-the-hip decision at all. I was giving up an awful lot that I had cared about, or thought I did, to do it.

Chall: Did you discuss this with anybody else? Was your daughter--the fact that she and her husband were young--did that have anything to do with how you might have felt? Did you talk to them about it?

Eliaser: They lived in Portland, Oregon. I don't recall that I discussed it with them. I may have discussed it with Tom Saunders. The attorney general and I, at times when we discussed it, were at different poles.

Chall: So this is something you had to wrestle with by yourself?

Eliaser: Yes.

Chall: You were doing something rather unusual. That is, you were stepping out of your role of presumed loyalty to the president at the time.

Eliaser: Yes. And it was the top role that a woman could achieve in politics at that time. It was as far as you could go and I really struggled to get there; and then I was, in effect, renouncing it. But I couldn't help it.

I was very surprised that they didn't accept it. And I can't tell you how I felt. I think I felt numb about the whole thing. I wasn't happy or unhappy. It remained as something I had to struggle with, I think. Analyzing it in retrospect, I think all of us like answers in black and white. We want to know right now. If the doctor says you may be sick, you want to know what's the disease; am I going to live; how will I treat it? Very often the doctor can't tell you on that given day what you've got or whether you're going to live or not. And that's pretty much how I felt. I've always been one who's wanted immediate answers. It wasn't to be, in terms of one's role or anything else.

Eliaser: Then I remember the evening Johnson withdrew. I was, I guess, washing the dishes--California time. I know I was still in my kitchen. Tom Lynch called me, and he said, "What are you doing?" I said, "I'm washing the dishes." And he said, "How can you be washing the dishes? The president's going to be--in exactly eight minutes the president's going to be on television." Or whatever. And I said, "Yes. I know. But I don't really care and I've got to finish up in the kitchen. I have a hard day tomorrow." He said, "Will you do me a favor. I have no right to be calling you and telling you this, but the White House has just called me and I think you'd better watch." And I said, "Well, tell me! So I won't have to be bothered!" [laughs] And he said, "No. I don't want to do that, so why don't you just watch, or turn it on?" So I turned it on the radio, as I recall, so I could keep doing my household chores. And I heard the president withdraw. And I called Tom back and thanked him for making me hear the news at the time. I know I didn't see it on television till the replays in the news later.

Chall: He didn't know, did he? Did he know what the president was going to say?

Eliaser: They called and told him, as the leader of the delegation. The president claims he didn't know till he went on. There have been controversial stories. Tom Lynch called me and said, "He's pulling out."

Chall: Oh. He actually told you that?

Eliaser: Yes. I want to get it clearly for you. First he said he wouldn't tell me; to just watch. And I said something about I can't be bothered. He said, "If I were you, I'd watch it. He's pulling out." Now that could have been intuitiveness on his part. But the White House called him as the leader of the largest delegation. Some of the records show that they did make a few calls before that broadcast. Mrs. Johnson may not have known, but somebody knew.

So it was eastern time, very, very late when that was over, and I decided not to do anything. It's always wise at the end of the evening, if you've had wine with your dinner, not to do anything. And I was very emotional about it anyway.

Commitment to Eugene McCarthy: The Primary

Eliaser: And the next morning I got up at five o'clock and called Eugene McCarthy's Washington office because I knew all the staff--all the women by first name and so forth. I'd worked with them for so many years. They told me he was in Wisconsin, and they gave me the name

Eliaser: of the hotel. I called there and couldn't get through. I don't think I left my name, I'm not sure. But by seven o'clock our time, he called me.

Chall: That's still seven a.m.?

Eliaser: Yes. I was having coffee. And Gene called me, and it had nothing to do with the fact I'd called him so far as I know. Records now show that his staff had prepared lists the night before, and they had a crew on five to ten phones--whatever it was--wherever they were in Wisconsin. And the staff placed the calls. They said, "Just a minute for Senator McCarthy." He picked up the phone in a series of calls to pick up as much leadership as he could on that basis.

I'd been told by friends who worked with him earlier and lots of people I know did. I've a good friend in the labor movement who was with him from the beginning, who had gone to an earlier meeting that year--meeting in Chicago with Gene--and Gene said, when the friend left, "Give my love to Ann Alanson." And the friend said, "You can't mean that. She's against us." And Gene said, "Not really, she's not. She's doing what she sees as her job. When the time comes, she'll be with us." And the friend came home and gave me that report.

It's important in politics, and I think everything else in life, where possible, to understand that you're not always going to be on the same side at the same time. And not develop feuds and these terrible bitternesses we see so often. Because you're against one another this year, but next year you're going to be in bed together--is what I say--and be on the side of the same cause. And it bothers me about politics, which is after all an exaggeration of life. Real blown up version, because it happens so fast, of what we go through in our daily lives. To have to develop antagonisms which are lasting, so it's like a divorce--when you ought to be together for the next round. And I think Gene McCarthy's expression was that he saw that.

Chall: He saw that in you.

Eliaser: Well, he knew I was his personal friend. There was never question about that. But he must have seen my value system and knew that it would work.

Chall: It didn't work with him, though, with respect to--

Eliaser: No. Isn't that interesting? To some degree it does and we'll get to that later. His actions at the end of the Chicago convention weren't exactly the way they'd been reported, or for the reasons.

Eliaser: Knowing him as well as I do, I think he's been maligned in that respect, though his subsequent actions certainly can be taken as coming from bitterness and a great unreal place.

Chall: An unreal place?

Eliaser: In other words his race for the presidency this last year has to be the most unreal thing that's happened lately.

Chall: At that time, you felt that not only did he express the national mood as it was coming up, for change, but that he would be a good president? Did you have any doubts?

Eliaser: I had no question about it. I used to argue with Dave Broder, who's a friend of mine, and others about it, because David had a chance to observe the Senator at work in Washington, daily. He would say, "Ann. He's sloppy. He doesn't really care about work and you have to be workman-like if you're president." I [Ann] was doing my idealistic thing. "He is the leader; people are obviously ready to follow him; he's done that ground work diligently." So forth.

And by then, I was in the campaign. Gene came out here in April. They held my announcement back. George Murphy, now of the San Francisco Chronicle, was the press officer of the McCarthy campaign in Northern California, and toward the end, the whole state. And he and the leadership of the McCarthy campaign tried to withhold the announcement of my support until a day when Gene was arriving here. It was early April.

They had a press conference for me at the St. Francis Hotel for me to announce my support. Except that they didn't. They left all the mechanics to me which was just terrible, 'cause I was scared; and it was a big move. The president was off the ballot, but he wasn't. The Lynch delegation was legally filed. They had to run. I had a terrible conflict in terms of my friendships, but I was proud to be doing what I was doing.

But the McCarthy campaign didn't even put on the press conference. They got out the notices, but nobody was there to help me. A cousin of mine, who was a PR person, was kind enough to come with me and pass them out and be there! They were all so busy revving up for Gene's arrival later that day, they wouldn't think to stoop to being with me.

But nobody understood the significance of it, including myself, that I was the only member, that year, of the Democratic National Committee--which was a rarified group as compared to today--who came out for either Eugene McCarthy or Robert Kennedy. All the members of the national committee publicly stayed with the presidency

Eliaser: and then Hubert. But I was the only one to come out and do what I did that morning. Though I didn't understand it till I read it on the front page of the New York Times the next day. There was a significant dereliction, if you will.

But from there I walked over to the headquarters and they put me in a cavalcade of cars, drove me to the airport where I would be the first one to greet Gene when he got off the plane.

We went directly from there, as I recall, to the Greek Theater in Berkeley, where they were hanging from the trees. They were literally up in the hills. There was no way to get another body there to hear his address. It was done. It was very exciting; it was very moving. I was introduced on the stage with a Nobel laureate, which was a little embarrassing. They were all--I just remember Chamberlain. But I guess most of the Nobel laureates in the Bay Area were against the war and as many as possible were on that platform that day, besides University of California people.

Chall: They'd done a lot of ground work, then, the McCarthy people?

Eliaser: People were ready to be there! So--I mean, it was important.

[interruption]

Eliaser: So anyway, then I got in the car with Gene again and we had some other appointments; I don't remember the entire day. That may have been the day when Martin Luther King was assassinated. Do you recall?

That night there was scheduled a fund-raising banquet. I think it was only about \$35 or \$50. It couldn't have made a lot of money. It was at the Hilton Hotel. They sold out the ballroom and any additional banquet space or hall space in that hotel was taken up. First there was a cocktail party upstairs in the presidential suite, privately, with the Senator, for people who would give a \$100 or \$200 or more. I recall my husband and I going to the cocktail party, and I noticed that people really weren't giving more money. And they hadn't. They had people there in the hopes that they would. Wasn't orderly. It was all kind of slapped together at the last minute. And it was the hallmark of that campaign, and many others I've been in since! [laughs]

It bothered me because the potential was there money-wise and it wasn't being handled in a business-like way. In fact, I said I didn't want to go because we weren't in a position to do anything but buy our tickets. And they said not to worry, that they were so grateful that I had come aboard; we were their guests. And I said no, no, no and that kind of thing. And then I noted that the people

Eliaser: I spoke with who were friends also had been given the same speech. And I guess they were more concerned when they planned the affair in getting a crowd, not realizing what they had.

It was the night that Dr. King was assassinated. And there evidently had been huge discussion as to whether the Senator should go on with his appearance or not, other than at this private thing. He himself was torn--I wasn't present so you understand that it was told to me. He never came into the dinners when we sat down anyway, because he couldn't stand them. Who can? He'd come in when it was time for his speech.

I was assigned a speaking role that night--or a brief appearance at the rostrum. I recall that. Perhaps it was to introduce Gene. I don't remember.

It was decided he was coming, but there had been much controversy. And I think Mrs. McCarthy, who was not there on that trip, definitely did not want him to appear out of reverence for Dr. King, and the moment. And I gather, after the fact, he and she had a huge argument about his breaking off his schedule to go to the funeral or whatever. He had a statewide tour which was due to start up here, in other words, and move south the next day. And instead he had to go South for the church services and that march which he was televised on, and so forth. There was a family debate on that. He felt he should, evidently, keep on. That he owed it to Dr. King, and all the things that they shared, to keep going.

In any case, he did finally appear at that dinner and he was well received. I don't remember. There were too many speeches. Everybody--speakers' table went from one end of the ballroom to the other. All McCarthy dinners were handled that way, and I have to gratefully say I had nothing to do with them except be a guest. Everybody at the speakers' table had something to say. They were interminable and very painful for people who'd come to see the Senator--to hear him, and who gave their money. It was unforgiveable that the evenings were so protracted. It couldn't be done anymore. So, while he searched his soul--or for whatever purposes-- And so that's all I remember of that trip. There were others.

The Oregon primary is the thing that comes to mind. I did a lot of traveling in the interim.

Chall: I see. You didn't have a special position at that time.

Eliaser: Oh, I'm sure I did. I promptly ran an office out of my house. There was no room in the headquarters space they had. And I had a three-story home at that time and a huge deck and it was lovely weather. So, I decided the best thing I could do is help raise money. I haven't changed much.

Eliaser: So we started the fund-raising arm of the McCarthy campaign out of my home. I was a little more organized than they were down there and I obtained all the medical lists of all the hospitals in the Bay Area and wrote a letter, with Jack Morrison's help, to all the doctors. And I also got a hold of the University of California employees' list. The whole university--not just medical. There's a key to that list, if you've looked at it, that indicates salary levels or the title of the job. Everyone's got a title, so that you know that a secretary or a maintenance person can't contribute politically too much. Because that list's much too big to mail to, we stopped at a given level. I think I marked all these lists and took out duplications.

Then we had anywhere from ten to forty women every day in that house addressing envelopes. We ran off that letter; had a return envelope printed, to me at my home, as opposed to the headquarters, and I think in ten days we raised about \$38,000 from that little mailing. Something that I've never done before or since. But it was very emotional, anti-war appeal.

I got that going--hired a part-time secretary that could continually run the fund raising. We'd get more names as people came into work; they'd bring names and solicit their friends. So we had a rotating bank account to the point that the headquarters people would make a pick up from me about twice a week from that account to pay their rent [laughs] and their telephone bill, and keep it going.

In any case, they decided to put me on the road by then. I had not in the past, as I think I may have told you, been a confident speaker. I was nervous in front of a mike; I had terrible television scares. With much early professional experience, I never did it well. But in the little work I did right away for Gene here, they could see that I really cared. I had a tremendous amount of confidence 'cause I didn't think about myself at all! I was dealing with ideas, with a candidate I cared about as a friend--but mostly that war. And I didn't have a moment to be nervous. It never occurred to me to be scared. So they put me on the road.

And Gene being as temperamental as he was about going places--and wouldn't--there would be lots of places in California he would get to to once or not at all. The Valley towns and so forth. They put me on tremendous tours all over the state. I did at least two Valley tours. One northern Valley, and one central and south, all the way to Bakersfield. They sent me to San Diego to advance a trip he made there. They did a train trip through California with him. Instead of acting like a big shot and going on the train with him, I went down to San Diego four days in advance to help set it up; to control the troops down there who had all kinds of bright ideas that wouldn't work; and to act generally mean.

Eliaser: I addressed a lunch in advance of his coming. Did all kinds of television shows and press conferences in advance of his coming. Just kept the action boiling for a rally that was held in Balboa Stadium. And did have dinner privately with him that night. He was exhausted and refused to go on with his evening schedule, which I'd anticipated and scratched anyway--because I know him too well.

Chall: I see. Was this for all groups? Not just women.

Eliaser: Oh, no--no, no. I just moved right out there. There was no structure anyway, which is so much better in a way. Least that year. Sometimes you need the disciplines or structure. That year it happened so fast, that what happened is people were allowed to do their own thing--didn't have the restraint of the campaign spending laws and reporting. There was no such thing till after the fact.

So people up in Chico were holding their cake sales, and their dramas for Gene McCarthy, and their meetings with Gene or surrogate speakers like me. Gene's children did the same kind of thing I did. They just moved, and they raised a fortune in money. They got out the vote--because there wasn't time to structure it and name chairmen particularly, who say this is what you have to do. Everybody just was doing everything they could, and I include myself. It was very comfortable, 'cause I didn't have any restrictions. I didn't have time to be afraid.

Chall: How did you find the kids, many of whom were moving from state-to-state or community-to-community, and sort of trying to take over?

Eliaser: They didn't come till the end. They didn't come to California because there were other primaries first. They came here last, thank God! They trickled in before Oregon.

I flew with Gene the day of the Oregon primary. By then I had done all my appearances pretty much in the Valley; was pretty tired. I'd been to Chico, and Oroville, and Sacramento several times. Fresno, Modesto, Merced, Visalia, Porterville, Tulare. Day after day of six stops in one day where you get to dinner at eleven at night. When I was north in Redding I put my foot down. I would not fly to Eureka in a small plane. It was too close, as I recall, to the death of Congressman Clem Miller and I was still upset about that. I was assigned a couple who had a station wagon and they transported me.

[interruption]

Chall: You've been traveling around California and then went up to Oregon for the primary.

Eliaser: So, they decided I should fly with Gene. It was the impression of the people who managed the campaign here--I don't know that it was ever true--that I had a good effect on Senator McCarthy; that he and I were such good friends that we had fun. That we talked about, not necessarily schedule or pressure things, but we were able to relax. The episode I recited about San Diego, for an example, where I was scheduled in for dinner alone, even though there was obviously a lot of staff around, was intentional; not by accident. But the fact that we had been friends for so many years, the people felt that it was correct.

So came the day of the Oregon primary, which was highly questionable in terms of predictions, as to whether Bob Kennedy or Gene McCarthy would win it in terms of the similarities of their campaigning style or campaigns generally, and the liberal nature' of that state.

They moved Gene out of Oregon and they flew him around Northern California. Continental Airlines was able, in those days, to donate an airplane, or rent it, or whatever those arrangements were in those days--for the day. Or it may have been in use for a week. I don't know.

But, in any case, he started from Portland, early in the day, and Jerry Hill and I flew from here up to Chico and met him at seven or eight in the morning. And we campaigned in Butte County. The speech at the airport; then we went to a nut farm--like an almond grower's thing where there were people out in the orchard. And we did a big campaign there because our primary was going to be in a week. So it was a very well-planned thing; I can say that I had nothing to do with it. In other words, the vote was happening in Oregon. Why campaign there? That's crazy. You have a full day to schedule. You had to be back there, obviously, for the night. Use him in Northern California and tie it up. Make a good, last visit out of it.

I hated to leave, because the following night there was going to be a \$50 or \$100 dinner at the Palace Hotel. And prior to the Oregon primary, there were about twelve reservations for that dinner. It was a high-price dinner for that particular campaign; it was not moving well. I felt an obligation to stay here, really, and keep selling tickets in the light of the fact we didn't know what would happen in Oregon. But, the management said I must be on the plane all day.

So, we went from Chico, back to Eureka--which was bad planning because they put us up into a logging area. The New York Times--all the national press was with us. And the New York Times and others were conversant with the environmental problems of the lumber companies ruining--spoiling California's trees. And all of this happened with no preparation for poor Gene. That was the only mistake on that trip.

Eliaser: We flew from there to Sacramento, where we had an airport rally. By then, we were running awfully late. Huge! Thousands of people. And from there, by car--a cavalcade of cars, into Yolo County, to the University of California at Davis in a hot sun, because that was late in the year. People had been waiting for hours. There wasn't a tree, or a spot of lawn, or any place in the world where you could get through. We were all taken to the platform. By then, I'd heard the speech so I stayed at the corner of the platform and wandered around a little, knowing which car I was assigned to--to get a feeling of the crowd.

John Burton, who was then a state assemblyman, was chairman of the McCarthy campaign in California, or cochairman, he did the introductions. And he'd been there trying to hold the crowd, evidently. All the other legislative supporters were introduced and he went through all that nonsense again. They all came there to hear Gene. It was hot, and it was awful, but he did beautifully, because he always responded to big, young crowds. That was his thing--where he was. Not as strong over finance groups and things like that, nor at the end of the day. He had an energy cycle that was predictable, also. Haven't we all.

So, anyway we did Yolo and that was very exciting 'cause there were a minimum of eight thousand people I think there! And that's enough to make anybody feel better who's hot and tired. Our clothes were sticking to us! It was just terrible! Then, we were so late and we had to rush back.

##

Eliaser: We were on our way back to Portland. We landed. I can't remember what hour it was before dinner, but we were planning a very late dinner. I'm sure there were no reports as to what happened in the vote up there.

We all checked into McCarthy's favorite hotel, which was some small hotel. Not one I'd ever heard of before. We were all to stay overnight there because the vote would be coming in very, very late. That was indeed not the case. They knew by about nine or nine-thirty that Eugene McCarthy had won Oregon overwhelmingly.

My children lived there as I just told you, but they were very busy at the big hotel there--the name escapes me. Mary was the assistant to Dave Broder; been there for four or five days. She answered his phone and helped him type and had a good bout with mother! [laughter] They were for Bob Kennedy anyway. The children were involved with Bob in that my son-in-law's uncle--only uncle--was Edwin Guthman who was on the Kennedy staff for years. He was most recently the national news editor of the Los Angeles Times, and has just gone to Philadelphia to become the editor-in-chief of the Philadelphia Enquirer. He's just moved from California.

Eliaser: So the children were over helping David, but they did find me. By then, the McCarthy party had won. We all went to television--from one station to the other to claim our victories, and then the McCarthys were going off to dinner, I think at Canlis, which was above the Hilton Hotel in Portland. Mrs. McCarthy was with the Senator, which she wasn't always. Nevertheless, Mary McGrory, and Shana Alexander, and the rest of them went along. There were two people that McCarthy moved into the campaign very late before this date. They were Tom McCoy and Tom Finney of Washington, D.C. Both former CIA operatives--retired. Finney, a senior law partner in Clark Clifford's law firm, and a well-known political person; McCoy at that time less so. They were a team.

McCarthy, as he could see himself winning possibly, decided to pull his act together and put on two top executives to help him make decisions, which was a very, very wise thing to do. It kept a lot of painful things from happening in terms of anti-Humphrey national media. They were very sane, solid citizens. Finney was an executive director of Continental Airlines which explains that--how we had that plane.

Anyway, Tom McCoy said to me when we finished all this television stuff, "Come on. Let's not go with that mob for dinner. I will take you for dinner alone." And we went someplace else for dinner. We went early. We went by ourselves. I just couldn't face this mob scene after a day like that. And we had a long, good talk about where the campaign should go within the next week. It was workman-like and more intelligent.

When I got back to the McCarthy party my children were waiting for me in that dining room to talk to me, and I greeted them. It was just too many people, and too much press, and too many cameras--and it was nonsense. Gene moved over and he said, "Come on, Ann. Join us." And I turned to Norvell Reese, who was the national scheduler at that time. He's from Philadelphia and the top administrator to the present governor, as I understand it. But he was then one of the leaders of A.D.A. [Americans for Democratic Action] in the East. He's an attorney, too, I think. I haven't seen him in so many years. He came on board as national scheduler and had run that thing with an iron hand. The only reason he was with the candidate--because it's a house rule not to bother with the glamour, but to stay home and do your work--is he couldn't get to talk with McCarthy ever, or to consult with him, or Finney or McCoy. And he figured if he got on that plane, at some point they were in a trap. And it worked.

So I turned to Norvell Reese who was headquartered by then in California at the San Francisco Hilton Hotel. I said, "I can't see our staying here for the rest of the night with all this glory. I have to sell tickets to that dinner tomorrow night. You must have

Eliaser: better things to do. Let's check out of that hotel. Get somebody on staff up here to find out if they could get us on a plane." So they wait-listed us on a flight that was leaving Oregon around two in the morning--one or two in the morning. So we did everything we had to do in terms of the amenities, but we didn't stay overnight.

If I'd stayed, I'd have gotten on that plane again, with campaign stops in Orinda. They were going to land in Oakland, I think, and then helicopter to various East Bay things and I was supposed to be there. It was a question of priority. You know, we call it camp-following, in politics, to have to be next to the celebrity. It's never been my thing. There's something else that needs to be done.

So Norvell Reese and I flew home. We got in the line to pick up our tickets. I guess at United or one of those. And it was tragic 'cause there were a whole bunch of kids--little kids in the line ahead of us. Bobby Kennedy troops who were trying to get tickets home to New York, on credit. It was terrible! First of all, I thought, we'll never get on the plane! This is ridiculous. Because each one of these youngsters took so long. The campaign was out of money, and they were just trying to get home. And in their eyes it was all over, at least for them. Or get on to California to do the next number, but with no money, and with nobody to take care of them.

We were wait-listed, but got on that flight. I was quite used to taking a taxi, since I didn't drive; I cabled Norvell Reese, at four o'clock in the morning, to the San Francisco Hilton, went home and slept for two hours, got dressed, went to campaign headquarters and tried to sell that dining room out, which after a victory in Oregon wasn't too hard to do.

Dinner was a great success. I was booked onto the platform to introduce the Senator, who again wasn't there. He had been scheduled, quite correctly, running statewide, for a lot of live media, and they only brought him into the dinner, which was also covered, after they'd been on every news program and everything else they could go to. And the audience! We were losing people who had paid a lot of money. But he did finally come in. I introduced Mrs. McCarthy first. I had met her in Oregon briefly. I had not ever met her before that night in Oregon. We did converse, I sat with her at dinner. At the end of the dinner I kissed them goodnight. They were going to Los Angeles, or they were going to tour then and concentrate on the heavy population for the next five days. Then it was all over--which it indeed was.

I moved to L.A. I would say two days before the primary election. I voted absentee and was moved into the hotel with them to cover whatever eventualities would occur in terms of the general election. Little did we know what it was with which we would be dealing.

Chall: So--

Eliaser: We lost!

Chall: Yes.

Elaiser: Before the Kennedy assassination. So we lost to Bob Kennedy by a percentage point, but we carried Northern California so far as I know. I haven't seen those statistics in a lot of years. But I think if you look at the counties, we carried places like Chico, Butte county, where we did work so well. I was there about three times in that campaign. In those short period of weeks. Well, I think a general check will show that we did win in Northern California. We raised enormous amounts of money up here.

They were so disorganized down south. It was a crazy thing. I went south; I forget the date--way back. When I came on board, Joe Holsinger, who was the Northern California McCarthy chairman, felt that the south--the southern campaign--had something to be desired and was not being well run. The chairman was Martin Stone, a very fine citizen and industrialist. But he was traveling, and making money a lot, and wasn't spending the time Mr. Holsinger was with the staff. He had a surrogate, a young man he was paying, who was about twenty-six years old, named Peter somebody, who was again very bright; but pulling Los Angeles together--greatest geniuses can't do that.

And they were not organized. They were not taking the fullest advantage of their media potential and a lot of other things. Which is why I was sent to San Diego that time, as a matter of fact, 'cause it didn't occur to them that McCarthy was coming into that portion of the state, and that they would need to plan advance media coverage, advance planning in general, or anything like that. Much was done up here. That used to be historic, incidentally, in California Democratic politics. San Diego preferred to be part of Northern California and work with us.

Chall: Well, it was just an extraordinary campaign altogether.

Eliaser: I wanted to work a precinct in Los Angeles. I said, "I don't want to hang around this hotel, drinking, greeting dignitaries coming in from the East all day. Please give me a couple precincts. There's never been an election day in my career in which I have not done that." And they said, "You don't know what you're doing. We haven't got the car to drive you. You stay here and help run this operation." And there was something to be said for growing up.

Robert Kennedy is Assassinated

Chall: I suppose that the night of the assassination is one that's unforgettable.

Eliaser: I was with the Senator. What happened was--the vote was so unclear. Even at midnight or thereabouts, it was not positive that McCarthy had lost, but it began to look that way. He was really not ready to concede, but again, they had every ballroom in our hotel filled with well-wishers--which was the Beverly Hilton. The Kennedys were up at the Ambassador, as you know.

So Gene finally decided. They had a big, two-bedroom suite where I was. I'd had dinner in my room and tried to be quiet; I couldn't rest. But I was up with the McCarthy family and his closest advisors, and very late Gene decided, even if not making a total concession speech, it was fair to his supporters in three ballrooms, to go downstairs. The national television, even at that hour, was still waiting.

For some reason that I did not then understand, Mrs. McCarthy would not go downstairs. The children were there, the three children, and they were going with their dad. So Gene turned to me and said, "Ann. Will you go with me?" It never occurred to me to think about any of this. I said, "Sure. I'd love to." So we went downstairs with a cordon of guards, all volunteers in the campaign, and advance men, and so forth, and went down to the ballroom.

All the kleig lights, the media--everything. Climbed up on the stage with the family. All of us were introduced on national television. And mother saw me in New York. Gene gave his speech, but he had to go on to the other ballrooms, and it was impossible, even with the crowd kind of opening up in front of us on the stage; he'd have to jump off the stage to do it! Gene said, "I'll do it. No reason for you to go on to the others." He said, "Ann. Will you watch out for the kids? I'll go with the fellows out there and do the same thing over again." And I said, "Fine." But didn't pay much attention, they were all young adults. Michael was the youngest, and I would say he was fifteen, sixteen, seventeen then. I don't remember. Fifteen, maybe. I'm not sure.

Anyway, we all got lost in this terrible crowd. I thought, it's time for me to stop being a celebrity. I think McCarthy was on the ninth floor. My friends were all down on the fifth in a big suite that had been equipped with several television sets. The workers, the people who'd run that hotel for three days, the campaign coordinators--that's where I belong. If I'm really a leader, I belong with the workers, not in front of television all night long.

Eliaser: So, I said goodbye to one of the kids and headed for that suite and I had my first drink of the evening. It was terribly late. Sat down in front of television and saw the assassination. It was shocking. Nobody--I assure you there was not a caustic or sarcastic remark in the house. Nobody who was for Eugene McCarthy was pleased by it. Everybody was just sickened. It was like the end had come, even for the McCarthy workers.

A policeman shortly thereafter, knocked on the door and he said, "Mrs. Alanson?" And I said, "Yes." He said, "The Senator would like you upstairs in his suite immediately." So, he had trouble getting me on an elevator and he left me there. I got up--the hall was cordoned off by police and they weren't going to let me in. I explained that the Senator had sent for me and they could check my name to see that I was cleared. And they got me in, and it turns out Michael McCarthy wasn't there. At that moment in time, there was no clue as to whether this was a plot to get rid of all of them or just Bob Kennedy. It was assumed, as you know, that they would go for Gene also. Your imagination goes wild during these terrible times. All the children were accounted for but Michael, who evidently had gone to a friend's room and eventually turned up. But if you can believe the horror and responsibility I felt at that time.

As soon as I could be excused and he turned up--I was. I went to my room. Some old friends from here joined me. Nobody could sleep. We watched television, I guess, for as long as it was on.

I was with Gene long enough to know that he was sick, that he turned the color of green--his complexion is always pale anyway. He was so injured by that. In fact, it is my opinion, he never recovered from that night. And that's what it's all about.

He has always hated Kennedys--always. He's always wanted to beat them. But, there is beating a person in the political field and there's what happened that night. He was sickened. And his plot failed. It was no longer honorable to fight the battle. People who don't know him well don't understand that. I think he gave up that night. His whole plan was felled by this ugly, sick, terrible thing.

So I didn't sleep. I got rid of my guests. And with all my clothes on, tried to rest on the top of the bed; left the TV on--hearing and seeing, but not really. At about six-thirty in the morning or seven, I went up to the main floor where Mr. Finney and Mr. McCoy were firmly in charge, along with the police. I guess President Johnson had put in the FBI by then. And I said, "Lookit. There's nothing more I can do here. Could I go home. I planned to stay and work the day, but it's pointless; I'm pretty sick and tired as you all are. May I be excused and get on the standby plane?" And they said, "Sure."

Eliaser: There was someone there they asked me to take, a young woman who'd reacted very violently. She was a volunteer who was from San Francisco and who was very emotionally concerned. Would I get her on? And I said, "Sure." They said, "Go with blessings." And I excused myself.

It took the FBI the entire day to get that family out, because they were all booked on separate planes, moving on the theory that it might still be a plot to get everybody. Michael was moved out alone; each of the girls and their mother, as I believe. And, of course, Senator McCarthy went to the hospital first and went home last.

Chall: Incredible. So I guess it took a while for anything to happen.

According to The Making of the President, 1968, by Theodore White--I don't know whether you've ever read it.

Eliaser: Yes. But I don't remember it. I've read them all.

Chall: He feels that the reason that Kennedy came in at all was simply because, one, he was quite opposed to the war and had been for quite some time, and two, that he felt that McCarthy just couldn't be a good president. He felt he would be impossible as a president. If it had been anybody else in the anti-war movement who had taken this stand, as McCarthy had, Kennedy wouldn't have come in, very likely.

Eliaser: Oh, that's true. That was valid from where he was coming. I'm not agreeing when I say that's true. I'm sure that Kennedy felt that way, and it was a valid position, and it certainly would exonerate his late coming in, so to speak.

Chall: Yes.

Eliaser: And his supporters felt that, too. There were a lot of people who didn't like Eugene McCarthy. He was erudite. Some felt arrogant; I never have. Certainly, remote. I had the advantage, if you will, of this close relationship for so many years that I didn't see him in the same light as many others. And I always saw him perform and function as he was expected to do--extraordinarily well. So, I came from a different place.

The Television Debate

Chall: And when he would go off with Robert Lowell and Mary McGrory and recite poetry? [laughter]

Eliaser: Part of my job was to be with Robert Lowell. As a matter of fact I was with the Senator and Mr. Lowell the night of the debate here in San Francisco, when we went over to the station together, and we lost Robert Lowell and we lost me. Did I tell you about that?

Well, they brought them in. That was exactly five days, I guess, before the California primary. They had a suite where Mary McGrory, and Shana, and all of them, sat singing Irish poems and things to keep Gene calm. The Kennedys were in Mr. Swig's suite as his guest.

The McCarthys paid. They always resented it. It became historic, because it happened each time. Every time a Kennedy was there, he was a guest of Mr. Swig, but Senator McCarthy paid.

And so I was escorted--invited up to the suite where Shana and Mr. Lowell were and saw what was happening--all this nervousness, and going over the issues, and the possible questions. I thought, I'll get out of here. I can't stand that. I had already been assigned to drive--to be in the car with Senator McCarthy and Lowell. Nobody else, except the driver.

So, I was perfectly happy to be at the car and not be involved in all of this. He was being made-up and being remade-up, as I'm sure Kennedy was. So, I waited in the car for him. And Dick Tuck--the famous Dick Tuck--was on the Kennedy campaign by then. I noted that our car was in that driveway at the Fairmont Hotel against the flower boxes or whatever it is, and there was a car in front of us when I got in to wait for them. As the Senator got in the car, a car came up in back of our car--there's room for two rows of traffic. And a car came up to the side of our car, so our car couldn't move. In other words, it was designed to make him nervous. There was a contest as to which one of us would get to the station first, both vying to be last. Nobody wanted to get there first and be nervous and wait. This was ostensibly the highlight of the year. What a laugh!

So, there we were, Robert Lowell, Gene McCarthy, a driver, and me in this car with a car behind us, a wall next to us, a car in front, and on the other side. We couldn't move. And Dick Tuck, standing on those stairs laughing his head off. Just having hysterics!

Eliaser: Gene got so angry and went like this [showing a fist] sort of! Everyone showed mortification; they moved the car in front of us, but not till the deed was done. And we drove around, and Mike, the driver whose name escapes me, said, "Senator, do you wanna look at the bay? Shall we just drive a little bit? We're early--and look at the bay?" Gene said, "No. Let's go to the station."

Well, evidently the hierarchy--without my knowledge--of the McCarthy campaign, felt it was very important to show McCarthy strength to the national media in front of that station--have a huge McCarthy rally, as opposed to nobody being there for Kennedy when the parties arrived, because there would be cameras filming the McCarthy arrival. Well, it was a terrible misjudgment! The eyes of the nation were on what was going on inside and it just complicated matters to have yelling, chanting crowds out front. They couldn't get our car to the entrance because of this. The police, not knowing who was in the car, stopped us. So we had to get out and walk a block and a half or so. And I lost Gene, and we lost Bob Lowell entirely.

Gene--I was right behind Gene, insisting to the police, I'm with him! They got Gene into the door and slammed it! And there I was out in front with people howling, and placards going all over the place--knocking on the door! You know, no one recognized me to let me in. Fortunately, Charlie Stanyan, who's a well-known TV photographer here, saw me and indicated that they should open the door for me, but by then I had been hit on my left breast--I'll never forget it--by a placard. I was just in agony! Tears were coming down my eyes. I wasn't consciously crying, but my face was wet and I was in real pain. They got the door open and I couldn't move beyond the media people. So Charlie Stanyan handed someone his equipment and leaned over and picked me up under the arms and lifted me up over all these people and got me inside! By then, I decided to worry about Bob Lowell! But [laughter] there were thousands of people out there! Nothing you could do.

So they took me up in the studio and asked if I needed any attention. And I said no, I thought I'd be all right in a moment. And George Murphy handed me a glass of something which turned out to be gin. I decided against it for the time being. Or maybe I didn't!

Chall: Straight gin! [laughter]

Eliaser: I was shaking! I was absolutely in shock but hopefully did not exhibit my distress. Crowds are not the best bet ever and this was out of control, even though it was a demonstration that was meant to be helpful. And as you may remember, when Ethel and Bob Kennedy arrived shortly thereafter, she was hit on the head and injured, and she may have been hospitalized here. Or at least she had to be gotten

Elaiser: to a doctor. No one at that time knew she was pregnant. Until after his death, nobody knew she was pregnant, but she was and this crowd got to her also. It was just utterly ridiculous; a misjudgment on the part of the McCarthy headquarters here. There was no point for a demonstration on what was a national television broadcast. It was a debacle--a dumb, stupid show in which nobody, including the questioners, said anything.

But, it was meant to be the highlight of the primary campaign. It was the only so-called debate. It was just awful. And so, that was that.

Then we went back to the Fairmont. Then they did a replay of it. Gene had to watch it and he was relatively satisfied. By then it was ten or about eleven o'clock, I don't know the hour. By then there were some precautions and the candidates didn't leave the hotel. I had a private room with Canlis restaurant downstairs in the Fairmont. And I was always instructed who would be in the dinner. In California, I was usually in charge.

My husband and I took the Senator, and Shana Alexander--I don't think Mary McGrory was along--Bob Lowell, a psychiatrist who was in the traveling party most of the time, a law professor out of Washington, who was black, and whoever was acting as travel secretary. I think we had about eleven for dinner when it should have been about four. And that was that night.

As I recall, even a preliminary of that--the state convention in Sacramento. I recall that I was in charge, more-or-less. There was a huge--the whole Northern California staff went to Sacramento to run his visit there. He was going to fly in, in the morning.

Campaign Supporters and Traveling Companions

Chall: He did make a speech.

Eliaser: A rally, a reception was scheduled at the airport, as well as meetings with Willie Brown's caucus, and everybody else's caucus, and private meetings were scheduled there.

Chall: Now, let's see. Just to clarify a point here. That Democratic State Central Committee meeting was August tenth or eleventh, after the primary.

Eliaser: Oh, right. So, that did come afterwards.

Chall: Yes. And you were talking about something within a few days of the primary.

Eliaser: Yes. That's right. Yes. That was much later, but he did come out for it [state party convention] and I'm reminded of it humorously, because Alan Cranston called me, or his staff did, at two in the morning, to please ask me if I couldn't hold the McCarthy plane in the air, because Alan's speech to the legislature and to the assembled bodies was at the hour of Gene's arrival and he was quite sure--correctly--that the media would all be out at the airport waiting for Gene McCarthy and he'd get no coverage! [laughter] I said, "Sure. I'll just tell the pilot to keep circling Sacramento! That you'd wake me up at two in the morning for that!" [laughter]

Chall: You weren't paying attention to Cranston's primary. Do you recall whether Cranston had any opposition?

Eliaser: Oh. He usually does. I don't remember.

Chall: I'll have to check it. I can't find it. [Anthony Beilenson]

Eliaser: I didn't have any worry that he wouldn't be fine. It was someone from Southern California, and I forget.

Chall: What would other people who were with McCarthy, like Allard Lowenstein, who presumably started it all; Blair Clark, and Richard Goodwin doing? Were they along?

Eliaser: I don't remember Allard on that trip. I got to know Allard along the way that year. Richard Goodwin was very definitely along, as was Jeremy Lerner, because we went through all of these meetings in the state capitol. Again I was hostess to the Senator's private dinner group, which was Shana Alexander, who had a British poet-boyfriend in tow, I think. I don't think Bob Lowell was along. So were the psychiatrist, the black lawyer, the travel secretary.

I ordered the dinner in a very elegant private dining room in Sacramento. A sidelight here: at all these dinners, and every visit to California after I came on board, I was kind of the hostess wherever we were geographically, and took care of Gene. Maybe it was because I picked up the tab. I don't know.

Jerry Brown always showed up. Jerry was on that campaign and one of the leaders. He was the speaker's bureau--one man speaker's bureau for Gene McCarthy, and a close personal friend. Nobody ever told me he was invited to dinner or he would have been most welcome, if anybody told me! Except he'd just find out and show up! And they'd talk about religious philosophies. You see, Jerry is a Jesuit, and Gene is a Dominican. And baseball! And a lot of other things

Eliaser: that were kind of--well, out there--a little bit remote for the surroundings. And Jerry would come in often as we were eating, and just pull up a chair and sit behind us. And I'd always ask him for dinner. I'm not sure he was at this Sacramento one, but I'm reminded because it was more elaborate. Usually the dinners were so late that I let anybody have what they wanted, but Sacramento was not equipped to do that, so I had ordered the dinner so everything would be handled correctly. And wine, and so forth.

Gene was nervous and upset that night and not too interested. At this point, as the entree arrived, Richard Goodwin and Jeremy Larnar walked in uninvited. I'd met Goodwin before, but I really didn't know him, and I thought, what a big nerve! The travel secretary didn't want them. They knew I was picking up the tab, which must have been, in those days, twenty-five dollars a head, which was a lot of money. Maybe a lot more. And they just pulled up chairs and told the maitre d'to bring them dinner. Gene left shortly thereafter to rest; he had had it. And so after they had had their dinner, they ordered cognac for everybody--at my party! Goodwin! Richard Goodwin! And cigars to be passed!

Well, I had a late date with a friend of mine I wanted to see and talk with about other political matters, and there I was stuck with this group of celebrities, about whom I could not have cared less, while they ran up my bill!

Chall: You didn't pay for this personally?

Eliaser: Yes!

Chall: These were your personal--?

Eliaser: Yes.

Chall: Oh, what a contribution. My word!

Eliaser: In Sacramento, it was personal. In San Francisco, my husband was always very generous and did it.

Chall: Well, that's quite a bit of generosity.

Richard Goodwin moved between, as far as I can tell--

Eliaser: From Kennedy to McCarthy to Kennedy. And all at the same time. But, Goodwin did a tremendous amount of programming. He wrote some great speeches--substantive things for Gene McCarthy that were wonderful, and were matters which, and thoughts that Gene truly espoused, and which the public did not see early. Like the new cities. That kind. When people would tell me out here, when I would argue for Gene, that he was a one-issue candidate, I would come up with all of Richard Goodwin's programs for him which were absolutely brilliant and ahead of their time.

Chall: Yes. I see. And what about Pat--what's his name, Lucey? Patrick Lucey.

Eliaser: Now Governor Lucey. I didn't meet him at that time. He's governor of Wisconsin.

Chall: Why were Shana Alexander and Mary McGrory along?

Eliaser: Well, Shana was with Life magazine, may God rest its soul. And her single assignment was the presidency, but I think it was only McCarthy! I don't know. Maybe she went down and saw Kennedy one to every six McCarthy articles. She had a full-time marvelous photographer with her. Fabulous British photographer covering that campaign! And Mary was the Washington Post's full-time correspondent on the trail. They both had big crushes on him also.

Chall: I see. And sometime during the course of this campaign, he left his wife. That's McCarthy.

Eliaser: That came later, very much later, and I didn't understand it as I think I alluded to briefly. There were problems, and I'm always the last to hear the beating of the drums. They're not things that I think about.

So when Mrs. McCarthy called me after the primary and asked if I would move to Washington and run her desk, and her staff of twelve, and keep her schedule, because she was having surgery, I believed her and went.

Chall: Well, that's what the newspapers claim, too, that she was having gall bladder surgery.

Eliaser: She never had it.

Chall: Never? That was not the reason?

Eliaser: Well, she may have felt it was, but she reconsidered. I'm not impugning her honesty for one minute, but there were tremendous problems other than that.

National Coordinator: Women for McCarthy##

Chall: All right, then you went on as the national coordinator of women for McCarthy.

Eliaser: Right.

Chall: At the request of Mrs. McCarthy.

Eliaser: Mrs. McCarthy's office in Washington.

Chall: Did you move to Washington?

Eliaser: Yes. Well, I couldn't move to Washington. I had a husband and a daughter here, but I commuted, and I'd stay there a week or two at a time. Very definitely spent most of my time there. Came home for the state convention. Came West--I'm trying to get the chronology--for the Western States Democratic Conference in Phoenix that year. Gene was to make an appearance, so I came back for that. Then I went to the first meeting of the delegation in Los Angeles--of the Kennedy delegation--because I was still national committeewoman. In other words, although Carmen [Warschaw] had been elected, the national committee members were seated only at the termination of the convention, so I still was in charge of the credentials and getting the work done.

Chall: For how long did you work as national coordinator? Was it only until the national convention?

Eliaser: Yes. That role was concluded at the Chicago convention.

Chall: What was being done in the women's sphere that you were expected to coordinate? Was there a strong interest in McCarthy's candidacy among women?

Eliaser: There was a strong interest in women's participation in Senator McCarthy's campaign, generated by the activities of Mrs. McCarthy and her own campaign staff. They functioned as a separate arm of the campaign and to a large extent were networked through Abigail McCarthy's strong Catholic connections. At the convention these women sponsored separate events honoring those persons who had been supportive of their efforts. Much of this was done in private residences of wealthy friends of the McCarthy's in Chicago.

The Democratic National Convention

Preparing the California Delegation

Chall: How did you work with the delegates to whom you were not really allied?

Eliaser: I had to see that our delegation was properly serviced and that they had their credentials, their hotels. I was still obligated, in my mind, to help the delegation, even though it was not the delegation

San Francisco Examiner
7/25/68

'McCarthy Will Be The Victor'

California's Democratic National Committeewoman, Mrs. Ann Alanson, is convinced that "Gene McCarthy will get the nomination, although not on the first ballot."

An announced backer of Sen. Eugene J. McCarthy since last April, Mrs. Alanson returned to The City briefly this week from McCarthy headquarters in Washington to sell her spacious Russian Hill home.

She and her husband are moving into an apartment here, she said.

The vivacious Democratic leader said that McCarthy has no definite personal choice for a running mate and "will leave that to the convention to decide."

PEACE ISSUE

Sen. McCarthy's campaign will continue to be based on "seeking solutions to peace in this world and the problems of the core cities," she said.

She does not expect to be renamed national committeewoman at the Demo's state convention at Sacramento Aug. 12. Mrs. Alanson will be named to one of the McCarthy key positions in time for the national convention.

"Right now Senator McCarthy is working on his program dealing with America's core cities. The solution as he sees it," she said, "is to encourage industry to evacuate from the cities to suburban industrial parks."

THE OTHERS

As to the other candidates of both parties, Mrs. Alanson says:

"Hubert H. Humphrey doesn't have his heart in the campaign. He knows he can't win.

"Rockefeller is weak. His pronouncements are good, but the public is just not behind him. He doesn't have a chance.

"Nixon is stronger than most people think he is. He probably has the GOP tied up — but if he doesn't, watch out for Reagan."

Despite Senator McCarthy's easy manner, and thoughtful demeanor, "he is a smarter politician than the rest of us — a brilliant intellectual who has understood the sense of the people when no one else did," Mrs. Alanson said.

Eliaser: with which I had been allied. Whereas Eugene Wyman refused to have anything to do with them. And because of my enormous cooperation, and flying home from the East and trying to be helpful in any way, the McCarthy people had asked me to get on the Rules Committee. I didn't know since this was a Kennedy delegation that it would be possible. But, I asked Jesse Unruh if he would put me on the Rules Committee, and he was perfectly happy to. There was never a problem because from the very beginning I saw my role as serving California and not myself or any particular candidate. The Kennedy delegation was elected. It was this whole, tragic, terrible thing. But, we were there to help each other, and not to fight.

Chall: Do you recall the election of the national committeeman and committeewoman?

Eliaser: At Sacramento? Very clearly.

Chall: Well, what happened?

Eliaser: Stephen Reinhardt and Carmen were elected. I don't know if Steve had opposition; I forget.

Chall: Did Carmen Warschaw?

Eliaser: No. Not that I remember. I was present for it while everybody made their gorgeous, praising, nominating speeches. No, this is just like free-associating on a couch, as you ask me that. I remember clearly being offended that nobody, considering the way I conducted myself--the dignity with which I was behaving and the supportive manner in which I was operating that whole scene--no one got up and thanked me for my years of service or how I had cooperated concerning the political and pressured, dangerous public circumstances.

When someone is leaving office, you manage to say two kind words. And I remember clearly that they were so concerned with what they were about and themselves, that they didn't go through any of the amenities. Actually, very typical of that group. I didn't verbalize it, but I felt it. Absolutely. Here I was killing myself, while Wyman would have nothing to do with any of them. I had already seen it as my job to serve them well and be sure that California's voice was heard at that convention.

Chall: And Wyman? You mean he was a Lynch delegate?

Eliaser: And he was for Hubert Humphrey right down. He was that one vote at the convention, all the way on every issue where we were x hundred against one. Wyman's vote was instructed.

[interruption]

Chall: Stephen Reinhardt and Carmen Warschaw were both from Southern California, which considering all the controversy in the years before over that issue--

Eliaser: That bothered me.

Chall: All these years about why two could not be from the same area--

Eliaser: There wasn't a beep out of anybody unless I might have said something about it. I don't know. Speaking from the north, I don't recall. That would have been the only thing I said.

Steve Reinhardt was a very good friend of mine who was very supportive always of my efforts, and so whatever I might have felt about being a representative of the north, I couldn't have verbalized too heavily.

In fact, I remember speaking, now that you remind me, to Stephen about it very quietly. I said, "Naturally, I'm for anything that you want to do. And you certainly have served the Democratic party long and well and are deserving, but I must tell you that I object to this because of the north being bumped.

Chall: I guess what it shows in effect is that the whole party was pretty much dismembered at this date.

Eliaser: It didn't matter.

Chall: It was too difficult.

Eliaser: All these things happened and there was no thought. There wasn't a discussion of any significance. As I say, absence of amenities.

But, I go back to that meeting in Los Angeles, the first meeting of that delegation to get it organized. The grief, and the sorrow, and the negativeness of it was just awful. I'd flown all the way from Phoenix to do what I felt was expected of me and I was very glad I went. But, it was just as unpleasant as could be. People were flying in from all over, and there was no effort to get anybody over there to the hotel.

We assigned committees. Jesse made his appointments. Once Unruh got his staff going, it operated marvelously, of course. He's historically the best-organized person that this legislature has ever had in this day. He's a remarkable organizer and his staff reflected that or vice-versa. And once he got a handle on it, everything worked awfully well. The convention itself ran magnificently thanks to Jesse's leadership, the expertise of his staff, and the full cooperation of myself. They couldn't have done it without me. And the effort that I made.

Eliaser: Gene Wyman just turned over all the credentials to me; would have nothing to do with it. So I co-opted two or three of the McCarthy California staff into my hotel suite to help me with what was the job of the national committee--the guest passes, which had to be allocated, and things like that which are just a mess, and traditionally the source of great problems.

I told Jesse that I would handle them on a first come, first serve basis--each day. People would have to line up for them. They would not be given away by favoritism or anything else that is ordinarily done. I had learned that from years of working with Roger Kent and his staff: that you make people go to the effort of standing in front of your door at x hour and you give it to them. And people cannot take their whole families two days in a row if there are people who haven't been yet. Wives, children, California people who had no recognition.

There were enough guest tickets to go around. The alternates got the bad deal because they were stuck up in the balcony and their tickets did not permit them to come downstairs because of the security measures. And so we decided among ourselves that if we didn't want to be present for any reason, to be sure an alternate got to use our seat. Or trade with them--meet out in the hallway and give them tickets, which were all electronic by then, so they would be taken care of. Very complicated; bad.

The Rules Committee and the Minority Report

Chall: That was a lot of work. You did have a vote in the convention. What else did you do?

Eliaser: Oh, I went into Chicago many days ahead. The Rules Committee met early.

Chall: I guess one of the most important problems for the Rules Committee was this matter of the unit rule, was it not?

Eliaser: Democracy, small "d."

Chall: And how do you recall that? I guess again it was always a question of what would the south do?

Eliaser: Well, the lieutenant governor of Illinois was the chairman. This was all pre-selected and plotted by Johnson. Johnson controlled that convention--entire.

Eliaser: He was a man with a Jewish name, who escapes me entirely, and I don't mind telling you he was a dope. Absolute instrument of the administration. It was a huge committee. Two from each state. Bill Norris was my counterpart. Thank heavens that a brilliant lawyer was present!

Throughout the two or three days of hearing--whatever it was--Congressman Wright of Texas came running in and whispered in the chairman's ear telling him what to do. I had known Mr. Wright at that time, but I was terribly offended. The Texas delegate who was on the Rules Committee--I don't think he was national committeeman--kept trying to corral everybody, buy them drinks, buy them dinner and lunch, and so forth.

Finally, and correctly, the chairman announced that the committee was unmanageable. Everybody would get to vote on each issue, but to form the policy that the committee would come up with had to be done in an executive committee. So, he would reduce the committee by half. He would take one from each state. We were, please, not to argue; he had done this arbitrarily, he said. I was chosen from California, and I thought, this is gross.

In retrospect I realize it had to be intentional. I was a woman with high intention. The McCarthy people brought us in days ahead and instructed us. We had real teaching sessions to let us know what they wanted in these committees. So those peace delegates that came in early did get a lot of help, but it couldn't compare--I couldn't ever, even with instruction, compare to a brilliant lawyer like Bill Norris of Los Angeles. In retrospect, I think it must have been intentional maybe to get some dopes like me on there. I don't know.

In any case, Norris is nudging me and sending me notes saying could I ask this lovely gentleman to substitute him? So after the announcement was made, I decided I would bide my time. I sensed that something was the matter here. I never know what it is, but I know that I'm a more experienced politician than Bill Norris will ever be, and I decided to hold my silence for a minute and a half. And hands went up all over the room! The member of the committee from New York, who was a black woman, asked if she couldn't be replaced by her male counterpart. And the chairman got very heavy and unkind with her and he said he'd agree to this change. Then two or three other people asked it and he just was murderous and refused them across the board. Norris is still nudging me, and I don't do a thing. The meeting is concluded, we take a break for lunch, and I said, "Bill. Let me do this my way."

Eliaser: There had been a lieutenant governors' conference in San Francisco--the Sir Francis Drake Hotel--shortly before then. I just thought, I'm just going to play this by ear. So, as the meeting concluded I went up and introduced myself, and I said, "Sir. I'm so happy to meet you. You know I didn't have the opportunity--were you in San Francisco?" "Yes. You from Frisco, honey?" I said, "Yes." "Oh, then you must know--." Well, Glenn Anderson, I think, was in charge of it, and Vernon Kaufman was the big doer. "Then you know Vernon Kaufman took us out on the Bay." So we had all this social conversation. I made it clear that I was Jewish. I dropped every Jewish name I could that he might know out here, and did a big social number on him.

Then I said, "You know, I really have to get to Elizabeth Arden's this afternoon. I don't know what a nice Jewish girl like me will do if I don't get a massage and get to the hairdresser. Couldn't you have Mr. Norris take my place? I know you don't want to do it, and that's why I'm taking you off in the corner, but I really have an appointment at Elizabeth Arden's." And he bought. And Bill Norris was seated to everybody's great shock! He wrote all that stuff that is now the law of the Democratic National Committee! And I got on a bus and went to Elizabeth Arden, really.

Chall: [laughter] Really!

Eliaser: I had no plans and didn't need to, but I thought, well, I'm not going to hang around. The Rules Committee was the only committee that was not in a very large room. We were in the ceiling room--attic room of that hotel, the Conrad Hilton or whatever it is, and there was no air conditioning--in Chicago, on that day. I was delighted! I was!

Chall: Pretty tricky!

Eliaser: And there was very little room to sit around and listen. There was no room for audience participation. Down in the Credentials Committee, which is what I did other than go to Arden's, there was lots of room for audience viewing; watch Joe Rowe and others do their number in credentials. It was fascinating. I was really delighted to be there.

I knew California and everybody else was a lot better off having Bill Norris up in my committee. And when it was time to meet as a committee of the whole, I went in and voted. Bill took the time to show me everything and to explain it to me. It was a great learning experience for me. I had no wish for power that I couldn't execute correctly.

Chall: Very interesting. The other great problem of the convention aside from the nomination was the Vietnam resolution.

Eliaser: Vietnam resolution, yes. We lost on that one, but I tended to feel very possessive about those rules matters in that Norris wrote most of it and that we had played a little game very successfully. I'm sure the administration was appalled that we had played this, what appears to be a very superficial and a silly story. It isn't silly, because what I did by saying I was going to the hairdresser and playing this game, was put one of the smartest, liberal lawyers in this country right there! And he didn't let anything get by him, and he really literally wrote most of that stuff.

So then we had to lobby for it, you see, which is one of the reasons--other than being kind--that he included me. We moved all over the floor to get support for that minority report and we won.

See, the chair was instructed not to let Bill bring that through the committee. And he didn't. So we formed a minority report which I did with him. We got plenty of support from the urban areas and we took it to the floor of the convention. It took lots of work in the hotels and on the floor lobbying for that. So, we lost on Vietnam. We got this terrible, watered-down, nothing statement. But we got rules changes through for the next convention that has influenced the Democratic party. It was a major victory for us which was not understood or recognized at that time.

Chall: I see. And even though the walk-out was threatened by the southern delegates, they didn't walk out.

Eliaser: No. No. We really worked very hard and he and I were a great team.

Chall: Yes. That must have been difficult. Sometimes the chairman won't recognize a minority report, if he can get away with it.

Eliaser: Maybe that was the bait they had to give us to keep the thing quiet on the war. It's hard to look back. Hindsight's a marvelous thing.

Chall: Yes. It might have been.

Eliaser: They figured they could stop it at the top later. Certainly in Texas, I'm sure there are few places where they still are not following the rules.

Chall: So you really worked the big delegations, then. As many as you could where you thought this would be important.

Eliaser: Yes. That's right. We got the help of everybody. It was easy to do. They were losing everything else. We said, "You don't understand." The problem was nobody understood what power was going to mean in years

Eliaser: to come. And their eyes were trained toward the battle of the war and didn't see that they could win a big one from Lyndon Johnson on this one, if they just paid attention, and were there to vote.

Voting for the Candidates

Chall: What about the rest of the convention as far as the California delegation was concerned? Unruh wasn't giving much with his delegation; that is, it was still held to a unit vote.

Eliaser: It was so harmonious there was never a problem. It was a remarkable experience considering how we started.

Chall: But what was it intended that this very large California delegation was going to do? Stay with McCarthy? Or go to McGovern?

Eliaser: The McGovern thing was the surprise there. That broke it up. California would have been with McCarthy, almost entirely, except for Gene Wyman's vote which was reflected on every issue. There was one vote on every issue that went with the administration.

Chall: On the first ballot--again these are the figures from Theodore White.

Eliaser: His book was not entirely accurate, incidentally.

Chall: Well, I imagine there may always be inaccuracies, and I haven't checked this out any place else. But, there were fourteen votes for Humphrey.

Eliaser: Oh, that was in our caucus, I guess. We caucused to do that. So that when we went to the floor, it was just announced. We caucused every day. Jesse met with us at least once a day, sometimes twice. And he did this, as he explains, so that when we went to the floor we wouldn't be the traditional California delegation that was all over the place--the Pat Brown scene where there were no disciplines, and we looked like fools. So he said, "Anything you have to air, that's what we're here for. It's a democratic process." We had a room full-time in that hotel--a big meeting room. We were covered occasionally by the national press. He said, "Let's fight it out here."

Committee chairmen, like ourselves--or committee members from the major committees, like credentials, and rules, and so forth, were asked to report to the entire delegation. Bill and I went up and did our number so that our delegation was instructed how to vote before it went to the floor, and we had come to some meeting of the minds. So for the only time in history that I'd ever been on a

Eliaser: California delegation, up to the time of the candidate selection, we were harmonious except for Gene Wyman's vote. Jesse ran that thing marvelously. You never felt he was hitting you over the head, although maybe that's what he was doing. He really gave very loving, generous leadership. And it was very harmonious. His staff was marvelous. They brought us together. It was a good feeling in California.

McGovern made inroads. A lot of the Kennedy--particularly the Hollywood people who didn't understand, and came on to the delegation late, and aren't involved in politics really the rest of the time so that they understand what it means--could not vote for Eugene McCarthy. So, those McGovern votes were Andy Williams, and Shirley MacLaine. All of those people were the McGovern votes. Pierre Salinger--he was there. I don't even remember all of it any more, but I know that Pierre worked for McGovern that last week and so he was able to reach into our delegation. But the body of those McGovern votes were the Hollywood bunch.

And then Humphrey. There was a big broughaha. Joe Alioto was going to nominate Humphrey, but in order to take the microphone on the stage you had to be a delegate, which he was not. He was a Lynch delegate.

So, there was a big debate within the caucus as to whether we should allow Joe Alioto this privilege. That was about the hardest fight among ourselves we had. Because by keeping Alioto out, it meant they'd have to go elsewhere. Joe wouldn't have this glory, and Humphrey would have to get somebody else. So, Bill Coblentz graciously withdrew, and Jesse named Alioto to that vacancy, for the purpose of the nomination, at Chicago, in the caucus. I think [Adolph] Schuman offered to do it; Coblentz offered to do it. You can see the structure at play here, but I think it was Cobbie who left. I'm almost positive. Maybe it was Schuman. Anyway, there was a lot of fooling around.

Chall: Alioto was there then as an alternate.

Elaiser: I doubt it. He was just there.

Chall: He was just there?

Eliaser: He could have been an alternate, but it doesn't matter. In other words, he could have been an alternate forever. He couldn't have gotten on that stage if he hadn't been a delegate.

Chall: And you think that these California numbers that I have here, were caucus votes and not first ballot votes?

Eliaser: Yes.

Chall: How many ballots did it go?

Eliaser: I don't think--it was acclamation! There weren't any ballots. Were there?

Chall: Well, he claims that there was a first ballot and then--.

Eliaser: Nationally or in California?

Chall: This would have been the California vote on first ballot.

Eliaser: Yes. We caucused and voted in the caucus. We balloted within the caucus, not on the floor. So, when we got out to the floor there was a question.

Chall: Then this is reported to the floor. So, that's the figures White has, then.

Eliaser: Or it could have just been reported, period. Because we were covered--there were cameras on us throughout, as I recall.

Chall: Well, it was Humphrey fourteen; McCarthy ninety-one; McGovern fifty-one, and Phillips--whoever he was--seventeen. Who was Phillips?

Eliaser: Had to be a black candidate.

Chall: I see. Then after that, apparently after the first balloting, or somewhere along the line, everyone changed votes?

Eliaser: It just happened. Yes.

Chall: But it's interesting what you said about the California delegation. You had no feeling that you were being ridden.

Eliaser: I was never a friend of Jesse Unruh's particularly. But I developed a new respect for him there. He handled himself with grace, which is hard to say about Jesse Unruh, but he did indeed.

Chall: Of course the unit rule was voted out so that there couldn't have been a unit rule here. And there was no attempt to get a greater unity in this delegation since nobody cared anymore?

Eliaser: No. That's right. We all came home and worked for Alan Cranston.

Chall: That was it!

Now, what about all these people, except for the fourteen? They didn't plan to work for Humphrey, is that it, when they left?

Eliaser: Oh, I don't know what anybody felt except myself. I felt total exhaustion. But it had been a long one for me. I think maybe the longest of all the people on that delegation. You'll know, if you go back over these tapes and hear what I went through for those months: the geography of the commute, the traveling throughout California, the pushing and pulling, and the need, at least for my own self-esteem, to act with great dignity. Even having the responsibility for that boy in Los Angeles. Everything that happened. I was just dead! And seeing the Rules Committee through in Chicago, as well as being responsible for credentials. Gene Wyman wouldn't handle them! He kept the guest tickets he needed, and gave me everything else to do as I wished.

The only night that I was sold out was when they were doing the Robert Kennedy memorial film at the convention. The youngsters who wanted these tickets had their sleeping bags, and they all slept in the hall outside my hotel room all night. I had to ask special protection from the hotel not to throw them out. And some generous soul sent up coffee and sweet rolls for all of them while they waited in line. It meant so much to these kids.

I had to have money to run that operation, pretty much. And Marin County, which is always the best fund-raising county in Northern California, kept sending me McCarthy money so that I could do a lot of what I did there, though I paid almost everything myself.

Chall: Oh, my!

Eliaser: My McCarthy expense account was covered by Becky Watkin in Marin, who sent me \$3000 while I was still operating back in Chicago, to do the right thing by everybody. And Jesse gave me staff. We really were together, except for Gene Wyman.

Action Outside the Hotels

Chall: Were you aware, or how much was anybody aware, of what was going on outside?

Eliaser: Oh, yes! It was terrible. I wouldn't go near the Conrad Hilton to see Gene. I was called to come over and be with him, but we were over at, whatever the name of that hotel was that California had, and I did my Rules Committee there, and I did what was expected of me legally, and I worked hard and well. I wasn't going to do any socializing. It protected me.

Eliaser: I had a car and driver. In the old days, when there were two members of the national committee from each state, the host city provided a car and driver for every member. It was traditional for years and years. There were college students who wanted the honor of driving someone around, and the automobile agencies gave the car.

Well, with the police cordoned around all of these hotels--and ours was not the only one--they wouldn't allow this youngster to stop for me and wait. He was horrified about the whole thing! And police brutalizing him! So that once I learned that I made a deal about where I would meet him, precisely on every day. It might not be in front of my hotel, 'cause if it was a block away it would be safer. And the last day or two, I just didn't use him when I didn't have to, because it was too hard for him. They treated him badly. They pushed you and shoved you. It was nothing compared to the Conrad Hilton, but it was awful. It was the same every place you went.

The convention--you were treated terribly. I had a beautiful, new Mark Cross briefcase I'd treated myself to, because I carried the California credentials every night. Gene wouldn't sit with us. So I was really the troop mother. And I carried all this stuff in every night. The names of delegates were in the list. For example, Shirley MacLaine got lost every night, and would lose her badge. They'd lock her up in a cell-like room, and they'd send a guard to me. The Chicago cops hadn't heard of Shirley MacLaine. I'd write a note to the teacher. "This is Shirley MacLaine. She is a California delegate. Please seat her." Almost every night! And she'd walk in there with Roosevelt Grier; she wouldn't have her tag; he had his. It was a crazy.

They'd go through my briefcase every night and stamp it with an ink stamp or a sticker. This seventy-five dollar case was a lot of money for me then; it's probably worth three times that now. Also, I had my period during that time, and it was stuffed with Kotex, and these men would just go through all this. And it was just awful.

Then you would go to the ladies room. Right? Which I would have to do--I was nearing middle age--with some frequency, because of a real hemorrhaging problem. And you couldn't--they had removed the stoppers on the doors of the cubicals in the ladies room, so that you'd be sitting there cleansing yourself or going to the toilet, and someone would push the door open on you because there was no way of closing the door. Now, I asked Tom Lynch about it when I came home, and he said that's what the police did in the old days, in men's rooms, because of homosexuality in men's public toilets. But to do that to women at a convention! They taped over the door stops. So, the whole thing was just purely horrible from beginning to end.

Eliaser: The California delegation, I think the first day or the day before everything started, was taken on a bus tour someplace. Jesse had arranged it. I had nothing to do with it, and couldn't care less about touring Chicago. I was working on rules anyway. But, there were rocks thrown through the windows of that bus, and one woman had to have some stitches taken. Just on a street corner! The whole thing was a horror from beginning to end.

Chall: These were the kids who got out of hand, primarily?

Now, did you get a chance to see McCarthy or talk to him during this time at all?

Eliaser: Not at Chicago at all, as I recall. Didn't see him. Didn't say hello or goodbye. I remember Abigail [McCarthy] had a lot of activities which I was supposed to be doing. I didn't have the mobility to get around Chicago. Also I have the ability to develop priorities. Did I want to go to ladies functions at that time? Did I want to change the structure of the Democratic party? You couldn't do all. And the men in Gene's operation had said get on that Rules Committee.

Chall: Regarding the Vietnam issue, have you any recollection of that Democratic State Central Committee meeting, particularly the time that Bob Coate ruled the convention adjourned before they could vote on a Vietnam plank?

Eliaser: I do remember that it happened, but I can't give you any of the details. It'll probably come back to me tonight and I'll tell you when I talk to you next.

We were angry!

Chall: Well, the idea was that there wasn't a quorum and nobody was about to go out to bring it in.

Eliaser: Well, I guess so. But even if we'd had that, there would have been another way to stop that. I'm sure those were the orders from on high.

Chall: Too divisive--Vietnam.

Did you have any feeling about Humphrey at this stage? Were you saddened by what happened here?

Eliaser: Yes. But I understood perfectly what had happened to him. I did all along. He was in a trap. If he didn't support the president's position on Southeast Asia, he wouldn't have been the nominee.

Eliaser: Without the president's support and the backing of the whole organization, Bob Strauss and everybody else, he would have been no place. So he made his compromise in order to survive politically, and that wasn't wrong from where he sat.

It was a strain on our friendship. There's a letter in my files I may have shown you. I don't know where that letter is, but it's in the office. Vice-president Humphrey saw me on television during that period I was living in Washington. He dictated a three-page letter which showed personal hurt. Lionel read it to me over the phone. He [Humphrey] indicated enormous personal offense at my appearance and comments on TV regarding the McCarthy candidacy. He alluded to our long-time very close friendship which he felt took precedence over the substantive aspects of the great debate which was raging in this country at that time. He felt that my personal loyalty to him should have transcended the issues.

By the way, about that time Shorenstein told me that he had closed off the bank loan. I had forgotten about it.

The Alan Cranston Senate Campaign##

[Interview 8: March 2, 1977]

Chall: I think the last time we were together, we were talking about the 1968 convention and whatever may have followed. So, when you returned after the convention, as far as I know, you were working for Alan Cranston.

Eliaser: Yes, that's correct.

I think I was San Francisco County cochairman for the Humphrey for President campaign at that time. Tom Saunders was running it, and asked that I do it. They never had any particular role for us except to give our name, and I guess money if we had it, which I didn't. I was moving from a house to an apartment at that time, which was a huge chore. Alan was calling me each day to see when I would come to work for him. I said, "If you get me down from a ladder once more, we'll no longer be friends!" I said, "I'll get there just as quickly as I can get these boxes unpacked." And I indeed did.

They had the headquarters down on the middle of Market Street where they were beginning the excavations for BART, so that the headquarters were flea-ridden. I remember the ladies' room was something else. I worked there--when I finally got there--I would say just for a couple of weeks. I found they really didn't have

Eliaser: room. It was an established headquarters, and they didn't have room for me and the crew of volunteers that usually come with me whatever I do. Also, it was uncomfortable because of the flea bites, and no parking, and transportation generally. So since my apartment by then was in relatively good shape and was spacious, we moved the work we did for him back to the apartment. We headquartered there. My dining room table again became a campaign headquarters.

Chall: Did you say that Tom Saunders was the chairman?

Eliaser: No. Tom did the Humphrey. The presidential.

Chall: Who was doing Cranston's? Do you remember?

Eliaser: A young man named Sorenson, whose first name escapes me. He's Ted Sorenson's brother. He had one of the roles. Mrs. Fowle, Alan's sister, was very much in charge. In the last several years, at least, she has had roles in his campaign. A gal named Wendy Turnbull was organizing professional groups--Architects for Cranston, Physicians for Cranston. Dianne Feinstein and my cousin Dick [Richard] Goldman were San Francisco cochairmen of the campaign, and working very hard in the headquarters.

Chall: I am curious to know who might have conceived the idea of "GOP ocrats for Cranston?"

Eliaser: Oh, the former husband of the lady sitting next to you, Sanford Weiner. He hired Lee Sherry Smith to expedite that, and that's when she lost her credentials, as I recall--with the Republican party, finally. And forever.

He had George Murphy and then Janet Broom--now Mrs. George Murphy, doing all the press work out of that headquarters. But I think they generally exploited that idea, the across-the-board Republican-Democratic support. I thought that was an awful word. The paid advertisements were the worst I'd ever read. Just because I didn't like how it started, I guess. I felt Lee was swell, and what she said was fabulous. And taking Lee, as separated from that word, was really fine.

And Alan indeed had good, enormous Republican support. I saw a lot of money. They didn't want to be exploited, they didn't want recognition. That was the mistake. They just couldn't stand Max Rafferty, but they wanted to keep their Republican credentials. And in those days, I believe it was still legal, if you wanted to give money to somebody, but you didn't want your fingerprints on it, you could give it to someone like me or to Lee, run it through our checking account and we'd give the check. There was nothing illegal about that. And there really isn't any reason not to. There

Eliaser: are an awful lot of things about the reform laws now, that we don't have to talk about today, that impose upon people's privacy, when privacy is the only fact.

For example, the late Marco Hellman, who was finance chairman of the Republican party, contributed to Alan Cranston, and very often it was through the party's Democrats. He was a man of great conscience and dedication. Never broke a law in his life. And all he wanted was privacy. And what reform has done is deprive us of that.

Chall: I see. Very interesting idea.

Eliaser: I think he gave Lee money which she gave. I know he gave it to my friend Bill Honig--Louis Honig. I think I discussed Madeleine Russell's role in the primary campaign with Gene McCarthy that year. I wouldn't want to put a lot of it on this tape, but she was then the director of the State Department West Coast Center here, which still remains a very much sought after job, which is at the pleasure of the president. She had been a Kennedy appointee and continued under Johnson. And she loved that job. It became her life--attending to the needs of the foreign dignitaries that come through this community. It's a wonderful department with tenured people and a political appointee at the top.

She was very much opposed to the war in Vietnam--was not quiet about it--but she liked her job. And she was a political realist. She wasn't sure that an anti-war candidate could be elected, so she gave money to Eugene McCarthy through my personal checking account, and through many others. She was an enormous contributor, but wanted the privacy of it because she was indeed working for the president at the State Department. There is no woman who is finer in this community. Nobody would argue that. Today, that activity would be against the law.

And going to the fall of that year, with the Cranston-Rafferty race, there were many Republicans who couldn't live with Max Rafferty, but didn't want it all over the papers. So the PR aspects of it were unattractive for them. And the money giving had to be done very privately, and they were trying it.

Chall: So the few like Lee Sherry Smith were willing, then?

Eliaser: To be out front. Many of the others saw a good purpose to the two-party system. I most certainly did. They had been in it most of their adult lives, and they wanted to preserve it.

Chall: Yes. There were only a few names attached to the press releases and then I think ads. Of course, I've only seen Lee Smith's, and that's because she's given them to me.

Eliaser: No. But there was lots and lots of money.

V POLITICAL ACTIVITY, STATE AND LOCAL, 1968-1976

Chall: Now we get into this period between '68 and '71, during which apparently you were planning for and then unplanned a divorce shortly before your husband's death. I know that you've said to me before that politics is devastating to marriage. I wonder to what extent politics was a factor in your problem.

Eliaser: Well, politics certainly doesn't lend itself to togetherness of a family, because the hours of your work are so unreliable. As you go up the ladder of politics--travel, meetings out-of-town, weekends--that kind of thing becomes more of an obligation. I've always believed in the issues in legislation which required my presence in the capitol during the legislative session. I didn't ever do a lot of Washington lobbying, though I'd go East for national committee meetings and to see my mother.

I would say Sacramento took up more of my life ever than Washington. And effectively because there were days when the Democratic party had a voice in the legislation in Sacramento--the official party.

Chall: Oh, it did?

Eliaser: Yes. Because in the early days, way before this period we're speaking of, we raised and gave money to legislative races. And I would say that any legislator you put in office is going to have his door open, at least to listen to you on an issue. He doesn't have to vote with you because you gave him money, but he certainly has to hear you out. But the party became less and less effectual money-wise and organizationally, and didn't deliver to the elected legislators. So that the party in my lifetime in politics turned around, where the legislators, under Unruh's leadership, began to dictate the shape of the party, as they saw it, in their image. But when I started in my early career, the party got the legislators there.

Chall: So it has swung around.

Eliaser: Unfortunately.

Chall: Will campaign finance laws have any effect on this if the candidates can't raise great sums of money from outside?

Eliaser: Yes. They'll still answer to the money gatherer. The man who raises the money, with the clout, who probably is the same person who was the big giver with the clout in the first place, will still be listened to.

The new campaign finance laws federally mean that the party again has a very strong voice, because the party is the receptacle of funds in a general election for the presidency. From federal races, actually. And so the party organization again becomes important. Their funding capability is terribly important.

But at least last year, which is the first year and therefore not a way to make a fair judgment, the party had to turn to the old-time givers to bail them out; so nothing changed.

Chall: In the state?

Eliaser: I'm talking about the state party. So far as my own history is concerned and my marriage, my husband's illness was over a period of eighteen years, actually. So his last illness was only a part of the picture. My life had taken me away from my family for a very long time, and I just think, as we got to middle-age, we realized more what we had sacrificed really for. These goals which we pretty much held in common.

Chall: He was very active in business, and apparently at some time had joined your family's firm. I never did find out when.

Eliaser: Oh, I forget the chronology of it. But the firm ran itself pretty much. It was third generation at least. And he had a lot of time when he helped me a great deal; was supportive of my work. He also engaged in a lot of sports activity. He was a good golfer; bought a piece of the professional basketball team; we had a racing stable in conjunction with others. He did things like that for which I've never had overwhelming enthusiasm.

The Democratic State Central Committee Meeting, 1971

Campaigning for State Party Chairman, Northern Division

Chall: Now, in January 1971, you ran for Northern California party chairman or, as it is also labeled, vice-chairman of the party. Could you tell me about that?

Eliaser: The chair--north. Right.

Chall: First of all, what prompted your decision to take this on?

Eliaser: Looking back, it's hard to say. I had held all the women's seats. I'd been women's chairman, north, twice by then; I'd been national committeewoman. I had remained active; I'd done a lot of organizational work. My household was still the center of Democratic activity around here and I felt that for all that I was contributing, monetarily and bodily, that I should have a seat in the party. And that seat was open, as I recall.

Chall: Yes. It was.

The Importance of Money

Eliaser: There was discussion that some of the legislators wanted to put one of their money people in. One of these people we've just been talking about, who give the money and call the shots. And the name that was presented to me in conversation was Adolph Schuman. In fact, Adolph was traveling in the Orient. It seems to me I was told that George Moscone and others called him out in Japan, or wherever he was, and asked him if he would run, and he said no. But he said he'd be happy to help one of his coworkers in the money group. And they settled on a gentleman who is a very good friend of mine today, Jack Brooks of San Leandro. He'd always been active and enormously generous, but had never participated in the party structure any more than Schuman had. Honorary titles, I would say. He had never been to a meeting of the state committee.

A group of us who had been activists were very offended by the attempt of the legislature, really, to impose somebody who really was an instrument of their will upon the body politic. It just suggested a spread of Unruh-ism, which said: we're the legislators. We're not only dominating the bills in legislation and elections in our district, we are dominating the Democratic party. It is going to dance to our tune. This leaves very little room for volunteers, which I guess is what I believe in.

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA
COMMITTEE *for* ANN ALANSON

Alan Becker
Morris Bernstein
George Bramson
Norma Clevenger
Joseph Close
James Cookley
Bert Coffey
Dr. Arthur Coleman
Emory Curtis
Donald Dempsher
Hon. Dianne Feinstein
Hon. John Foran
Elizabeth Gatov
William Grader
Mary Green
Clarence Heller
Joe Holsinger
Joseph Houghteling
Howard & Nancy Jewel
Roger Kent
Hon. Robert Leggett
Hon. Thomas Lynch
Jeanne Miller
Hon. Leo McCarthy
Gerald Marcus
Rodney Minott
Hon. Ronald Palosi
Nancy Swadesh
Paul & Norma Turner
Rebecca Watkins
Joseph Williams
(Committee in Formation)

100

Dear Fellow Democrats

The next two years will be extremely critical ones for the Democratic Party of California.

It is during this time that our new party leadership - to be elected at the State Central Committee Meeting on January 24 - must build the kind of organization and grass-roots strength that will lead us from our encouraging victories of November 1970 to a Democratic President in 1972 and a Democratic Governor in 1974.

We feel very strongly that Ann Alanson represents the type of leadership California will need during these two crucial years and endorse her without qualification for Northern California Democratic Chairman.

As you know, Ann has long been involved at every level of Democratic campaigns. She has walked precincts, led fund-raising drives for many candidates, was National Women's Chairman for Eugene McCarthy in 1968. She was, in fact, the first and only member of the Democratic National Committee in 1968 to support either Eugene McCarthy or Robert Kennedy.

It is significant that much of Ann's work within the party has been with young people. She can provide the kind of enlightened leadership that the party will need if it is to indeed attract to its program and its candidates the bright, young people of today who are so easily disillusioned by politics "as usual".

We urge you to take your own position of leadership at the Sacramento convention very seriously and to join us in working to elect Ann Alanson Northern California Chairman.

Dianne Feinstein *Roger Kent* *Joe Holsinger* *Nancy Swadesh*
Dianne Feinstein Roger Kent Joe Holsinger Nancy Swadesh

DIANNE FEINSTEIN

January 19, 1971

Dear Delegate,

The successful election of Ann Alanson as Northern California Chairman of the Democratic State Central Committee will represent a major step forward for the Democratic Party.

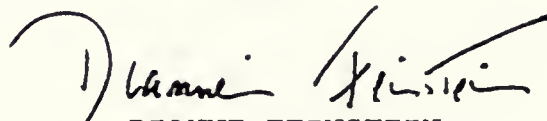
Many long-time campaign volunteers have increasingly felt that the Party fails to recognize service and tends to cater to those who provide its major funds. Women, young people and minorities feel omitted from policy determinations. Consequently, they see no way of really becoming influential within the Party and unfortunately join the large numbers of people, who rather than continue in Party service, become "drop outs."

For years, Ann has given the Democratic Party untold hours both in organizational activities and in hard work for individual Democratic Party candidates ranging from local supervisorial candidates to state and national office seekers. She has held the highest Party office a woman can hold -- that of Democratic National Committee Woman. Because of her articulate and incisive analysis of issues, because of her warmth and compassion, and because of her knowledge of the Party and her ability to be effective on a funding basis, many of us feel that it is most important that Ann's candidacy be successful.

Ann has earned this office, she deserves it and I hope that the Party will respond. I hope that you will cast your vote for Ann Alanson. Her role as Northern California Chairman will not only bring an unprecedented and dynamic image to the policy makers of our Party, but will demonstrate to all in California that the Democratic Party has opened its doors to new leadership and involvement.

I look forward to seeing you in Sacramento.

Sincerely yours,


DIANNE FEINSTEIN

San Francisco Chronicle
12/3/70

Ann Alanson Backed for Demo Post

By Earl C. Behrens
Political Editor

An imposing list of Democratic leaders was announced yesterday as supporting Ann Alanson of San Francisco for Northern California division chairman of the Democratic State Central Committee.

It included Attorney General Thomas C. Lynch and Dianne Feinstein, president of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors.

Mrs. Alanson, a former Democratic national committeewoman for California, officially announced her candidacy for the post at the January 23-24 Sacramento State Democratic convention.

In addition to Lynch and Mrs. Feinstein, supporters include the present Northern California division chairman, G. W. "Joe" Holsinger of Burlingame; Roger Kent of Kentfield, a former Democratic State chairman; former U. S. Treasurer Elizabeth Gatov; Supervisors John F. Foran; Leo T. McCarthy, and Ronald Pelosi; Congressman Robert Leggett of Vallejo, and San Francisco Fire Commissioner Morris Bernstein.

The contest over the Northern California division chairmanship presages the struggle expected in 1974 over the selection of a Democratic candidate for governor.

Forces behind the anticipated candidacy of State Senator George Moscone of San Francisco are already lining up behind John Brooks of San Leandro for the chairmanship. Brooks is now treasurer for the Northern California division of the central committee.

Moscone has endorsed Brooks as has former Governor Edmund G. Brown. The Moscone organization will soon reveal the names of leading Democrats joining the Senator in support of Brooks.

Neither Mrs. Alanson nor a

third candidate, Mel West of West Sacramento, have indicated any opposition to Moscone. Their supporters caution that it may be "too dangerous to party unity" to bring about a division over probable 1974 candidates into the coming convention.

San Francisco Chronicle
12/17/70

State Leaders

SF Chron
12-17-70

Demo Feud Over Loan

By George Murphy

California's Democratic leaders, strangely united in last month's elections, returned to normalcy yesterday with a spate of intra-party name calling.

What sparked the squabble was a \$4000 loan made the Democratic State Central Committee by East Bay developer Jack Brooks, a candidate for Northern California chairman of the committee.

ELECTION

The current Northern California chairman, Joe Holsinger, of Burlingame, issued a statement saying "this deal smacks of selling the Democratic Party to the highest bidder . . . I question the propriety and motivations of a \$4000 loan by a candidate a month prior to the election (which will be held January 24)."

Holsinger is backing Ann

Alanson, of San Francisco, a former Democratic National Committeewoman, for the northern chairmanship.

State chairman Roger Boas, informed of Holsinger's statement, said it was "based on a complete lack of knowledge, and he (Holsinger) did not even bother to check."

APPROVAL

Boas said he went to Brooks in Brooks' current capacity as State Treasurer for the party, and asked Brooks if he would approve the committee's seeking a \$4000 loan to pay for the January convention costs, "and Mr. Brooks said he would advance the money himself."

Boas emphasized that "I am not taking part in Mr. Brooks' campaign in any way."

Brooks said that Boas, "as I understood it, with the ap-

proval of the top State Committee officers and candidates for party office asked me as party treasurer to negotiate a loan of \$4000 to take care of salaries and other expenses involved in putting on the January 23-24 convention.

"To save money for the State Committee, I agreed to lend this sum personally, interest free."

Holsinger said the loan came to light "a few days ago when Mrs. R. E. Fowle (sister of U. S. Senator Alan Cranston) contacted Mrs. Alanson and told her about the loan and asked her to guarantee repayment to Brooks if Mrs. Alanson defeats Brooks."

"Boas then called Mrs. Alanson with the same request.

"He also suggested that Mrs. Alanson lend money to the committee, Mrs. Alanson refused."

- Eliaser: If you're volunteering and giving your whole life to something, somewhere in there you ought to have a voice. And what happened to us as volunteers is our voice became less and less--dim, more dim, dimmer, whatever--by virtue of all of these things that were happening. And so what I did, I think, was in protest of this swing away from volunteer politics to domination by the legislature. It wasn't Jack Brooks or Adolph Schuman. It was just a general trend that we were seeing at that time.
- Chall: Well, you apparently committed yourself to run, prior--at least as far as I can tell from the news articles--to Jack Brooks coming out saying he would run. This may not be so.
- Eliaser: Well, chronologically it may be so, but it was clear that Moscone and others were going to put up somebody from that money group. It didn't matter which one it was going to be. It was clear it was happening. And at that point I did commit myself.
- Chall: What if you had been a man and a volunteer able to raise funds, as you had been doing, and also having been active in the party? Would that have made any difference do you think? Did it have to be Jack Brooks?
- Eliaser: With them they would still have opposed me. Because I have always been supportive of those people in terms of effort and money, but I have maintained always that the volunteer body had to have a separate place. That was a balance in politics.
- Chall: And these people really didn't want that, or did they want Brooks because he was able to give and raise large sums of money?
- Eliaser: I've never given and raised money the way Jack Brooks has. I wouldn't pretend to.
- Chall: All the newspaper accounts said was that Brooks' election meant that Moscone scored a victory, that it would help Moscone's position if he runs for governor in 1974, which indeed he did.
- Eliaser: They felt that I would stand in George's way. George's staff at that time felt I was a very great threat to their further political ambitions, and there was nothing personal in that. They felt I was familiar with his personal life and his record--parts of his personal record which are unattractive publicly, that they felt I would voice publicly--which of course I never would. That's not how one operates politically. But they knew I was aware of many, many details of his personal life, that I'd known him since he was very young, and they believed that I would not protect his privacy in a race that I disapproved. I have no interest in people's personal life or habits; that does not influence my politics a bit. But they were scared to death of me.

Chall: Is that right? Do you think that you didn't have much of a chance despite the fact that--

Eliaser: No. I never had a chance. I think I was hopeful.

Chall: You put out marvelous literature. I mean, everybody it seemed, who was anybody, was supporting you. At the back of your open letter to the Democratic party, which is an interesting statement about the place of the party and the leader, you have a long list of supporters.

Eliaser: Oh, they met at my house twice a week for weeks helping on it.

Chall: Is that right?

Eliaser: Oh, we worked very hard. There was nothing superficial about that effort.

Chall: So the effort--you did try, but you didn't think you could make it.

Eliaser: Oh, I campaigned all over the state. I traveled, spoke. Jack Brooks went in his private jet everywhere. Hired Tom Saunders to run his effort for him, which was difficult for Tom, being the old friend of mine that he was. We would meet in Fresno, let's say, or various places where I'd get there all by myself and they would be there together.

Brooks was a real gentleman, and Fresno is a marvelous example of that, but it happened often. We would address the Fresno caucus asking for support. We'd go back to the airport. On that particular occasion they were flying commercially also, and we had time. So Jack and Tom took me for dinner--drinks and dinner--and we flew home together. Then they drove me home. And here we were competing for this chairmanship, but we were friends. I think we had some pleasure in doing this; we were well coordinated and we didn't say lots of things that were different.

What happens always in these situations, whether you're running for president, or chairman of your local committee, is that your seconds--the people who are involved with you--get very emotional. They are the ones who create problems, who say ugly things and don't perform well. But most often, if principles have taken their careers far enough to want to run for something like this anyway, they're going to behave honorably and well toward one another.

Chall: That's interesting background, because one can't tell from reading the papers.

Eliaser: Not at all. No, Jack and I almost always traveled together to these things. And he was most generous always, and courteous and complimentary. Couldn't have been better.

Chall: What was the big problem with respect to his lending \$4,000 to the Democratic party to help finance this state convention?

Eliaser: I'm not sure I knew that. Maybe I did. But it was bigger than that. In his travels around, particularly to districts I couldn't even get to geographically by commercial airline, that he could go to in his little plane, there were an awful lot of people that year who had appointments to the state central committee--their own vote plus their appointees--who were losers with deficits. Or even winners with more appointees and deficits. Mr. Brooks went around and promised all these people he would assist them personally in picking up their tabs to clear their old bills.

I was never in a position to do anything like that! I lost out. Particularly the ones who were losers in districts where you couldn't win. These are pretty naive people or they wouldn't have run in the first place. Right? So they're going to believe a guy who flies in in his own little jet, or whatever it is, and say, "Look. Here I am, and I'm going to be your chairman with your help. My first obligation is going to be to pull you out of debt, and I will personally give you a check." This kind of thing, I would never say that, 'cause I couldn't give that money.

Chall: So that does definitely show the influence of the money?

Eliaser: Oh! Absolutely. And I think \$4,000 to finance the convention, which probably happened. I'm vague about it.

Chall: Well, I have the press clipping. But that is only the tip of the iceberg?

Eliaser: The very small part of it!

Chall: I see. But there was quite a bit of publicity about that with [Joseph] Holsinger saying it wasn't fair--words to that effect.

Eliaser: Well, it wasn't. But it was only a symptom of a much larger problem.

Chall: Then the press indicates that Holsinger and [Roger] Boas had had difficulties throughout the two-year period.

Eliaser: Tremendous.

Chall: What was that over? Policy?

Eliaser: No.

Chall: Apparently he accused Boas of using the party as a stepping stone for higher office.

Elaiser: Well, probably he did. But I've met very few people in politics who haven't. Women are the rare ones. That probably is changing. Roger doesn't like to work. Still doesn't. I gather he's shopping for an administrator of his present job with the City. Work isn't his big number.

The Democratic party was in dire straights and really needed a chairman who would give, in the old tradition. You see, all of us were at the age where we were terribly spoiled by the efforts of Roger Kent and Bob Coate, who gave their lives to the Democratic party. And Libby Smith Gatov, in her way, who were there every day for part of the day. Roger Boas wanted the title and the ceremonial obligations only.

Losing the Election in a Bitter Struggle

Chall: Was the contest for the northern chairman a real battle?

Eliaser: Yes. And it was very ugly.

Chall: That's not reported either in the press. That isn't reported at all. Only the contest for party chairman between Charles Manatt and George Brown.

Eliaser: Well, that got it finally, but it was a real battle.

Chall: What happened?

Eliaser: For example, and my memory--it'll come to me as we speak. Tom Lynch and Dianne Feinstein, and a third speaker. We had three speakers each. I'm terribly embarrassed. I will come up with the third person. It would be my guess that it would be a black person, and it could be one of any number of friends from the black community where I've spent a good deal of my life, not just in politics. I've forgotten, but I may have decided to use only Attorney General Lynch and now-Mayor Feinstein.

So that because it was well known that Tom Lynch was a personal, social friend of mine, and would probably nominate or second me, they pulled Charles O'Brien, who was his chief administrator, out of the hat to nominate Mr. Brooks.

Chall: So at that stage it was bitter?

Eliaser: Terrible! And not for me. I was well protected by good staff work. The Sanford Weiner offices, you can see by that material, had a lot to do with the staff work. And they all were in Sacramento with me. I was well removed. My suite of rooms was not in any convention hotel. It was in a hotel removed. It was on the outskirts of Sacramento, so that I wouldn't hear any of the drinking, and the all night bar stuff; so that when I was finished with my caucus speaking and professional work, I would rest. One of the staff secretaries was there with me. A driver was there at all times. It was a very professional job--with scheduling and so forth.

I knew what was happening, but I didn't have to deal with it directly. And this was intentional, so that I could devote myself to the substance of what I was saying. I spoke, I think, in seventeen caucuses as well as to the convention at large twice, I believe.

Chall: This is the Northern California?

Eliaser: Yes. And you can't do that, and say what you want, and be good at it, and be different in each one depending on the need, and also be engaged in this back-biting, bitter, stupid, wasteful nonsense!

So Moscone's staff was let loose, I gather, in the bars and the lobbies of the hotel, and they spoke of me in a very ugly way. They spoke of my sexual behavior to such a degree that when I finally heard it, I said there's only one thing that bothers me about that. I sure wish it was true. And it was really horrible. Work in the halls, in the aisles. I had a tremendous amount of grass roots, black support, in that convention, because of my work with their community my whole life, not just in politics.

Ron Dellums, who was not coming to the convention, whose administrative assistant was voting his proxy and who was committed to me along with his entire delegation, was called by Jack Brooks and flown out at Brooks' expense, just for the Sunday of the convention and for the vote.

Chall: Flown out from Washington?

Eliaser: Yes. And his A.A. was pulled off the floor--my vote. And further, when I arrived at the convention that morning, I saw Mr. Dellums with [Mervyn] Dymally, who shouldn't have been voting or even working the northern districts, going in and out of the urban caucus districts, who were already seated, trying to move that black vote around.

Eliaser: I pulled Merv Dymally aside. I'd given Mervyn a lot of help legislatively on bills where he needed support, and we were friends. And I said, "If Dellums has to do this because of his obligation to a constituency, I have to accept it and I'm not going to fight it. But you get out of here." I said, "This is Northern California's side of the floor. Please leave."

Chall: Did he?

Eliaser: Yes.

Chall: Who were your other black supporters? Can you remember any?

Eliaser: John George, who is currently a councilman over on your side of the Bay [Berkeley]. Numbers of San Francisco grass rooters. Mostly the people I had worked with on a day-to-day basis in the party. Not leaders so much as just people who did the work as I did, always.

Chall: So they would have been appointees?

Eliaser: They were all appointees, and that's what made it so tough when Dellums came in.

So my work addressing the caucuses the day and night before was very, very technical and tough.

At this point I must not forget to tell you about my escort for that entire convention--Otho Green. Otho Green was a highly respected black business leader from Oakland and Washington, D.C. He was a long time political contributor and political activist. He once ran for mayor of Oakland but was defeated by the Republican candidate at that time. He was my escort for that entire convention. Instead of sending me out onto the floor of the convention with an aide, a campaign professional, Otho just took over and moved from caucus to caucus with me. I'd almost forgotten that. I shouldn't. You oughtn't to forget people who are that generous.

San Francisco, as you may know, always meets jointly. They're two congressional districts. Up until recently, the caucuses were by congressional district. It's only now that we have state senatorial district caucuses. I think it was still fourth and fifth. It may have been five and six as it is now. The congressional districts meet together to consider problems and to hear the speeches, because our interests are mutual though we've had two districts. I don't think Marin County was in. We didn't have Marin in those days.

Chall: No.

Elaiser: So it was a solid San Francisco caucus, and Moscone was very much present, and that's a huge vote out of Northern California. We hadn't lost a district, and so there were a lot of people.

I walked in, and I was called upon first. Brooks may have been there. Brooks didn't address a lot of caucuses. Brooks is not good on his feet. He doesn't pretend to be able to talk publicly, and I don't think he made the effort that I did. He didn't have to. When I got to the San Francisco caucus they were in the middle of business, and I requested that I be heard out of order, because I had, I believe, seventeen speeches to make. I was on roller skates in that auditorium!

I saw George Moscone there, and I got up and I said I didn't want to take much of their time, but they had all been my good friends for many years and I hoped that they could see clear to support me. But the one thing that I wanted to ask of them in that meeting was first of all to support the intent and all the high purposes of their state senator George Moscone and the work he was doing for them, and to think of me after that. I thanked them very much and started to leave, and George stood up and asked them all to stand and applaud me. And that was it.

I gave rather routine presentations most of the places till I got to a combined East Bay caucus, which after all Mr. Brooks owned and operated, and he was there. There wasn't a question that I would have any votes there except some of the black votes which were mine pretty solidly. I think Bob [Robert] Crown and maybe Nick [Nicholas] Petris were mutually or jointly chairing it--I don't recall. It could have been John Miller; I don't know if he was around then. It was up in a balcony. I remember it was awful, because it was physically uncomfortable and dangerous. It was up a very steep stairs in a balcony of the auditorium.

##

Elaiser: I was asking again to be recognized out of order by virtue of being the only speaker in the whole auditorium that had to hit every Northern California caucus. The people really objected. The women particularly sissed and booed. They didn't want to allow me to speak. It was most humiliating. Jack Brooks, for one, looked like he wanted to die. Bob Crown was so angry by the behavior of his delegates that he stood up and he said, "We are going to hear Mrs. Alanson out of order as a directive of the chair." And they still made ugly noises but they listened to me. I thought to myself, what am I doing here? I don't have a vote except for a few of my black friends. By then I had heard Dellums was on his way up, so I doubted that even that would hold.

Eliaser: So I said, "I'm not here to take your time. You've made it clear to me that you have serious business you want to attend to and there's not room for me on your agenda. We have many years ahead of us in which we're going to be working together, and so I'm here to ask that we remain friends to achieve our mutual goal. I see my good friend Jack Brooks sitting here. I know you plan on voting for him. You couldn't have a finer candidate. Thank you very much."

Chall: I'm really surprised, though, at the response of the caucus appointees.

Eliaser: Chewing gum--

Chall: Because it's undemocratic.

Eliaser: It is, and things have changed. Bob Crown, who was one of Brooks main supporters, was so humiliated by my experience and so pleased with the way I dealt with it, that I became his appointee. I had never been appointed by him at that point, 'cause you always appoint, if you can, within your own district. The following convention he called and insisted that I be his appointee, and helped me always, until his death.

What came out of that was a tremendous growing experience for me, in learning how to modify one's own behavior and not respond to anger or offense. Lady is an old-fashioned word, but that's what I was. I took all the criticism that I heard second hand, and all the overt treatment, like that which I just mentioned, and swallowed it, and proceeded as though I didn't know it was happening. What it did was give me a whole new set of credentials that still carry me in the Democratic party.

Chall: There are many men who don't make it and are running for these positions.

Eliaser: They're not treated that way.

Chall: They're not treated that way? Why is that? You mean they are actually not treated in this humiliating fashion?

Eliaser: No one would pop bubble gum at them, and say, "Ssss. Don't let her talk," or "Let him talk." Or, "Who needs that bitch?" Really, I'm not exaggerating. You just wouldn't do it. They'd say no, or do we have to, or grumble a little bit.

Chall: Does this mean that, at that time and probably today still, a woman is just not considered to be available as the chairman of the party? The very fact that you were up there asking for it, and they treated you this way, does that mean that they're telling you, as a woman, this is not the place for you?

Eliaser: Has to be. There wasn't anybody in any of those caucuses, male or female, who had given half the time to the party I had; who had demonstrated over a period of many years by then, the ability to work, and the generosity of giving. Didn't matter. I was at that headquarters every day. Had been for many, many years. I'd spent more time there than any chairman, and loved it. I wasn't working for anything, except very high goals. Didn't matter.

Chall: Do you think things have changed at all?

Eliaser: A little.

I'm reminded of Hubert Humphrey's physician--how many years ago?--about that time, a little bit later even, who said women could never be president or hold high office because of their menstrual period!

Chall: [laughter] I remember that. That's right.

Can you recall what the vote was like?

Eliaser: It wasn't overwhelming, but it was nearly so. I expected it. I would have been interested in figuring it out. As you know, each side has counters, those who oversee the counting. A friend of ours, Bill Porter, was among those for Northern California, just governing the count. Because of the way ballots are dropped into a box anonymously, though you vote by district, they could pretty well see which districts stayed with you and which didn't. Bill was just intelligent-guessing--telling me where my heavy losses were. I held onto the whole Central Valley, or a good part of it, where I'd done a lot of work over the years, which will show up when you go back over these tapes.

Chall: Tell me again how these ballots are handled.

Eliaser: You write it down. You're given a list, including I think, if I recall and I'm unclear, the Manatt race, our race, all on a mimeographed ballot, and they have different colors depending on how many ballots you go to. You're called upon by congressional district to go up to a box in the left aisle or the right aisle, one by one, and drop your ballot in that box.

Chall: What does the left aisle and the right aisle mean?

Eliaser: Nothing, although maybe it was north, south, one, three, five. I don't remember anymore. But you go up to two boxes, if you have a two-aisle or a two-section auditorium. It's just done to keep your traffic flow. But it's done by congressional districts so not

- Eliaser: everybody clogs the aisle at once. So you know that the first district is going to be on the bottom of the box. Right? And the second or the third on top of that. So when they start to unpile those ballots and count, you know where they've come from.
- Chall: Oh! I see!
- Eliaser: Even though it just says yes, no, Alanson, Brooks, Manatt, Brown.
- Chall: So that's how Bill Porter knew?
- Eliaser: Gussed. It was conjecture. You always know anyway. But there were some surprises. I lost the far north. The Eureka down to Marin area. He said that shows that Brooks--you can't fly up there on a commercial airline with any comfort and he was up there for days on his own plane. All of that showed.
- Chall: Now as I recall, he didn't stay in that office for his full term.
- Eliaser: Four months.
- Chall: It was as short a time as that? Why?
- Eliaser: He went in on the campaign promise to clear the deficit, and he left it more deeply in debt than when he took the office, just because of operational costs. He was bored! I knew that that's what would happen to him. We were friends. It's not his thing, organizational work. It isn't now. He lends his name to it, but he doesn't do it. There are very few people who don't die of boredom, sitting and running an organization or building one, as the case may be.
- Chall: Who took his place?
- Eliaser: A man named John Merlo, I think was his vice-chairman, from Chico. And I think he may have had the interim chairmanship. I don't remember anymore. I was certainly out, so I was a bit out of touch. It didn't go well. The headquarters closed down shortly after that.
- Chall: The Northern California headquarters?
- Eliaser: Yes. There was a non-headquarters for a long time. Holsinger finally took it over and reopened it, I think. My chronology may be inaccurate because I was moving away, little by little, by then. Holsinger, I know, reopened a headquarters at some point with good staff work and some very good in-depth issues work. Holsinger understood where the party was, or should go, and where political activity was developing, which was through what you might call third world groups--new voices in the American political system. And he played to that and tried to develop it, and help them grow within the party system.

Chall: Until recently, I guess women simply didn't expect to move up the ladder as men did, as a result of their party work. And if they did, they were rebuffed, and this seems to have been what happened to you.

Eliaser: It was more than that. I don't want to dwell on it. I believe I was rebuffed by the voters at the convention because I was a woman. But I believe it was planned to happen, not because I was a woman, but because of George Moscone's fears or the fears of his staff, to be fair to him, of my knowledge of his personal life, which at that time was very unattractive.

Charles Manatt Elected State Party Chairman

Chall: In terms of the Manatt election, were you able to know what was going on?

Eliaser: No. Not really. I was aware of it, and one of my oldest and dearest friends was running. He came in third on that, Leon Cooper. And I gave him a vote, which Chuck Manatt says he will treasure for the rest of his life, 'cause that's what helped him to go to the next ballot and win those few little Cooper votes.

Chall: That's right. It was very close on the first ballot.

Eliaser: That's not why I voted for Leon.

Chall: No. You would have no way of knowing.

Eliaser: I voted for him 'cause I had to. We were old personal friends; we are good friends today. He had no business trying to run for reelection. He didn't do anything as chairman [southern division]. But he was up there, and I knew he would have to drop off, and one or two votes might help him save face, be comfortable with himself. And his little wife was with him being hurt and dismayed by all of this.

Chall: It's interesting, in retrospect, to look back on what the press was saying. It's always interesting. The Manatt election, it claimed, was rebuff to the remnants of the McCarthy-for-President movement, represented by Brown. It was considered also that Tunney would now gain strong influence within the party and this would aid whatever future ambitions he would have for higher office.

Eliaser: Hah! Tells you what the press knows. That was boloney then and certainly is boloney now! [laughs]

Eliaser: Chuck Manatt is one of the best organization people I've ever known in my life. He's a hard worker. He spends hours and hours doing these kinds of things, and he deserved to be chairman. And he's a good issues person. He had everything to offer to that convention. And he was a John Tunney operative. There's no question about that. I'm sure there were all of these things that came to play. But Chuck was doing this on his own, because he wanted it, and he wanted that power. And he delivered. He has been a fine chairman. The press was looking for a story. This is the story of our life.

Carmen's little play, for example, when I ran for national committeewoman, and she put on that train cap and said that she'd been railroaded and all that. It wasn't anything. It was trite. It was cute. I enjoyed it; it didn't upset me. But that was the story the press carried. It was a great, big deal. It was never meant to be, I'm sure, on her part. And if it was, it didn't get me at all.

Chall: Who among the members of the press understand the background of what's going on inside, or is it one of those things that nobody really understands? These are moves for power rather than influencing the next election, perhaps? But I mean, is there any story that's understood at the time it's happening? And if there is, who understands it?

Eliaser: Nobody, for example, understood the Moscone move against me at that time. It was important that they didn't. It was very private and personal. And I never discussed it myself at that time. And George was trying to get rid of me so he wasn't going to discuss it. Right?

I felt that George Murphy, who was then representing the San Francisco Chronicle, their political desk, knew all about every bit of this. He's now doing editorial work for them. I think a lot of the guys, some of the working press, understand this, because we become good friends as we move through these years together, weekend after weekend. Very often it's something they can't write about, if they understand. Their bosses don't understand. You're talking about motive and personality. I don't think the top desk people want to know. It doesn't sell papers.

Chall: Does it mean anything--who's the head of the party?

Eliaser: Used to. Not sure it means anything now, no. People still battle for it for personal power, or recognition, or to achieve something for a principle they hold very dear, but it means less and less. It's too bad.

Chall: Well, it's certainly been difficult since about '68, by the time Bob Coate was leaving.

Eliaser: Yes.

Chall: Now, he wrote an interesting letter to you about Jack Brooks' inability to come through with the promise he made about paying off some debts.

Eliaser: That was a letter I would not allow to be distributed to the convention.

Chall: Is that right?

Eliaser: That was printed to be distributed to the delegates the night before the vote. All of those were supposed to have been burned on my instruction. Mr. Holsinger and Jack Tomlinson, who was in Roger Kent's law office, a number of friends who were working very hard on my behalf, paid to have that printed and distributed in order to win the election for me, or reverse a trend that was going against me, and I would not allow it to be used.

Chall: So that what we have are a few precious copies?

Eliaser: I don't have one. Did you find that in my file?

Chall: Oh, yes, I did.

Eliaser: Because they were burned. They were destroyed. I must have kept one.

Chall: You've kept a few. You can let me know what you want me to do with those.

Eliaser: You can keep it, but just so it's noted it was never used for the purpose for which it was printed.

Chall: It is so noted now. It's on tape. It's fascinating.

Eliaser: I just didn't want to be chairman that badly.

Chall: I see. Because I thought if there ever was a piece of information that would turn the tide, that might be it.

Eliaser: I thought it was not proper to use. I'd rather lose than win with something like that.

Campaign Costs and Organization

Chall: Did you say that you had a sort of a professional group, a group of friends--and from this sponsor's list it looks as if many of them were very active and professional--working with you on strategy?

Eliaser: Yes. We met in my apartment once or twice a week from the time we decided to do this. Bert Coffey was one of them that comes to mind. Jack Tomlinson, Bob Coate, Libby and Al Gatov, Sandy Weiner, and Michael Novelli, who was his aide in those days. Joe Holsinger, very present with all of his troops. I could go on and on. A very large group that worked around the clock, including two full-time semi-professional fund raisers who did it for love. I have never known all the people who gave money to that effort. They purposely kept me out of that. They thought, I think wisely, raising money would divert me from what I was trying to do, but they did it for me to pay for all of this stuff that you have in front of you. It was very costly.

Even at that, what I did was relinquish controls because you couldn't do it all. I think real candidates for office face this today. You cannot be a candidate and run your campaign. It's impossible. And so I let go for the first time in my life, all of these details.

Mr. Weiner presented me with some bills after it was all over that blew my mind! And being me, I went and sold some securities and paid them all immediately. I don't like to owe money. But I then realized there are some questionable corners of giving up total financial control, from a candidate's point of view. You've got to know what's being spent, and know if it's affordable.

They didn't want me to know who I was obligated to. I've never seen those files of people who gave to that campaign. It was a mistake. I ought to have been allowed to write thank you letters.

Chall: Do you have any idea how much the whole thing might have cost, just running for a party office?

Eliaser: That was a lot of years ago. I would guess \$4,000, minimum, what they told me. Maybe that doesn't count my plane fares and the things I was out of pocket directly--meals. Let's say five. Printing has tripled since then.

Chall: Is it always like this? Has it always been? I'm just finding out about what it's like to become a leader of the party.

Eliaser: Yes.

Chall: I'm sure Roger Kent didn't go through this expense every two years, did he?

Elaiser: But he did it on behalf of people he wanted serving with him who were in contest.

Chall: So it is a cost.

Eliaser: It's terrible, and it only comes mainly out of one person's pocket.

Chall: Did anybody have any idea that Brooks would stay in so short a time? Did he?

Elaiser: He and I didn't discuss that, and haven't since then except in a joking way, because we are friends. I could have predicted it, because I knew him. I understood he was dedicated to the Democratic party and to various candidates, but his interests would not be in running a headquarters and so forth, ever.

Presidential Aspirants, Pickets, and Other Memories

Chall: You may have been too tied up to have cared, but at that convention, the three potential presidential candidates for 1972 were there--Muskie, McGovern, Bayh. Did that mean anything to you at the time?

Eliaser: I don't remember Ed Muskie, or seeing him. I think I walked out of a McGovern speech, because it bored me and they still do. Birch Bayh's brunch I went to; it was a breakfast. He bought a very elaborate champagne, a bloody Mary--breakfast at the Senator Hotel to which everybody went because it was a freebie. I have very strong feelings about those generally, which is that they never get you votes or support. Anybody's going to take a free drink or free meal if you offer it, but it never essentially means anything. But nobody asked me.

The people who were running my campaign asked me to go there only because it was the morning of the vote, as I recall, and I would see a lot of delegates and people I had not yet seen. So I did a walk through, and I remember standing in the back of the room--I wouldn't sit down, and I didn't partake of the meal--to listen to him. I guess I knew them all anyway. I'd spent enough time in Washington and around to know where that game for the presidency really was. And I was interested a little.

Eliaser: Oh! And I remember at that convention, Alan Barron was out in front-- the Senator from Idaho, the recovered alcoholic; Iowa--Harold Hughes had representation and badges there. Wasn't he a dark horse, all that way back? I think so. I remember meeting him, and then he came to call me after the convention. Yes. I was aware.

Chall: How about the problem of the Mexican-Americans and their picketing?

Eliaser: That was uncomfortable. I'm vague on that now, but I was very aware of it at that time, because of my own relationship with the Chicano community, and my wish not to offend any friends, but with my need to proceed with the business at hand. It's something I think that touches us in anything we do today. I had occasion just at the end of this last year to have to go to City Hall and buy the new voter lists for San Francisco, and I crossed a picket line to do it. It bothered me terribly but I had to have them.

Chall: I guess it was really done for the benefit of Mr. Unruh and a few others, and had to do, I think, with a welfare bill and reapportionment which the Mexicans wanted.

Eliaser: That's marvelous, but they don't understand nobody cares at that point. And maybe some of the people who were working at the convention knew delegates who are sensitive to every issue, and are soaking up, really like a new sponge, the whole new experience, who will listen and talk. But the movers and shakers couldn't care less. They're there to do one or two things which are of importance to them on that weekend, and the hell with the rest of it. They spend energy and money. And it's a learning experience for them too. It's okay.

Chall: What did you feel like when it was all over? Were you planning to stay in the party?

Eliaser: Oh, sure.

Chall: Do anything?

Eliaser: I moved myself even before the final vote count was in, I think--but it was certainly indicated how it was going--back to my suite in the Senator Hotel where I actually didn't stay. Every candidate is always given a suite in the Senator Hotel, but if you're smart, you use it as a front, hospitality operation. You sleep someplace else so you get your rest.

I moved up there with my managers and supporters; there was a small bar left. I heard from friends there, and we laughed a lot. It was at that point that Senator and Mrs. Cranston telephoned me to say how sorry they were about what was happening, and would I

Eliaser: join them in the Caribbean the following month, that they would like me very much to be out there. That's the thing I remember most about that hour.

I had to rush home and buy a bathing suit, which I didn't own, and get one for Mrs. Cranston who was just recovering from a very serious stroke and was unable to do any serious shopping for herself. She told me what size and color and that was my next move.

Oh! I remember a lot! I remember the big dinner that night, 'cause I was seated with George Moscone and Geneva Cranston. I guess Alan was the speaker, Saturday night, at that convention. Of course you have to go to the main event whether you can stand it or not, even if your mind is someplace else. Otherwise they'd say, "Oh. She's not strong enough to face all of these people." Or some of the nonsense they said anyway.

I had spoken to the convention, as I recall, that day--to all these caucuses--and I still got to that dinner, and was seated with George who was obviously running the game against me. I said, "George. Let me buy you a drink." We had a very nice time. [laughs]

I remember being horrified, though! I hadn't seen Mrs. Cranston since her stroke, and she and Alan entered by the farthest door from the rostrum. He had to take her-by one arm; she had her other hand on the cane. It was a very long walk, the length of the room, to get where they were to be seated. It must have taken them ten minutes, and it felt like an hour. I thought I would personally die watching them make that struggle. It was awful.

We had fun.

San Francisco Politics and the Appointment to the Board of Permit Appeals, 1971-1973

Chall: Mr. Alioto [mayor of San Francisco] appointed you to the Board of Permit Appeals. According to the newspaper article, you had been cochairman of his campaign for mayor in '67, and were a sponsor of his campaign in '71. In 1971, didn't Dianne Feinstein run for mayor?

Eliaser: She ran against him that year? Oh! Of course she did!

I remember that. Dianne didn't ask me. Neither did Joe, as a matter of fact. I didn't have much to do with either of them. I was on the periphery of the activity, as I recall. I wasn't really involved. I was a friend; I was anxious to see him be elected. Nobody asked me to do anything much, except go on a letterhead.

Eliaser: I did become involved in asking Dianne not to run. It was hopeless, and probably for those of us who cared about her career, destructive. If we had an interest in her future, it was not the move.

My husband was in the hospital--we had reconciled--and I remember coming home from the hospital very late, just in time to have a bite to eat before I went back. John Richey, who was then a planning commissioner of Alioto's called me--I hadn't been appointed then--and said, "Dianne listens to you. You're a good friend. Will you call her. Tomorrow is the last day for filing" (or whatever). "Will you please pull her off? The mayor wants me to ask you." Well, I don't know if that was so or not.

I tried to reach Dianne at that point, and I did. And I said, "We're very good friends. I would not presume to advise you or push you in your career one way or another, but I've been asked to speak to you, and that's why I'm calling. My interests are otherwise, at the moment; they're at Mount Zion Hospital. But I am fearful for your future, because I see it as a very long, and fine, and growing thing, and please be careful before you do whatever you have to do tomorrow. I know you'll do the right thing." The end.

Chall: And do you think it was destructive to her career?

Eliaser: Yes. Although the electorate in San Francisco, and maybe every place, is fickle. Two years later they change their mind, or they do other things. I think you lose friends when you do something like that; you make some new ones.

It was a very ugly campaign. I'd forgotten it till now. It was very personal. People who had been friends of theirs didn't support the Feinsteins. They personalized very much, for instance, the absence of someone like me in that campaign. I wasn't in Joe's campaign either. They used my name. But I was at that hospital from the hour they would allow me to come in till I dropped dead of fatigue.

I remember Alioto, in that whole period, asking only two things of me. There was a labor breakfast for women in the labor movement, and Joe was going to be very late. He was on a national television broadcast that he had to do. They asked that I go at seven o'clock to this breakfast and hold it together.

My husband was very ill by then, and he was home. I was allowed to bring him home for three weeks between his two hospitalizations. So Mike Novelli, who was running part of the Alioto campaign, came over and stayed overnight at the house with me, because I didn't have a housekeeper those couple of days, and I would not leave my husband alone. Michael stayed there and gave him breakfast, so I could go do that.

Eliaser: Then they asked me at the end of the campaign--oh, the last week there was a rally in Union Square--they asked me to address these thousands, in the pouring rain, as I recall. Or perhaps just to appear before the media, which I happily did. They never asked me to do anything. They never asked me for money or to be anywhere. They knew better. They were very considerate.

Joe called me at Mount Zion Hospital to appoint me to the Board of Permit Appeals [September, 1971], and I said, not understanding the details, that I was very honored, but that I actually didn't know much about it and whether I could fulfill what he would expect. But then, in any case, I would presume because he reached me there, he understood my circumstances and that I couldn't serve on anything. He said, "That's all right. This doesn't open up till January. I'm sure everything'll be fine then." My husband was very sick--just--well, he knew. It was going to be over very soon.*

Chall: And how was that appointment? You didn't stay on very long; a couple of years.

Eliaser: That was long. Two years too long. It's all right.

If you like listening to whether people have the right number of inches and support columns for their back porches, and have electric wires which are legal, and having to consider whether you approve of the police attitude toward gay bars, and whether you like high risers or not. There were some good battles. It was always four to one. I was the one. That's not why I left [May, 1973].

We came into the gubernatorial race [1974]. I was an Alioto appointee and I wanted to support William Matson Roth. It would have been in very poor taste for me to remain on as an Alioto appointee, when I was going to oppose his bid as governor, which I did. And I made it clear.

John De Luca took me to lunch and we discussed it, and parted lovingly. Joe thought I was crazy.

Chall: There are people who feel that Angelina Alioto did in Joseph Alioto. Do you think that?

Eliaser: Well, if she did, she meant to. I'm not sure.

Chall: You think that really had that much effect on his campaign?

*Lionel Alanson died November, 1971.

Eliaser: Well, I was very surprised he was second. I thought he'd be third. I think he ran a marvelous race! There are some people who think that all the attention she got for him by her antics got him votes. Who knows?

Chall: Meanwhile you were married to Dr. Maurice Eliaser [June, 1972]. That wasn't going to halt your activities in politics, I assume.

Eliaser: Oh, I said it would! [laughter] I was never going to be in politics again for at least three minutes! But I did. I have restrained. Compared to what I used to do, I'm not in politics at all. Really.

Chall: And you're not suffering?

Eliaser: No.

Aside from my commitments to my marriage and the fact that I'm married to a very busy physician, and support his career, I've witnessed during all of these years we've discussed, the inability of some people to let go.

##

Eliaser: We were talking about women or people--I shouldn't just say women, some men do it, but more women--who can't let go. Who feel they held important office once, that they are still very important to everybody; who are hypersensitive to lack of recognition at given events; who if they aren't seated in at the right place, will change their place, or holler and complain; who insist upon staying up front because it's due them.

I feel that you've been an unsuccessful leader if you haven't developed talent, younger people, new people, behind you who can come in and do your job better. You just haven't been a good leader. You should let go; sit back and be delighted when people ask for your advice and help, but not insist upon staying. I feel that's part of maturity for starters, and that there are always other avenues in life from which to derive gratification. You can come back as you're needed. If you've done a job there are times when you can always re-enter. But I just couldn't stand, as a young person, some of the others who said, "Don't you know who I am? Why don't I have a better seat? You left my name off the program." That kind of thing.

I'm very comfortable where I am.

Chall: And you did find this among the women?

Eliaser: Yes. The exception, really the great exception is Libby Smith Gatov, who has always been able to let go, and who remains the person, when heavy advice and counsel is needed, to whom people still go.

San Francisco Chronicle

3/27/75

S.F. Woman Named to Tahoe Board

Ann Alanson Eliaser of San Francisco, a former Democratic National Committeewoman, was appointed a member of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency by Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr. yesterday.

Mrs. Eliaser has served as an alternate member of the Bay Conservation and Development Commission, and as vice president of the San Francisco Board of Permit Appeals.

Mrs. Eliaser, whose husband, Dr. Maurice Eliaser is a physician here, recently opened a political consulting firm, Compass Associates, in San Francisco.

She replaces Robert G. Van Allen of Cypress in Ormation.

Mrs. Eliaser's appointment came in for some criticism yesterday at the regular monthly meeting of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency at Crystal Bay, Nevada.

Jim Henry, Placer county supervisor, said he felt Van Allen had been removed from the governing board because he is a leader and independent thinker."

Van Allen himself later told reporters he believed he had been replaced "because Governor Brown couldn't control my thinking."

Lone Woman Quits Permit Appeal Board

San Francisco
Chronicle
7/3/73

Ann Alanson Eliaser, prominent liberal Democrat and first woman to serve on the Board of Permit Appeals in 30 years, resigned that post five weeks ago, it became known yesterday.

Tom Flynn, Mayor Joseph Alioto's press secretary, said that there had been no announcement because the Mayor's office had wanted to announce the name of her successor simultaneously.

Mrs. Eliaser, named to the board by Alioto in September, 1971, is a former Democratic national committeewoman from California.

At the time, she was Ann Alanson, wife of Lionel Alanson, a meat packing executive and sportsman who died in late November, 1971. Last year, Mrs. Alanson married Dr. Maurice Eliaser, a prominent San Francisco cardiologist.

In her letter of resignation, Mrs. Eliaser expressed regret that "the press of other important and time-consuming obligations combined with a prolonged absence from San Francisco this fall, persuades me that I must be relieved of this commitment now."

She expressed faith in the value of the Board of Permit Appeals, a tribunal established to make it easy for citizens to appeal decisions of city agencies without undue formality.

But she also expressed "disappointment" that the board had not adopted more formal rules of procedure to protect it from a barrage of suits in which it is now involved.

Alioto's response commended Mrs. Eliaser for her service and said he was "genuinely sorry" that she felt it necessary to leave City Hall.

State Appointment: The Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, 1975-1976

Chall: What about your appointment to Lake Tahoe Regional Planning Agency?

Eliaser: Well, that came as a total surprise. I had not supported Governor Brown's [Edmund G. Brown, Jr.] effort in the primary, though we had been good friends. And I remember him sitting here on a couple of occasions, drinking coffee and talking about the future, even though I told him I wouldn't support. We were friends.

When he ran in the general election, of course, I supported him, but I didn't do a lot for him, as I recall. I didn't give any money, or very little. Went to a luncheon for his mother, more out of a gesture as an awfully good friend of her's than anything else. I took a table because I thought I could bring a lot of the old timers in and that would be good for him, and it would be good for everybody to see him. He was marvelous. I didn't hear from him and didn't congratulate him, or go through any of that exercise. I was busy. I'd opened Compass Associates by then, and we were handling Jimmy Carter.

One day the telephone rang and the secretary said, "Ann. It's the governor." I picked up the phone and said, "Hello, Jimmy." But it was Jerry. And he said, "How would you like to save Lake Tahoe?" I said, "I'd love to. I've wanted to for years." And he said, "Fine. Be there at ten o'clock tomorrow morning." I said, "I beg your pardon, governor." And he said, "I'm appointing you to the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, if you'll accept." I had thought it was a very frivolous conversation until that moment.

He never made it clear what the obligations of that office were. I didn't realize it required senate approval; that it required two or three days a month in the mountains. Two full days of work, plus getting in and out. And because of the way I do things, I spent a lot of time on homework as well. And because I enjoyed working with Claire Dedrick, I would go to Sacramento to work with her and go in to Tahoe with her and so forth. I generally give more time to things than what the papers say is required.

On the other hand, my commitment to myself and this marriage made that very difficult, because of travel into the mountains, particularly in the winter. It was a losing proposition, I could see it then. And in case I didn't know it, the papers have been telling me that this week. Tahoe Regional Planning Agency is virtually non-existent. They debate matters and sanction studies while the high-rises proliferate.

Chall: But wasn't that true even then?

Eliaser: Oh! Certainly! And I knew it better than the governor. I had spent every year--part of every summer there as long as I can remember. And I knew what the governor didn't understand when he appointed me. He knew that I was good on environmental positions, and that I was a hard worker, and on his side. But what he didn't know is that I was an old-time Tahoe person, and that I knew every rock at that lake, and every situation. So where he was criticized for making the appointment of me, as a newcomer, I wasn't at all.

At that first hearing I was as familiar as anybody with the situation, if not more so. I know all about that lake and what's happening. Ten years ago I knew it was a lost cause. I know about the algae. I knew about the destruction of the quality of the air, as well as the water, and the general building, and soil destruction and everything else.

Chall: There are two agencies that work up there. At least two.

Eliaser: The California Regional Planning Agency, which is California's version of the T.R.P.A., and I believe there's a Nevada one too.

Chall: Is this the one--this T.R.P.A.--is this the one that has members on it from both Nevada and California?

Eliaser: The bi-state agency, sanctioned by the Congress. I mean it movès with congressional approval. So, anything that both states approve then has to go to the Congress. And there's some funding from the federal government as well as from both states, and from the counties who have membership on it.

Chall: It's been my feeling that this has never been able to function.

Eliaser: Well, Nevada and California have separate goals entirely. And it seems to me there are still some things that can be done that haven't been done, but that it's playing a dangerous game.

Chall: Why is this kind of an organization allowed to exist in its present form, when the goals that it was set up to achieve are not being achieved? I wonder whether anybody appointed to that board could ever turn it around?

Eliaser: No. Because the elected official of the state of Nevada, from the governor on down, are answerable to the gambling interests of Nevada. If they weren't--if they didn't answer to them, they wouldn't be there in the first place. So the structure is impossible. It's a dream.

There is one member up there now who the governor did appoint, who is a sound environmentalist, and came out of the League to Save Lake Tahoe. He is an environmental attorney in Reno, who is the

Eliaser: strongest, most articulate voice up there. He's one vote. When he defines his positions--I've seen him, subsequent to my resignation; I hear from him now and then--the governor calls him in to modify his position, as good as he is. If he doesn't, because he's serving at the pleasure of the governor, he goes off.

Chall: Would you have stayed on there, all things being equal, if it hadn't taken you to Tahoe?

Eliaser: Those are the two things that took me off, and essentially not in this order. Being separated from my home by virtue of my geography, and the fact that I was spending a lot of time doing something where I wasn't achieving.

I was so angry about the absence of achievement that I moved off. I have become a member of the board of directors of the League to Save Lake Tahoe, recently, where I hope to raise a lot of money for their litigation. I think the only answer is the courts, possibly. To stop these high-rises, you just go to the courts. But, if you don't have a case--. Who knows? And I don't claim to be an attorney, but I'm in support of that avenue, and so I will give and raise money for them, and make a lot of noise I couldn't tactfully do as a member of a governing body. I was the governor's vote, so I had to be particularly careful. I'm not good at that role.

I've been to Sacramento, testified before the Senate Finance Committee to knock that budget all to hell, or to redo it. I've worked on legislation for a new representation of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, a whole new programming of its membership, and done a lot of work that has passed the legislature entirely and has been signed by the governor. So in a couple of months really, I feel, I've accomplished more than I did up there.

Chall: He appointed another woman in your place.

Eliaser: Carol Onorato. She's a Newsom, formerly from San Francisco. One of her sisters is Barbara Pelosi, now divorcing Ron Pelosi. Judge Newsom of Auburn. Huge San Francisco family. Old time connections with Governor Pat Brown. She's been voted Tahoe Woman of the Year. She's on the school board, and the library commission up there. She's remarkable. And the fact is, she lives there.

The governor cannot legally appoint anyone who is a resident in the Tahoe Basin. This appointment must represent all the people of the state of California. Fortunately, her legal residence is in Placer county, just outside the legal definition of the Tahoe Basin. Squaw Valley, isn't it?

I didn't leave till we found a replacement. And I was helpful in that search. We found a woman who lived in South Lake Tahoe, who is a very vocal environmentalist; hated by everybody on both

Elaiser: sides. Wonderful woman. She was called down to be knighted by the governor, when somebody read the fine print of the law. She couldn't legally be appointed, because of her residence, which nobody knew. So, it was very sad. She wanted desperately to do it, and had chaired all kinds of volunteer committees up there on this. So, we started all over again, and found Carol, who's worked very well with the people and has accomplished a great deal, considering what you're able to do up there. And this other woman is now on the Highway Commission, I think. So, that's fine.

I talk with them all the time and we're in touch, so I have no sense of leaving Lake Tahoe. I was just making enormous sacrifices with no achievement. I stayed up there ten or eleven months, I recall.

##

Eliaser: Tahoe was a real loser for the governor, for the state of California, and for me personally.

Chall: That appointment?

Eliaser: No, the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency is bad news. I was one vote; they'd never seen a woman, they couldn't stand me because I represented Jerry Brown, and I was very, very vocal about what I considered to be our collective position. The gubernatorial appointment in Nevada voted with me all the time, and our environmental person out of Claire Dedrick's office. Every vote was seven to three--for the ten months that I was physically there. And it was hopeless. I was away from Maurice for a two-day meeting. I was away really four days. For me, from here, getting into the mountains in the winter, it was at least that. It was very difficult. And I was very unhappy about it, and I wasn't achieving anything--and so I quit.

At that time, when I told Mrs. Dedrick and Anthony Kline--Tony Kline whom you may know--his legal secretary, but who has a hand in all his appointments, that I wanted to leave, there were other people leaving top-level agency jobs. The papers were jumping into this and making capital out of things that were very often personal, or of little consequence. They were making a big deal out of it to embarrass Jerry. I didn't want to be part of that. So I said, "I'll stay until you can find my replacement."

But I explained why I wanted to go, and what was the matter: we needed new laws, a lot of other things. Everyone in Nevada and a few people in California were answerable to the casinos--as long as we had that and didn't expose it we weren't going to go anyplace.

Eliaser: I said that what I thought would be less embarrassing than my quitting--during this turbulent period with the newspapers--was for me to transfer into another agency where I didn't have to travel as much and be away from my husband for long periods, and where I could be effective--that I wasn't accomplishing anything. They thought that was a swell idea. There's no reason why this shouldn't go on the tape, because some of it didn't happen--though there was a confidentiality about it as I'm sure you know.

Tony Kline immediately thought that that was swell. Would I wait till they had found somebody? I said, "Certainly, there's no urgency about this." He said, "Are you a lawyer?" And I was very embarrassed. I said no. And he said, "Wonderful, we need to appoint a civilian governor of the State Bar. You'll be marvelous at that. You're so outspoken, and you do your homework." And I said, "Tony, I've had one year of college, at which I didn't do well. I'd love to do it, and actually I could work for you every day in Los Angeles and be home for dinner with my husband. I'd love that. It would be easier to go to Los Angeles every day than to go to Lake Tahoe once a month. I could do more, but I don't think you want me."

He said, "Would you send everything up to us again? This might be perfect." I said, "Let's put it another way Tony. Did you know that I'm married to a physician?" This was right in the middle of all the malpractice discussion. And he said, "Oh no, forget it." He said, "What else can you do?" I said, "I'm not asking you for an appointment. What I'm saying is I don't want to embarrass you." He said, "Well, what do you know about?" I said, "Oh, my God, I'm forty-eight years old" (whatever I was then). "I know a lot about horses." This was just fey. I was being funny. "The Horse Racing Board would be perfect." It's always been a three-man board, and it has more clout than almost anything but the high court in this state, and the board of regents in past days. I was really being hysterical, and the reason I said it is I knew it was just something Jerry Brown might think was correct.

I said, "I owned a stable in my first marriage and I'm very conversant with the amount of income that goes into the general fund of the state of California from taxing of the race track, or their share." I said, "I don't really mean that. I'm just telling you that there is no way of just saying in five minutes, 'What can you do?' when someone is my age and has been around and done so many things."

So the next thing that happens is Claire Dedrick called me-- who's the head of the Resources Agency. I hadn't realized that the Horse Racing Board falls under her aegis, under the Park and Recreation Commission within the state organization. I suppose I knew and had forgotten. She said, "We need somebody like you

Eliaser: desperately on forestry. Wouldn't you do that?" And I said, no. I said, "I'm really not seeking a position. Again let me tell you that I want not to be a quitter, and I think it reads better to say you're moving me over into something, rather than out. But I want to do something that I know a great deal about, that I can contribute to--for your sake and the governor's and that I could share in some way with my husband, possibly." That's where I'm at in this marriage. So she said, "Fine."

A couple of weeks passed and she said, "Herb Rhodes, our Director of Park and Recreation, just thinks you're fantastic. He thinks you're so well informed on horse racing, and you are the funniest person he's ever met, and he wants you. We are recommending to the governor you be appointed immediately."

I said, "Well, that's interesting. I've never met Mr. Rhodes."

She said, "Now Ann, he spent some time with you and he told me everything you said. You know him?"

And I said, "I don't think so."

She said, "In the recent two weeks did you meet a black man who has one arm?"

I said, "Yes."

She said, "That's Herb Rhodes."

And I said, "Well, I met a man, I think it was at a Tunney breakfast, a very attractive gentleman, and we talked a little and racing came up and I don't remember half. And we may have talked for twenty minutes, and I was just saying everything that I really think. It was a crazy conversation. I didn't know [laughs] who he was, for heaven's sake!"

She said, "You were interviewed."

But not really. We happened to be at the same meeting, and he had heard about me, and he asked me questions. It didn't occur to me that he was a director of anything, but was somebody there to meet with John Tunney, and help him, or whatever it was. I always say the same things to everybody anyway [laughs] so it doesn't really matter.

Chall: Did he know your name?

- Eliaser: Yes, well, because I had worked very closely with Claire Dedrick on Tahoe. I had flown to the lake, with her, not on the appointed meeting time, but on a time when she had to deal with some problems. I had been advising with them and taking special trips to Sacramento a couple of times. I worked very hard on that job--other than at the prescribed meeting date. I do a lot of work.
- Chall: And this particular appointment that's hanging over is still related to the--
- Eliaser: To the horse racing board, which has gotten very sticky, very complicated. There was one vacancy over a year ago, of a three-man board. There is now another person sitting there, who is either up for reappointment or goes. The chairman is a Ronald Reagan appointee, and one of his largest contributors, and he has till next year to go. He's a personal friend, and he's had some difficulties concerned with that work. But I'm related to an owner of one of the largest tracks up here. I've had interests in the past and I made it very clear with Dr. [Carlotta] Mellon in a very long conversation, what the disadvantages would be in appointing me. Because I told her that I cared a good deal more about the governor and the ultimate work of that commission than I did sharing in it; that it wasn't important to me at all and she should do what was best for the governor. That's where we left it.
- Chall: I see, a year ago.
- Eliaser: No, last week. [laughs] It was a year ago this all started, and then again this nothing for one year, and I paid no attention to it; then she called me late one evening last week and we started again. You see when I was appointed by the governor a couple of years ago now, whenever it was, I am reputed to have been the only person he hadn't interviewed, personally, for any of these appointments, particularly those which require senate confirmation--because he knew me so well. And so I'd want to be meticulous in what I tell them in terms of any disadvantages.
- Chall: Yes. It does take him a long time to appoint people to committees.
- Eliaser: Well, you see, you can see in my reporting all this to you what they're going through and what the steps are.

Setting Up the Campaign Management Office: Compass Associates

Chall: I take it that the kind of work that you're doing now with Compass Associates is what you really like to do.

Eliaser: Not altogether.

No. When you're in the process of earning money and showing the IRS that you're not just following a hobby, but running a business, you're going to take some accounts that aren't God's gift to everybody in order to meet your payroll and your overhead, and not keep writing off losses every year. Ideally we've chosen work that we are committed to emotionally and intellectually, as well as to earn a living. But, it's tough. And we've made some compromises.

I remember the first time I met Jimmy Carter. I knew he was governor of Georgia. I knew very little about him, and I couldn't believe that he was anyone I would care about. I thought, I'll take any client for president short of having two heads, to make ends meet in this business. I met this man--I fell in love, promptly. I was so impressed! I have never been carried away so, by any one person. Such dynamism, such brilliance. His conduct with the press on his first day. The whole thing. I came home and said, "I have a winner." And my husband was the first to say, "Jimmy who?"

Chall: But you do like to organize and see a job accomplished from beginning to end.

Eliaser: Oh, yes. I do. And that was the great difference in Democratic politics between Libby Gatov and me. I succeeded her. She was always in the position of making policy. She would go into campaigns personally, once it was established that so-and-so was the candidate. She contributed very heavily to the ideas, to the think-tank staff.

I was always the person coming in at the beginning, working very hard on building structure, doing what we call scut-work and enjoying it, and putting together the details that made the policy she made, work. So we've always been complementary to one another, rather than competitive. And I think we still are.

So I do enjoy putting together the pieces, organizing, shaping something that people will enjoy coming into; a place where they can make their contribution. And perhaps, being analytical for a moment, the reason I do that, is that I felt so left out on so many occasions, that I am still working on building something where there's room for everybody, and a job for everybody. So you end up having produced over a given period of time.

Eliaser: Maybe remaining with that train of thought for a minute, that's why I hated the Board of Permit Appeals so much, and Tahoe, where they were losers.

It's wonderful to have the gay community in San Francisco celebrate me and say, "Isn't she wonderful. She's on our side." But what's the use of having me on their side if I lost every vote? There had to be another way to help them.

Chall: Doing that takes many, many years.

Eliaser: That's right.

Chall: And other kinds of appointments.

Eliaser: I'm impatient. I anticipate a long and healthy life, but I've seen the end of it for many people, and the end of careers. So I think you make the most of every moment, and try to give it the best you've got, so you don't put yourself in restrictive situations unless you get a lot of ego gratification from it, or something like that.

Chall: Do you think that men and women function differently in these campaign management offices, or is there no difference at this professional level?

Eliaser: No. Different manners of functioning in these management situations cannot be separated out by male or female but rather by the individual and his/her attitude toward their work. Perhaps the only difference is that women tend to work harder!

Chall: How did you decide to set up this business, and who have been the associates?

Eliaser: Compass Associates was formed after my long-term effort as a volunteer on the William Matson Roth campaign for governor of California. During that period I observed that I was spending more time with greater productivity as a volunteer than were the paid staff members. Further, my role became so important and time consuming, that I was working around the clock and during my private time at home with Dr. Eliaser. I would receive numerous interruptions at any hour of the day and night.

This situation required reflection. It occurred to me that I would translate my long term professional/voluntary activities into a really professional business operation. I was also anxious to put some kind of controls into my activities which would permit me privacy in my home with my husband.

Eliaser: Thus, Compass Associates was born. It is an established fact, that when people are paying for your time, they are less likely to impose upon your time and will respect your privacy.

My first associate was Michael Novelli. It was to have been a partnership. He was unable to produce his share of the capitalization, so I became the sole owner and he worked in a management capacity. Working with us at the inception of this office were: Tory (Victoria) Hartmann, a most competent political scheduler, PR, and graphics person. Also with us at that time was Rossie Coulter, a leader in black grass roots politics who functioned as office manager.

[Added by Mrs. Eliaser when she reviewed the transcript]

As you know, we have shifted away from political campaign work altogether and only raise money for candidates and issues--doing no campaign management whatsoever. At least 80 percent of the work at Compass Associates presently is fund raising in the non-profit field--largely in education and health. As of this date [August 1981], I remain sole owner of Compass Associates. My colleagues are: Ellen La Follette, Liberal Republican, feminist, Trustee of Radcliff College; Alan Palmer, Democratic activist, who assists us in the management of our event fund raising since his career specialty has been in the world of food, beverage, and banquet management.

You might be interested in this partial listing of organizations present and past represented by Compass [January 1983]:

Political

Alan Cranston for U.S. Senate Committee
 Alan Cranston Presidential Advisory Committee
 Senator John Garamendi for Governor Committee
 S.F. Supervisor Louise Renne Campaign
 S.F. Supervisor Bill Maher Campaign
 Conway Collis for State Board of Equalization Campaign
 Jimmy Carter for President Committee
 Jerry Brown for President Committee
 Frank Church for President Committee

Non-Profit

Brandeis University
 Benjamin H. Swig Chair in Judaic Studies at the University of San Francisco
 Rosalind Russell Arthritis Center, University of California, San Francisco

[listing continued]

League to Save Lake Tahoe
Environmental Defense Fund
San Francisco Mental Health Association
Children's Cancer Research Institute
Pacific Vision Foundation, Pacific Medical Center, San Francisco
The Junior Statesmen Foundation
Advocates for Women
Yori Wada Education Fund
The Chamber Soloists of San Francisco
Judah L. Magnes Museum, Berkeley
Center for Independent Living, Berkeley

VI ORGANIZATION TECHNIQUES: POLITICAL PARTY AND CAMPAIGN FUNCTIONS

[Interview 2: September 16, 1976]

[While setting up the tape recorder in preparation for this second interview session Mrs. Eliaser and Mrs. Chall began to discuss some past aspects of political party organization and management. This led, quite naturally, into Mrs. Eliaser's then most current activities as a professional campaign manager. That interview has been placed in this section of the memoir where it best fits the chronology.]

Some Examples of Difficulties

Eliaser: For example, Libby [Gatov] has never done the kind of work--I don't know if Clara [Shirpser] did or not because I came so long afterwards--the kind of thing I do, which is what I call really out in the vineyards--the grass-roots stuff--which I believe in. I'm good at a lot of detail work and it doesn't bother me that I still do it, because I think that builds toward your eventual goal.

Neither of them sat, ever I think, behind a desk, and assigned tables or tickets--which is fortunate for them. They have done a lot of issues work and important things that I haven't done. But I'm now doing professionally what I learned to do in those days, and I was able to witness procedure and behavior on the part of individuals.

I remember one of the first things I did--I know I'm taking you out of sequence. In 1957 there was a Democratic National Committee conference here simultaneously with a Western States Conference. [Adlai] Stevenson. Paul Butler, I think, was still in charge. That goes back a long way. Governor Harriman--people like that.

I remember that Katie Louchheim was the vice-chairman or whatever we called the top woman in the national committee in those days, and that she did not, in her remarks, acknowledge Clara

- Eliaser: Shirpser. She acknowledged Ellie Heller, and Libby, and others I guess. Mrs. Louchheim didn't feel at all well; she was exceedingly tired and had been traveling with the committee. I recall having to get my then physician to take care of her. She needed a massage, and some medication, and so forth. One of the calls I got, that was big trouble in trying to protect her, was Clara, being very angry that she hadn't been acknowledged from the rostrum. And friends of Clara, trying to disturb Mrs. Louchheim saying, "Why didn't you; you should apologize." So we had to handle it.
- Chall: Clara has mentioned this in her interview, and I sometimes wonder why these things did happen--they were slights.*
- Eliaser: Sometimes they're intentional, there's no question about it. Other times it's an accident, and I've been as guilty as anyone when I've been at the microphone. When I'm assisting speakers I try to lay all of this out for them, so that this doesn't happen. In those days when we had these occurrences, I wasn't even at that position of responsibility, where I laid out a program in front of people at a speaker's table. That came years later. Had I been in charge, I would have seen to it she'd been acknowledged; she was surely deserving of it.
- Another example was, way back, Harry Truman was president and came out to speak at a dinner. In those days I think they were \$25 or \$50 dinners, and we thought that was a lot of money. Matthew Tobriner, who was then an activist in the party and is now a supreme court justice, was, I believe, presiding. In acknowledging the various party leaders in the dinner audience he failed to recognize Clara, and again it was one of those things where the next day you spent the whole day trying to mend that fence.
- Chall: Are these Freudian slips?
- Eliaser: Oh, not with a man as busy as Matthew. Someone didn't tell him to do it, which wasn't Freudian. It could have been intentional, or--who knows?
- Chall: Generally these things are laid out, then, for the speaker?
- Eliaser: Oh, heavens yes! Particularly when you bring people in from outside. I was interested, the first time I brought Lady Bird Johnson in, which was when President Johnson was vice-president--about a month

*Clara Shirpser, One Woman's Role in Democratic Party Politics: National, California, and Local, 1950-1973, Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 1975.

Eliaser: before the Kennedy assassination. Her entire set of remarks and speech were laid out for her, presumably by somebody in their office with our assistance--on the next size after the three by five card--

Chall: Four by six, I think.

Eliaser: Yes, in speakers-print type, and in some kind of a holder like a binder, where she could flip the cards and it wasn't noticeable; she wasn't shuffling them, as many speakers do. Her introductions, acknowledgement of individuals, as well as her principal address, were all on these cards--with some room, I noticed, to handwrite in what she needed to do.

Chall: My, it takes a great deal of preparation, doesn't it?

Eliaser: Right. That's typical of a Johnson operation; nothing was left to guessing, ever.

Chall: Oh, is that right?

Eliaser: They were very orderly people.

Chall: So these things vary?

Eliaser: Oh, yes. You would have Muriel Humphrey walk in, for example. This goes way way back when Hubert was to have delivered a major address and was held for a vote in the Senate, or by weather someplace, and she'd replace him. She'd have his speech in hand, and read it to you or give it. Nobody had been decent enough, or prepared really, for her, and given her help with any of the extemporaneous things that she had to do. She'd always coast, with grace.

Chall: Knew how to do it?

Eliaser: Yes. But everybody's office manages differently. I've seen the Ted Kennedy preparation, which still exists. He is put on the plane, in Washington for example, with a binder--with sections, depending on what it is he's looking to know. It has to do with his schedule, individuals he's going to see for sure or ought to call, all pertinent information regarding those individuals. Every detail you could imagine about what's going to happen to him on this trip, or background he should have, including a major address, is somewhere in there. But all sectioned off for easy reference--the most remarkable thing I've ever seen.

Early Jimmy Carter Campaign Preparations, 1975

Chall: [laughs] I can imagine what Carter's itinerary looks like these days.

Eliaser: Oh, when he started out here, two years ago, I'll tell you, it didn't look like anything. Our office handled it for the first three months of 1975.

Chall: Compass Associates did?

Eliaser: Yes. We're professional enough to have done much of that for him, and Atlanta did a great deal. But we were in the position of "Jimmy who?" So, much of it just had to be done by a sense of feel. You weren't always sure where you were going the next hour-- because you didn't know if you'd be received or not.

Chall: But you had to set it up, anyway?

Eliaser: When we started with him he was governor of Georgia. He was in his last month as governor when we met him. I met him in December--it will be two years this December. We handled him from that time on. He made a January 1975 visit at our urging to attend the state convention in Sacramento and to do some preliminary Northern California spade work. They kept holding us back; they didn't want to give us the Northern California time, except for the convention.

He was an acquaintance of Lou Wasserman of Music Corporation of America. Mr. Wasserman had promised a dinner with movie stars and potential money people, and they were holding out for that dinner. They were desperate for the money and they were desperate for the connections. They had been disappointed once before, so they kept saying, "You can schedule Sacramento and the state convention in any way that you wish, but the possibility is we won't come to San Francisco unless it's to change planes or for a press conference for a minute.

Four or five days before the intended visit, they were able, finally, to get through to Mr. Wasserman's office. It turned out that he would be out of the country, or out of Los Angeles. And we had that much time to take care of two days, almost two days. It worked, but it was just that we worked around the clock. So with that kind of timing, you can't prepare the kind of thing Ted Kennedy has, as I have described it. It's impossible.

Chall: But that isn't expected, at the very beginning, when you're seeking, looking?

Eliaser: Oh, he was very generous in his approach to time lag, and difficulties that we encountered. He knew, first of all, that much of it was put upon us by the hesitancy of his office to commit to Northern California. This is a problem you must get recurring in your interviews from people who live up here, particularly as we get into more recent history, because of population and representation.

Chall: Just doesn't count much anymore.

Eliaser: No. When I started out though, it counted a lot. It seems to me in one of Alan Cranston's early statewide elections, not for Senate, but one of the controller's races, that he won his statewide race having lost Los Angeles County--by carrying the heavy populated Bay Area counties, in the aggregate.

Chall: That must have been what, 1958?

Eliaser: Way back. Ancient history.

Mrs. Cranston tells a story of waiting about two days to know this. I believe they went to a movie finally, which they sat through several times, because there was no way of dealing with it. They just had to wait through the count. In those days they counted the L.A. ballots by hand.

Chall: Alameda County's were counted by hand too.

Eliaser: Were they, I didn't know that.

Chall: The only modern source, for counting, I guess, was San Francisco.

Eliaser: Now we find our system antiquated.

Chall: Well, those are interesting touches. I guess you've learned how to handle these campaign details from what you did in the past.

Eliaser: Well, you wing it, a lot. Jimmy Carter, in those days that I mention, was just as tolerant as he could be. By the next visits, he began to be more important in everybody's judgment, including his own--and less tolerant of waiting, lateness of other people, non-appointments when there was something on the schedule. We had to be very precise.

When I took him, in March of this period I'm telling you about, to Southern California, I sent an advance person down there two weeks in advance to work the whole area of his trip twice before I took him down. So that the drive to the various television and radio stations had been run twice, through freeways at top media-time traffic hour.

Chall: Is that so?

Eliaser: Oh, yes. We left nothing to a guess.

Chall: Even to that kind of timing?

Eliaser: I sent a woman to advance it, which was unusual. Traveling with us, unexpectedly, was Ken Rich, one of the top political writers of the L.A. Times, who was socked into the trip maybe two days before. Of course we were thrilled that he would write up a whole three-day visit. He was in the back of the car when we moved out from the airport to make these television stops at prime news time. He said to my little gal, who was driving, "Are you sure you're doing this correctly? Shouldn't you go by the such and such freeway?" She was really thrown by this because he was a Los Angelean, and she said, "Well, if you say so, Mr. Rich, of course I'll go the other way." And he thought about it a minute, and he said, "Have you done this before?" She said, "Yes, Mrs. Eliaser had me do it twice." He said, "You'd better do it that way." And it worked out right on time, all the way.

Chall: So that's the "advance-man" approach?

Eliaser: Right. On the other hand, even at that March visit, there was a hole in the dinner hour of the first night. Governor Carter flew in from Atlanta on his eastern time to L.A. at about five to twelve. I chartered a flight that got us to San Diego late, but in time for a lunch in his honor, with the press conference waiting in the luncheon proper. There was some time after the lunch and we took him over to the San Diego Union I guess for an editorial conference; back to our charter, to land at an L.A. private airport at Burbank, where our car was waiting to take the entire party to these various TV stops.

What we hadn't been able to fill in was the dinner hour. This was ten days away from his visit and I was taking a short vacation with Dr. Eliaser. I left my small staff to deal with that, and we had some options. But again, he was waiting for a Lou Wasserman party and said we must hold that Friday evening, or whatever it was, because he absolutely had to have this money or movie star dinner with MCA.

So, when I went away he was still holding. His visit was only ten days away and that's not good.

Chall: Something must have been going on with Lou Wasserman.

Eliaser: Well, now it's fine, and he's in charge. But at that time no one took Jimmy Carter too seriously, even though Wasserman was an acquaintance, at least, if not a friend, and had promised and he always kept his word. But people who promise things (and I include myself) to candidates and other people, have placed them in a priority setting in our own heads--in relation to our personal lives. So Mr. Wasserman probably thought, this isn't really the most important thing in the world and I'll take care of him and keep my word when it's convenient. But Carter was desperate for that kind of help in the moneyed community.

So I left for a short trip to Mexico, I think, with just that dinner hour, the post television time, not socked in. I had called friends of mine, by the name of Barry and Audrey Sterling in Malibu to ask that if we didn't hear from Wasserman, would they put together a dinner for Jimmy? They said they had met him and they were not ready to contribute to him because they had given to Morris Udall--this was way back--and probably would give to Henry Jackson. (This may not be accurate.) But they agreed that even though they weren't ready to give to him, maybe they could put something together.

She was on jury duty; he was at his office. I spoke to both of them, and that was hanging out there with nothing happening, and no word from Wasserman, when I left. So the gal who was doing scheduling for me I instructed to follow up and call both Sterlings--regardless of Lou Wasserman at this point (because I didn't believe it would materialize and that was a correct assumption)--and put anything together with them that was acceptable. This was, as I have said, the only hole in what was otherwise, I think, a four day perfectly gorgeous productive schedule.

In my absence, a dinner was put together with Mr. and Mrs. Sterling. When I got back I noted that they were entertaining international bankers, because he's in some business related to this--investment. We were instructed that it would be a seated dinner of twelve or fourteen persons. The only restriction on the evening was that we were not to discuss politics, because these were all personal friends and international visitors who were not, at that date, particularly concerned with American elections--which were almost two years off.

Poor Jimmy. He was on Atlantic time and had been through this horribly difficult day, from L.A. to San Diego, back to two news broadcasts, and an hour-long semi-talk show with Pamela Mason and Mort Sahl--which was a little too energetic for him at that late hour in the day. Then he had about an hour by car from Burbank to Malibu. We arrived for dinner at quarter of nine, and had a sip of champagne, which was all they served.

Eliaser: It was a fabulous dinner in this beautiful home. There were four wine glasses at each place. You could tell immediately what the evening meant. Our host, in seating us, thanked us all for being there and honoring them by our presence. He said that Governor Carter was there as their guest, as a courtesy to their very good friend of many years Ann Alanson, now Ann Eliaser, and that they would admonish Ann and the governor not to talk politics because they were there to discuss international finance and other things. I thought that Jimmy would die--he was so tired.

I told the host before we were actually seated, "Look, without offending you, as fast as coffee is served, in your drawing room, we must leave. I will have the gal who's driving us come back. I'll have her go to a drive-in for dinner or something and wait outside." Ordinarily if you had a volunteer driving, they'd be asked in, but this was obviously not that kind of evening--it was very formal. The hostess was very good and she said, "So and so lives in Beverly Hills where you're staying, and they'll take you whenever you want to go." So I let Sue, who was exhausted, go back to her hotel--which was rather a mistake. It was good for her, and her rest, but it meant we were dependent on a couple who felt that certain manners dictated when they could leave.

We got out of there, I would say, at eleven-thirty. Governor Carter and I sat in the back of the car and he instructed me that I was to write to every guest there requesting financial support--he was desperate for it--except for the visitors who were not citizens.

I saw him to his hotel; I had him in something in Beverly Hills that was inexpensive. His preference was to stay with people, but he didn't know anyone down there with whom he could stay, so I picked kind of a shabby chic place where he could be accessible to everybody, but cost him only \$26 a night--which is not expensive for Beverly Hills. I placed his press secretary, and my advance person there too. I stayed up in the Beverly Hills Hotel in a suite, four or five blocks away, so that the next morning when he had to see Mayor Bradley at breakfast, and other important people, whose appointments we set up, they could be comfortably treated. The campaign was never charged for that, of course. That was out of my pocket as my gift--that's a bad word now--but as my participation in his campaign.

I did follow his instructions. The first thing I did the next morning, in the middle of his press conference, was run across the street to the Beverly Hills Jurgensen's and send a fine bottle of cognac to the hosts with a thank you note. Ten days later I got these finance requests out to everybody. The two people from whom we heard, out of the twelve or fourteen guests, were the twenty-one year old daughter of the hosts and a young woman they had--same age,

Eliaser: her friend--who was the daughter of a very very big giver in Beverly Hills who was not for Carter. She sent us fifty dollars--which was very significant. Of course, in later months all of those parents were in the Carter campaign, but at that time it a complete negative, and very embarrassing for me--but it was a place in the schedule.

Chall: But the follow-up letters to a non-political dinner, would, I imagine, be embarrassing. However it was your duty I guess--

Eliaser: I was ordered to, so what I did was dictate the letters, rather than do a form letter which goes to everybody. I dictated each letter depending on the circumstances and the inclination--as I guessed it.

Chall: You had to find out who all those people were and where they lived, though, didn't you?

Eliaser: That's right, and I couldn't ask the host.

Chall: But, was the host ultimately upset by your follow through?

Eliaser: Didn't answer it. But wrote me a beautiful handwritten thank you note for my gift. That was the end of it until the daughter moved from the southland to the East, and wanted a job in the Carter campaign. That brought everybody in. The father of the other girl was already in or one of the leaders of the Carter campaign.

Chall: Do you ever allow time for candidates simply to rest?

Eliaser: I do, and I think it's terribly important, depending on which candidate you deal with. Jimmy Carter doesn't allow time for rest for himself. During those early visits when there was quiet time at airports, before flights, he would whip out a pad of paper that had "Governor's Mansion, Georgia" or something that said "Jimmy Carter, Plains, Georgia," and handwrite thank you notes to everybody; his habit straight through the primary. He never was just quiet. I never saw him read anything but the Wall Street Journal, or a paper that would pick him up on details he needed to know. Quiet time for him, on a plane or in a waiting lounge, was thank you note time, or reading factual material to prepare him for the next stop.

Frank Church, with whom we worked for a short period--long rest times were allocated at the absolute command of Mrs. Church. Hubert Humphrey, never. If you allowed quiet time at four in the morning, he would find someone to talk to, or celebrate with.

Chall: I see. It depends on the person.

- Chall: At the time you were talking about Jimmy Carter nobody really knew that he was running for office. Did you?
- Eliaser: Oh, he was an avowed candidate! He announced for the presidency, I think, at the first part of that year. The minute he left the Governor's Mansion, he announced.
- Chall: I see.
- Eliaser: He left the Governor's Mansion in January--
- Chall: '75?
- Eliaser: Yes. I met him in December '74. January '75 was his last month--part of that, I don't know the day. And he then announced for the presidency in Atlanta. The second press conference was in Washington, D.C.
- Chall: How did he happen to come to your organization for his initial campaign work?
- Eliaser: Personal friends here, and through some connections in Washington, asked him to meet with us, asked us if we would meet with him.

As you know he has campaigned for four years. So he'd come to California many times while he was governor, and was handled up here in Northern California by personal friends. There's one young man from Marin County named Bill Lynch, who I believe worked for the Coca-Cola Company--one of the large corporations in Georgia--who had worked very hard for Governor Carter when he was running for governor. Lynch programmed him in Northern California prior to our meeting. Because he was a Marin person I noted on old schedules that he had kept him almost entirely in Marin, or introduced him to volunteer Democratic club people, in the City, or under the aegis of the Democratic party had organized a fund-raising luncheon. But he had done nothing that really benefitted Carter's ultimate goal.

- Chall: Except for people knowing him.
- Eliaser: Yes, but it was a very limited thing. This is why we were called in, because we were known as fund raisers--and he was desperate for dough, just desperate for money.
- Chall: Do you take clients whom you might not support ultimately, or whom you wouldn't support at all?
- Eliaser: No.
- Chall: So you were favorably enough impressed to take him on?

Eliaser: When I met him in December, we were making judgments of one another. We had exactly five minutes quietly together. My then associate started in with what I call the routine, or the dance--where he usually says, "Well, you have a long time; why are you running; why are you doing this?"--all this nonsense. Carter looked at him with those cold blue eyes and said, "We have five minutes together; why are you asking me these questions?" Then he turned to me, and we continued whatever it was we were saying.

He then said, "I am now going to hold a press conference." This was at an Inter-American Congress on Drug Abuse and Alcoholism, and that's why he was here that December. He was holding a press conference within the framework of that subject matter, and after our five minutes with him he said, "Would you like to join me?" So we were able then to see him in performance, as it were, with the press.

Chall: And how did it come that you took on Frank Church for a while?

Eliaser: Well, we only had Carter for a few months, from this date that I'm alluding to, from that December through about March or April, maybe till May of 1975. They didn't pay us. I thought they were clients; they covered their own expenses and those few expenses of ours that I billed them for. I was terribly careful always that anything I did personally, in the style that I operate, that they weren't charged. For example, the suite at the Beverly Hills or my air fare. They never were billed for anything like that.

But any staff work that I did on their behalf--the room, and the transportation, the car rental for the girl who advanced that trip--I charged them for. And they paid, fairly promptly. They were good about it. Very often in advance work, just so that you move quickly, you pay in advance. On that first visit in January to San Francisco before the state convention, we put them into the St. Francis Hotel because my associate has a cousin who worked there and we got cut rates. What we did was pay for everything in advance because we were moving so quickly. To stop, and to register out of a hotel is a crazy use of time, so everything was paid for in advance. We were trusted, and any little added charges for, let's say, coffee or room service, they sent us a bill for later.

So we went out front, for an awful lot of money for them, and they were relatively prompt, upon careful billing on our part, to repay us. I finally said, "Lookit, we have to charge a fee for this, because I'm paying salaries. This is illegal, in my opinion." And they were unwilling to do that, so after three or four months we had to give it up.

Eliaser: At that time they retained a young man in Southern California. They'd been advised that they ought not to have an office functioning out of Northern California if they could only have one office in California. That wasn't altogether wrong, though my associate at that time said he would have been willing to move to L.A. to do it. So they hired a Los Angeles young man, whom they subsequently fired and who no longer has anything to do with them. It ended up very unhappily. Ultimately they sent their own people out, from Atlanta, which continues to be the pattern in that campaign. It's very closely held.

I was heartbroken, because I was really fascinated with Jimmy Carter and the progress he was making; and felt over a period of months that we had done a lot to mold what he was doing. But it was their wish, and we remained friends. Subsequent to that, later that year, we entertained here in the house in his honor for about thirty-five or forty potential givers, and delivered a couple thousand dollars that night, and solicited more afterwards.

It was still very hard, even at midyear last year. That was early; no primaries had occurred. It was crazy to think you could walk into somebody's house like this and pick up \$5,000 to \$10,000 in a night, which was his goal. He stopped accepting invitations that wouldn't produce \$5,000 in an evening.

So that was it. We continued our relationship.

We're a business, and Jimmy Carter never paid us, even a small fee. I decided we'd charge him \$1,500 a visit, for the two months that we professionally handled him, which was a bill of \$3,000. I always billed them, because the IRS looks at my books, and I'm totally honest and meticulous about my reporting. Those bills are outstanding, and they weren't paid, but we never had a signed contract. My agreement had been verbal with Jimmy Carter. In his first visit he said, "Ann, we're not in a position to pay you an awful lot, but if you'll have faith with us we'll cover our expenses and we'll be able to pay you at some time." But I was paying very heavy salaries and it was an illegal activity, in my opinion. So we just couldn't continue it and remain friends.

Late Frank Church Campaign Preparations, 1976

Eliaser: At the end of last year, Frank Church's friends here asked if we wouldn't put together a visit over New Year's weekend for him--professionally--and help qualify him for federal matching funds in California. They offered to pay us generously for one visit. I

Eliaser: had been an old friend and a rather generous contributor of Frank Church's over the years, so I was thrilled and delighted, although I had been advising them from their first contact that they were coming in much too late. I begged them not to do it. I felt it was wasteful, though I felt in Northern California particularly he could turn on an entire community. He's a typical candidate of the Northern California liberal establishment--which always wins primaries and loses elections.

So we set up. Then I was told the first day of this little visit was to be on Saturday, the third of January--New Year's weekend. And I thought, "Oh, my God." It was just before Christmas this landed in my lap. Dr. Eliaser and I were going away with our children for Christmas, down to Pebble Beach. I thought, "What am I doing?" I had about two weeks notice.

I accumulated lists, and we scheduled over a period--I think he was here three and a half days--and I got the first day. He came in the night before, late the night of the second of January from Oregon. We gave some help up there too, largely press and money. On Saturday, the third, my daughter, who lives across the street, had five couples, privately, for nine o'clock breakfast with Senator and Mrs. Church. I did not go, because it was their relative age group, although some people were closer to my age.

She had Willie and Nan Hearst, for example, who cannot go to any kind of public meeting or give money--when they're newspaper publishers, and so forth. They're very young. Then Rita and Len Sperry from Marin [County], who are younger than I am and older than Mary. Allan and Carol Becker, who are approximately my age, from around the corner. Bill and Joan Roth, who live down the block, were asked but they were out of town. But I would say five or six couples like that, for a breakfast that went for two hours--on the issues, totally--no money, but on the hope that these were such important people that Senator Church could personally then go back for money or even more important help than money.

I, meanwhile, was here across the street, with two telephones; all the staff coming in and out. It was a very easy thing. We were manipulating the rest of the day from right across the street, so that breakfast remained very private, and it was a kickoff really, for the Churches to get into the California thing.

We moved them from there to a brunch at eleven or eleven-thirty at the home of Red and Anita Fay. Now he was the under secretary of the navy for Kennedy and has stayed out front in what I call, at least socially, the Kennedy group. They were very generous in giving a brunch in Church's honor where money was never brought up, but it was very pressworthy--a whole other kind of group entirely--

Eliaser: exposure-wise. One of the television channels was waiting out front for us and we hit all the news broadcasts, which on Saturday is tough to do. And some radio I think was present there.

A good brunch, for which little supporter help ultimately came, except that Herb Caen was there. He stayed the entire time and walked out with Senator Church, and indicated deep interest. I think in fairness to Herb that's all I should say. It was apparent how he felt about it, because he showed it a little too clearly. He was very strongly for Church, I believe, at that point.

And then we left, and I think he went to Madeleine Russell's house for a private lunch, and some private one-on-one meetings--including some people from Texas, and possibly Oklahoma, who happened to be holidaying here--who were going to be trying to raise the matching funds in those states. That was planned. I wasn't in on that.

I came back here again, because all of this was in just a few blocks, to meet with staff, feed everybody two o'clock lunch, rest for an hour.

Church then was scheduled into a meeting at the Jewish Community Center here, again very close by. The center is planning, if they can get federal funding and enough private funding, to build on property they own over here, facilities for the Jewish aging in the Bay Area. Church is very conversant with that topic, and I believe is on committees that influence this funding. He met with the leadership of that proposed project.

Because all of this, for a couple of days, happened in this neighborhood, I housed him in the El Drisco Hotel down the block from here--which is known as "shabby chic." My mother stayed there forty-two years ago when she got her divorce from my father and it was old then. And for thirty-two dollars I got them the most magnificent view suite in the hotel for the night. Money is a consideration.

Chall: Now you had scheduled all of this, all of these events that you've already discussed?

Eliaser: Some of it was put in with me through other people who were involved with them, but all of the printed scheduling, press work, and fund raising was done by us; the transportation plans and what have you. I also postponed our trip to Pebble Beach and on Christmas Eve got out a statewide press release on the entire visit.

Eliaser: They had no public activity planned because of a holiday week, and because of no need--all they really wanted was money. This is the problem with all candidates now; they want "m and m," media and money, and they don't want anything else. And I'm just too good a democrat, with a small "d" to believe that that's correct. I said, "You have to have some place, on that schedule, that is public, even if it's for money, a small amount--so that workers and interested Democrats can meet you and participate with you, and make a judgment.

So they permitted me to schedule a ten dollar no-host cocktail event, that same day at five or five-thirty, at a place called Wharfside Restaurant in the China Basin Building, which is out beyond the railroad tracks on the China Basin Channel. It's on Fourth and Barry Streets, just out nowhere. It's going to be redeveloped--on the edge of what will be redevelopment. The building wasn't used on the weekends so we had the whole place. We mailed about 2,700 invitations that we printed overnight, but which were used as a classic example in the Church campaign. They were sent all over the country after that, because they were so pleased with that invitation. We asked for a response and I had, before I went away for Christmas, some eighty or ninety acceptances. Now how to deal with that?

Three hundred people came. Well, since it was no-host I had carefully ordered enough liquor on consignment--I could send back what wasn't used. We had very little in the way of hors d'oeuvres. We had two more live television broadcasts; in other words we hit everybody but Channel 2 on that visit, live, which on a holiday weekend is really unbelievable. There was that much interest. Three hundred people on a Saturday afternoon. What happened is, people came back from the holiday and found that invitation. They had no way of notifying us; they just came.

Chall: And you had assumed all those people might come?

Eliaser: Yes. It was cold, terrible. From there he went to the Concordia-Argonaut Club here on Van Ness Avenue, which, as you know, is a private Jewish club. That dinner was a cost dinner to their members and guests only. In other words, I guess the dinner cost \$12.50. Frank Church didn't get any; it all went to the club. They sold it out. Here he gave a major address. If you asked me what it was about I'd be very embarrassed.

Chall: Did you tell me that he's required to have a certain amount of rest? [laughs] When did this come about?

Eliaser: You see, everything I've told you up to the time he went to China Basin--my daughter's house, Madeleine Russell's, Red Fay's, and the Jewish Community Center are all within six blocks. It was all

Eliaser: Pacific Heights. So, he could get back. And we finished the Concordia Club at about eleven, on that Saturday night. They didn't leave for Los Angeles until noon the next day, so we had a long breakfast rest hour. Then he was in L.A. for half of Sunday and all of Monday--which we didn't do--except some advance press work.

He flew to Sacramento early, on the earliest plane out of L.A. Tuesday. I had scheduled him with C.K. McClatchey at The Sacramento Bee for an editorial conference, because Mr. McClatchey had been so generous when I had taken Jimmy Carter in exactly a year before. They appreciate it, in the Valley, if you give them a first shot at these people--who look on the Valley, not understanding about our geography, as second and third on their list.

And so Senator and Mrs. Church and their traveling party went to see Mr. McClatchey. I didn't go up there. And from there they went over to the Capitol for a brief press conference which we had set up, and a luncheon that Speaker Leo McCarthy did in their honor--a legislative luncheon.

I have a volunteer who works for me, just out of friendship and love, in Sacramento. He's a young man who's now in law school up there. He and his wife drove. They did the advance work and all the driving from the time the plane landed in Sacramento, to The Bee, to the legislature. This young man's trained to call me at each stop, for messages or changes of orders and so forth.

He drove them to San Francisco, back to the El Drisco Hotel, I believe. Rest and change; a \$250 a head, or a couple--I don't recall--cocktail party in their honor, on Washington Street, where there were photographers and a lot of people. From there he went to a very private party at Madeleine Russell's--sit down dinner for a \$1,000 a person, where they could manage it, otherwise \$1,000 a couple. He left Northern California with, I think, around \$26,000.

In other words he qualified for federal matching funds up here, not in Los Angeles--which was very rare. In other words \$5,000 in small contributions. That \$10 party meant a lot more in terms of federal funds than the \$1,000 one. Because at the \$1,000 party only \$250 of it can be attributed to your matching funds.

All of this has to do with the new election contribution laws. In qualifying state-by-state for federal matching funds, minimum contributions in the total were at least as important as the final large gift. At the Russell's party they were all \$1,000 contributions. The campaign can keep the money; they just don't get matching funds for it.

Chall: Oh, I see.

Eliaser: So it's terribly important; he needed it, it was all spent. But you just don't double it, over the \$250. We learned that the federal law says that, for example, a \$1,000 on behalf of a couple-- we learned this very speedily--you ask the wife to give \$500, or \$1,000 if she will, and the husband the same. Because then \$250 in each of those checks becomes eligible to be matched.

Chall: You really have to know your way around that one.

Eliaser: It was fast learning. I didn't know.

That was Frank Church, and they asked me to stay on. They said that they didn't care what our fee was, that they wished we would stay on for the duration. I said that Governor Brown was beginning to make very positive noises about being a candidate, that I was a Brown appointee, and I thought his candidacy would be a very interesting one that would offer a great deal to the people of the United States, and a whole new look to American politics, which I felt was desperately needed. I felt that if I was lucky he would allow me to work with him; I wouldn't do otherwise as an appointee anyway.

I was so grateful for the experience of working with Senator Church. It was really a perfect visit in every respect. Business-wise, public-wise, it was swell. And that was the end.

Chall: Why was his such a good experience?

Eliaser: It was a rich schedule. Our planning was good, there weren't fake advance, there weren't things you had to do: people were begging for him. What he had to say was fabulous at every stop. More people turning up than you expected. Mrs. Russell saying, "I can only seat twenty-five." And I saying, "Madeleine, if thirty-five people will pay won't you add them?" At \$1,000 usually it works the other way around. Ordinarily you're padding groups. It just worked all the way through.

The Later Edmund G. Brown, Jr. Campaign Preparations, 1976##

Chall: As long as we're on the 1976 campaign, let's continue. You were planning to take on Jerry Brown in his campaign if--

Eliaser: It happened.

Chall: If he asked you and if he happened to decide to run. First of all, you said you were an appointee. An appointee of Jerry Brown's to what?

Eliaser: Tahoe Regional Planning Agency.

Chall: I would want to get into that at another time. But you stayed on it a very short time.

Eliaser: A year.

Chall: So, did you feel that you owed an obligation to him as an appointee?

Eliaser: Yes. And also, I wanted to work with him because I sensed a need in our political life, I think in our entire national life. To say political life is self-limited. Something terribly new is needed in the way of leadership. And something terribly new is needed coming up from people's feet. From the beginning somewhere.

The traditional candidates, even those that might win, were not offering it. Somehow Jerry Brown has a way of appealing to large masses of the electorate, in a way that forces them to do a good deal of thinking for themselves--a good deal of work by themselves. It's been a very productive experience, this campaign, his campaigning. I wanted very much to know more about it, and be a piece of it--learn what this was about. While I realized I was a little old for this group, I knew I would enjoy doing it. [laughs]

Chall: Did he invite you, then, or did you make overtures to him?

Eliaser: No, he did not invite me. I made overtures to him. I knew that he'd been calling national labor leaders, that he had called some of his very heavy contributors from his gubernatorial race, made a lot of telephone calls at the top leadership level. I never expected to hear from him in that respect. Knowing Jerry, I never expected to hear from anybody. So one night, Saturday night at about ten-thirty, knowing Jerry's working habits, I called the governor's office. Called right in, and a young woman answered and said, "Governor's office." And I said, "This is Ann Eliaser. Is the governor in?" And she said, "Just a moment." Jerry came on and said, "Hi, Ann." We must have talked close to thirty minutes, about his running for the presidency. A very serious conversation, in which I said I'd like to be involved.

So, "I'm so glad you called. I have to have my steering committee report by tomorrow. The whole ballot thing has to be set. Would you like to be on my steering committee?" And I said, "Not particularly." I was terribly flattered and if he needed me I'd be happy to. But I wasn't sure that I was the image, the traditional Brown image that he needed--that I was very kind of upper middle class, and an age that people didn't associate with him.

[interruption]

Eliaser: I'm sorry, where are we?

Chall: You were talking about the fact that you didn't think--

Eliaser: Oh, the Brown candidacy and our conversation.

Chall: The image for being on his steering committee. This would have been a steering committee to plan his campaign?

Eliaser: The five-person steering committee which ultimately, by the new definition of the law, is responsible for his campaign--legally. And picks his delegation, and all of that kind of thing in the primary. I said I would be happy to if he couldn't do it another way. But what I really wanted was the work for him to be important. I felt that was honorary--with a few meetings. And I certainly hoped I could do more than that.

He said, "Well, I want all your numbers because we're going to be doing this late tonight and tomorrow. By tomorrow night at midnight that's it." And so I gave him my numbers, and then we talked in depth about the candidacy and what his intention was.

"Jerry, I really don't want to work for anybody who isn't serious about this." I said, "Winning the California primary isn't necessarily awfully much." He said, "Oh, I'm definitely running. I want to win." It was more serious than that.

And I said, "I have this vague feeling--other than that you're probably a little late--that the people will do a tremendous turn-on for your candidacy and that could be very exciting. But there's no point in pursuing this unless you intend to see it all the way through." He said, "I absolutely do," and went on to define his feelings.

I alluded to the fact that the papers had had stories about his ultimately seeking the vice-presidency, and that's all he wanted. He said, "Not at all." "Who said that!" he said very angrily.

So, that ended the conversation. It was little more than that. And, to my great surprise, the next day at about three o'clock Grey Davis, his administrative aide, called me, and he said, "Ann, the governor is simply thrilled that you plan on participating in his campaign." He said, "I want to put my secretary on a minute, and then I want to get back to you. We have to know where all your numbers this evening are, because the governor plans on speaking with you again today." So I explained.

Chall: These are the phone numbers where he might reach you?

Eliaser: Yes. In other words, I'm here now but we're going to my dentist's for a dinner party--all this. Dr. Eliaser's exchange always knows where we are because he's permanently on call unless we're out of the country.

The secretary took all of this down, and Grey got back on and talked a little more about the campaign, and how I visualized it, what I felt I could do. And I said, "I'm in the unfortunate position of always being asked to raise money. If you don't need that, I'm very good at organization, and press, and public relations, functions, anything you want--I really want to serve you where there's room.

He said, "We don't plan on spending very much." And gave me a number that escapes me at this late date. But it was, even to me on that first day, so low as to be unbelievable.

He said, "We don't feel we're going to have to do that much except for buying some advertising." He meant media. He said, "Of course we will be raising money." But he said, "I think we will have enough committed very shortly, but in any case the governor wants to speak to you later."

And this went on, and Dr. Eliaser was home because it was Sunday and he couldn't believe this conversation. The follow-up was so immediate, because that wasn't the reputation of the governor's office.

That was the end of the story.

Chall: Oh! [laughter]

Eliaser: I didn't hear from anybody and a couple of weeks passed. That was the end of the story. I think it's so funny. I love it! Because it's really perfect. After all of this fanfare, and these in-depth discussions, and immediate follow up. So, he did announce--his steering committee was announced the next day. And the only person my age on the committee was his mother. [laughs]

Then there was a Chicano, a black person. Howard Berman was the chairman, Assemblyman Berman of Los Angeles, he was number one. That meant four others. It was done, in my opinion, correctly. And I was very glad that I had made my position clear, because I'm quite sure on that Saturday night if I had said, "Yes, I want to be on it," he would have said, "Fine," period. And it wouldn't have been the best thing for himself.

Oh, Dr. Eliaser and I went away for four days, to the desert just to rest--and I guess I was so excited about this that I called Grey Davis's secretary and left all my phone numbers, expecting to

Eliaser: hear. [laughter] It's like this call I'm expecting from him now. This has been in the air for a year. And there's never been a call. The other evening I came home from a real workout at the office--a very unpleasant day--and at quarter of six Dr. Carlotta Mellon did indeed call me and discuss this matter, and said, "We'll be back to you on it." And that could be another year--or never at all. You really can't tell. It's marvelous that I know how to relate to what happens up there.

Chall: Are you seeking an appointment?

Eliaser: Yes. For somebody else.

Chall: Did you do anything at all for him during his presidential candidacy?

Eliaser: Finally. After this long wait and coming back from vacation and no word, I was speaking with Mr. Martin Harmon of Auburn, California. I had introduced Martin to Jimmy Carter on that first visit way back, and he'd become one of Carter's prime movers in California. You can't say "largest contributors" anymore because there's a limit. But he has friends all over the state and all over the nation, and he really moved into the Carter financial picture. But he remains closest to Jerry Brown, and had been his single largest giver in his gubernatorial race, other than for Joan Palevski, I believe, of Los Angeles. I'm not positive of the numbers.

So I called Martin and said, "What are you going to do?" I beg your pardon, Martin called me. Jimmy Carter was going to be in Los Angeles. Martin had received an invitation to a \$100 cocktail party at somebody's home in Beverly Hills, which he could not legally go to, because he'd given the maximum. Martin trusts me and we've become very good friends through all of this, and he said, "Ann, I'd really like to see him. Is he coming through Northern California? I am ready to go national now. I'm ready to move in Wisconsin; that primary's near, and I know I can do a lot. Could I talk to him for just five minutes?" I said, "Martin, I haven't seen Jimmy since you have. And I don't hear from him at all, but let me take care of it for you."

So I called the chairman of the Carter campaign, who resides in Atherton (who did) and said, "Is he coming up here?" And they said, "No." And I said, "Well, what's the schedule in Los Angeles? Martin's perfectly willing to see him anywhere you want. In an airport--he doesn't want to be invited to a party, he can't legally give money."

And the wife of this man said, "Well, the cocktail party is \$100, and then Max Palevski is giving a \$500 a person (or a \$1,000 dinner) and he can't come there because he's given. We can't really

Eliaser: deal with this. We're in the business of raising new money." And I said, "Polly, he wants to help, he wants to do more. This is important. I haven't given. Maybe I could in some way do this for him, or just something so that he can see Jimmy and help."

She said, "Well, I'll tell Rod (this is her husband, the chairman) to call him, but really we need money. Perhaps he can get someone else, a friend of his, to give it. But otherwise he can't come. We're terribly busy, goodbye."

So I called a youngster named Philip Schaefer I had brought into the campaign because he was a Jewish youth leader when Carter first came out. He had just come back from one of those missions to Israel and he brought a group of twenty young people to meet in Carter's St. Francis suite to discuss Judaism and Israel. It was one of the best meetings I've ever attended with Carter--he was so knowledgeable. There was nothing fake about it, and there was a good deal of give and take. My young friend Mr. Schaefer stayed in, although he really didn't want to--particularly at that time--because I asked him to. And he has turned out to be one of Carter's national chairmen of finance.

I called Philip and I said, "Lookit, you know who Martin Harmon is. How in the world do we take care of him--to get him to Carter?" He said, "Ann, consider it done. I have an extra ticket to the Palevski dinner. I'll call him and he's my guest."

It turned out that Martin ended up moving the state of Wisconsin almost entirely. He traveled on Carter's plane. His brother is there: he owns nursing homes all over the country. Patrick Lucey was about to endorse Mo Udall and he held that endorsement off because of this conversation which they weren't going to allow Mr. Harmon to have. Meanwhile I called him back and said, "Martin, you're all taken care of. You will hear from Phil Schaefer, you're onto the schedule, and everyone's thrilled (which wasn't entirely true). But it's all worked out and I'm so grateful."

And I said, "But what are you going to do about Jerry, because you knew him first and you're so obligated?" He said, "Well, I love him and if he asks me--I gave him a \$1,000 the week he announced, which is all I can give. But I promised Carter first, and I'm really for him. I think I can do more, and that he's the correct person now. If Jerry needs anything of me at any time, he knows I'm available. If he wants the vice-presidency I'll work for it. Why do you ask?"

And I said, "I really am interested in becoming involved there. I told him the story, what had happened, and he laughed. He said, "Do you mind if I call him and tell him and see that you get involved?"

Eliaser: I said, "Oh, that's embarrassing. I wouldn't think of letting you bother him. With all that he's doing, that's silly."

He said, "Well, you mentioned it to me; you can't take it back for something personal like that. Good-by." And he called back in about a half-hour and said, "I've just talked with the governor for fifteen minutes, and I've told him all of this, and you'll be hearing from them." And within minutes somebody did indeed call me. I was invited to lunch with the governor within three or four days, and got all involved in the finance structure of his campaign--where I remained.

Chall: Oh.

Eliaser: Well, that's fine, and that's what I know how to do. And by then weeks had passed and they learned they didn't have all the money they wanted, and that they would have to do almost continuing finance work. And so I put on the governor's \$100 dinner at the Hilton Hotel for close to a thousand people, which was a full-time job with the five or six weeks left by the time that we got connected. I also did actually conceptualize that whole day here.

I felt that they needed the \$100 dinner. Actually as a result of Mr. Harmon's phone call, Micky Kantor, Jerry's campaign manager, flew up from Los Angeles and spent the day here--at that table with me [pointing to her dining room table]--talking about what I wanted to do, what they planned to do, where I could get other people in other states to help, and this kind of thing. He told me what their plans were. At that time they wanted to do, instead of a \$100 dinner, some kind of theatrical. Kathy O'Neil, who was their finance person, thought they could do a Bicentennial theme evening where--oh, the man who does Mark Twain, could do Abraham Lincoln possibly--and Whitmore could do a Harry Truman reading, and Cecily Tyson could do a piece.

Chall: All in one night?

Eliaser: Yes, a theatrical night is what they thought they'd do instead of a dinner, because they thought it would be more Jerry Brown's speed. The idea was that if we could get a facility large enough, we could start at seven or seven-thirty, at intermission serve maybe champagne and a light supper, and then go back in. In that way they would raise the same kind of money, but with a different approach to it.

Well, I thought it was very exciting, but I couldn't believe that in five or six weeks she could put this together. We were all on the phone all over the country, and Micky Kantor's calling

Eliaser: me "the PR guy that had done Alan Cranston's campaign and other things," and telling me, "We're going to go into Maryland, and nobody knows this yet but I want you in our meetings tomorrow," and so forth and so on.

I was terribly excited, to think that we were going into a state where nobody'd ever heard of him, and they were just making that decision at my dining room table more or less. And so we proceeded, and they indeed went into Maryland. And they were in touch with me on a daily basis.

They told the governor about the theatrical evening and he said, "That's much too elitist. I want a plain old-fashioned \$100 dinner the way everybody else does." [laughter] And this was after she had laid all the groundwork, had the evening selected, and we were scouting theaters or hotels with a theater arrangement-- anything that would accommodate. And she had her's firmed in in Los Angeles--had hoped to just ship the whole package to me the next day.

So we started over. And there we were, and it was crazy. So I said, in spite of Governor Brown's feelings, that I knew by then that the national press would be traveling with him full time, and I thought the focus on a \$100 dinner, considering his image, was maybe not the wisest thing. Could we have him for the whole day, pretty much, in the City. And they said, "Why?" I said, "Why don't we do a Union Square, brown bag rally--while I'm doing my dinner, secretly, for a \$100,000. [laughs] Why don't people come for free for lunch with Jerry Brown in Union Square?"

He said, "That sounds pretty good. What do you suggest?" I said, "Well, he doesn't like to waste paper or money on advertising." I said, "Why don't I try to get some brown paper bags, and you print those and distribute them in the downtown offices in the Union Square area so people can actually pack their lunch in the things. They will serve as an announcement." So I got them twenty thousand paper bags.

Zellerbach didn't want to contribute them which was correct, so they sold them to me at a really ridiculously low number, so it was a sale rather than a contribution. And the Brown campaign organization did some flyers as well, finally. And anyhow, it went off: there were eight or ten thousand people depending on which report you heard. The entire focus to the East Coast, because of time, was on that rally--with these mob scenes! And the dinner became incidental--which was my intention. We sold it out anyway, and I sold some of the tables twice.

- Eliaser: So there were no problems, but I was worried about the dinner in San Francisco. The national press comes in, right? And they stay in San Francisco, even if he's in Contra Costa [County] or Berkeley, let's say, or whatever. And they're lazy, as we all know. You do everything for them. So, the dinner would be where they would concentrate and set up their cameras--which they did en masse anyway. But the national news was at Union Square, period.
- Chall: Where do you get ideas like that?
- Eliaser: I don't always. You get a couple a year, that you feel are creative. I really relate to Jerry Brown in some way that if you asked me to explain to you I could not. I think I understand what he's about.
- Chall: You think that he seriously thought that he might be nominated, or that he was seriously running?
- Eliaser: Those have to be separate questions. He was seriously running. He hoped to get the nomination. His own expectations are in some place in an undescribed area where he is neither elated or disappointed.
- Chall: Well, he must have been realistic. As he said, he could count.
- Eliaser: The Maryland thing kind of blew everybody's mind.
- Chall: Because it was so successful.
- Eliaser: Yes, it just took off--nationally--from there. It was a most presumptuous thing for anyone to do if you think about it. With a couple of weeks to go is when they did that.
- Chall: They had to do it if he was seriously running for president.
- Eliaser: Yes. And then Nevada.
- Chall: And Oregon.
- Eliaser: At final count, indeed he beat Carter in Oregon. Frank Church won that handily as you could expect, in any case, I think.
- Chall: And he didn't hurt himself at home?
- Eliaser: He lost a lot of friends. He'd made a lot of people angry, particularly in the legislature. He unnerved some people, including the speaker, who was his chairman, I think. However, when I did get so deeply involved, I went back to his old list--from his gubernatorial race--to raise money. And I won't, on your tape, repeat the language that I got from some of these men. "Why the little so-and-so doesn't return a call." And, "I gave him blankedy-blank, and I've

Eliaser: never been thanked." And so forth and so on. And I found that what I did was create a whole new base, got to new people. And the men that worked with him, that remained close to him, brought in their friends. I didn't do it alone by a long shot, I assure you.

But the stalwarts from his earlier campaigns were not essentially those who came in. And I think that this repeats itself, because he quite conceivably won't thank most of the people--he's famous for that--who worked very hard for him that time; that there will be a drop off of those who really are not deeply, ideologically committed--money types. Then there will be the new ones for his next enterprise. But because the young people, and the people who constitute the electorate, of all ages, remain with him--or new people come in in great masses--what's the difference? It's what you get out of it. This is why I get along well. I didn't ask him for that appointment.

When he called me to appoint me to the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, and they said, "It's the governor for you." I said, "Hello, Jimmy" or something. I didn't expect it to be Jerry Brown on the telephone. And this whole other thing that's going on now is of little consequence in my life. I'm just interested in the process, and in him as a human being.

Chall: Well, you've certainly seen different kinds of people work, and his method is unique.

Eliaser: It is unique. And I think I can say that I trust him implicitly. I am disappointed in a number of things that he does. His knocking of the [Wilson] Riles budget upset me terribly, although I think I understand what he's doing in the field of education. Just all the way along the line; I can't enumerate the legislative problems we have, or his stand on issues that occasionally disappoints me. But as a human being, I trust him.

Chall: And you would trust him to be president of the United States?

Eliaser: Yes! I would. Definitely. We come from different places on separate issues. But don't we all?

Chall: You trust him now, or maybe four years from now, or eight years from now?

Eliaser: I trust him as a person right now. Unless some radical change were to take place in terms of his psyche or his health I see no reason not to trust him.

Chall: Do you think he will learn to administer a little differently, if he were--or would have to?

Eliaser: That was the frightening thing about the serious pursuit of the presidency. It's a problem, more severe with Jimmy Carter in my opinion.

Chall: He's--

Eliaser: Same thing, it's holding the cards too closely. The trusted advisors ingrown, and not trusting anyone outside of your own circle. This is not true of Jerry Brown, incidently. He trusts people. He has a marvelous trust of people, and people en masse sense this. Carter on the other hand trusts nobody. Jerry Brown doesn't delegate: that's the difference. Jerry trusts but doesn't know how to administer--which is your word--or delegate. Carter, on the other hand, knows, but won't.

Chall: Is that going to be a danger if Carter becomes president?

Eliaser: I don't know.

Chall: But it's something to be concerned about?

Eliaser: Yes. I'm on the last of a long list of people, including Dave Broder, and Joe Kraft, and everybody else, who elucidated in print on this matter. They liken him to Nixon, unfortunately.

Chall: Do you agree?

Eliaser: Not in motive, no. Procedure, yes.

Chall: In terms of what you're doing now, and what you used to do as a volunteer--does what you're doing now have in it more creativity, energy, and is it more interesting than what you did as a volunteer?

Eliaser: I have to go back and edit, if I may. I wasn't paid to do any of this Brown thing. They picked up my expenses and they had to pay my secretary. I gave them \$1,000, which I did without thinking, but it put me legally in a bind. I should have skipped it. It meant I couldn't expend anything, a stamp on his behalf. So we had an arrangement where he picked up my costs, so that I would keep him and myself out of jail. But it was totally volunteer, but with a very businesslike motive.

Some of the old time pros in this town haven't given our little office a break in terms of putting on these dinners and events. They simply don't come to us for a lot of boring reasons. So I decided I was going to put on the best God-darned day that ever

Eliaser: happened in San Francisco. The money was irrelevant; I knew they would take care of me in terms of my costs. Because of their fairness, and the relationships we had established, I wasn't worried a bit. But I wanted to be creative, and see that it worked, that they were satisfied, and that everybody involved thought it was the best evening they'd ever had. And that's what we did.

Chall: If you had been in any of the volunteer arms of the Democratic party would you have been allowed to have been as creative, and had your own way about most of this as you did? What I'm trying to do is to contrast what it was like when you were chairman of the women's division--

Eliaser: Oh, no.

Chall: Or even national committeewoman, working on campaigns as a volunteer, with what you're doing now.

Eliaser: Times have changed so radically, but the role of women has unfortunately not changed radically. We did a lot on our own, and we had our own way, if you will--in the role of woman leader. But there were certain doors which were always closed to us, as women volunteers. Whether you're in business or a volunteer, there are certain problems, as a woman, you face.

I remember, and I can't give you the chronology--stop me if we've talked about this in a previous interview--being so frustrated as women's chairman of the party, in not being able to be creative, and open doors up to new, more people (the kind of thing that Brown is doing) that I started something called the Democratic Women of the Bay Area. And the reason I invented that, out of the air, was to get out from under the control of the men in the party. In other words, as women's chairman of the central committee, volunteer, I took orders from men--only could do what they allowed me to do. We weren't equal.

So I started a new, unaffiliated if you will, group that--I forget how many hundreds of members we had over the five or six years we functioned effectively. I know we published a bimonthly newsletter, that we raised enormous amounts of money, put on glamorous events, got great press for candidates, did a lot of things. But I felt I wasn't functioning, even as party leader.

Chall: So, even as a party leader you couldn't function?

Eliaser: As a woman--of course not.

VII PARTY POLITICS, WOMEN, AND RELATED ISSUES

The Role of the Political Party##

Chall: Do you see the role of the political party as one that reconciles different interests, or is it to take a clear stand on issues?

Eliaser: Could I say both? [laughs]

Chall: You certainly could.

Eliaser: I think that the role of the political party within its own body is to reconcile many, many positions, and have room for the expression of many ideas within the party. If you want to stay in power, I suppose you have to take a clear stand, in a public sense. What you say to each other, I would say, is one thing, but what you say to the world--as this is what we stand for, is something separate. When you come down to an election year, we find candidates who can take many positions on the same issue and are pragmatists, are very often the ones who are elected. So, I've just debated with myself pretty well.

Chall: But the party itself must take a stand on issues?

Eliaser: Where else are you going to say it if the party doesn't say it? Why have a two party system if there isn't a difference?

Chall: If something is going on in the legislature, should the party take a strong stand on the issues?

Eliaser: Be marvelous if we could, if we had the strength to pull our act together.

Chall: Basically though, it's the legislators who make the decisions at that point?

Eliaser: Right. We used to do it. You see, I started out where there was a luncheon caucus once a week with party leaders and the Democratic legislators, and they did the whole thing together. It was a marvelous example of citizens and their elected officials working together toward the same goal. It was remarkable. But, as we became disorganized, and when we had these in-group fights, so that we stopped raising money, all of that stopped. I think it has not only weakened the Democratic party, it's weakened the system of government, because you're not having citizen participation where it really counts, which is in the making of laws.

Chall: Is the fact that the legislators now are full time, and that they are given good salaries, has this affected the opportunity for the volunteer to come in and give them any advice and help on policy, because he's not beholden to you any longer?

Eliaser: Yes. Partially.

Chall: I guess you've already expressed this because of the way you did behave at a national convention, but some people feel differently about what a delegate at a national convention should do. Opinions vary as to whether one should use one's own best judgment on an issue, or rely on the state and national party leaders, or follow public opinion.

Eliaser: That has a lot of different things.

Chall: As a delegate, what have you done? A delegate to two conventions?

Eliaser: An alternate to one, and a delegate to two.

Chall: What do you think delegates should do?

Eliaser: First of all, a delegate is now elected by the new caucus system that we demonstrated this last time [1965]. You are elected to represent a certain constituency. It would be unfortunate if you didn't reflect the wishes of that constituency. There's nothing written. There is something written! As a matter of fact, I remember going to City Hall and signing something where at least I pledged to stay with my candidates for two ballots, I think, before I was released. I'm not positive. To that degree your own judgment is removed from you when you are pledged by some kind of honor, and something legal.

So far as voting, and you do as a delegate vote on platform and credentials and so forth, I don't think you'd be elected if your constituency didn't feel you had the judgment once you were there.

Chall: To act on your own.

Eliaser: That's right.

Chall: What's your opinion of a national convention as a method of selecting the presidential candidates?

Eliaser: A presidential convention today serves more as a focus for the nation to recognize the political process and the choices before it. As long as primary laws differ state-by-state, a judgment on candidate selection and convention status is difficult to make. But, as you can gather by my opinion statements, I would be unhappy to lose the focus of a convention, since it serves a number of purposes besides candidate selection.

Women in Politics##

The Place of the Women's Division in the Democratic Party

Chall: And now I have a few questions to ask you about women in politics, some of which we've touched on, some of which we haven't. I just threw them into a pile to wait till the end.

There seems to be a recurring, I don't know that it's a problem but it's a controversy that you see discussed in the press once in a while about the women's division. In 1970--this was just prior to your 1971 campaign for northern chairperson--the press reported that "another target of widespread dissent came at a hearing of a subcommittee plan, a recommendation that would, in effect, downgrade the Women's Division of the Democratic Central Committee. Its leaders would no longer be full-fledged officers of the state party." And at that central committee meeting in 1971, Adele Leopold, for the first time, it was said, had the Democratic women caucus separately.

Eliaser: I remember it very well.

Chall: And she's quoted as saying, "The decision-making body of the Democratic party need not be a male preserve." The women debated whether it was inconsistent with their goal to remain a separate division, and some of them urged the creation of a man's division. And some of them have urged various other things. But I keep finding this concern today and I'm wondering what it means.

Eliaser: Nobody understood her at that time. She was a woman before her time within the party.

Chall: What happened?

Eliaser: She was very strident. Didn't win as I recall. And nobody understood what she was trying to do. She was striving for equality, but most of the women leaders who were present at that meeting, as I recall, felt they had achieved their's. They had recognition by virtue of whatever little office or membership appointment they held. They felt they would lose everything by moving into the kind of thing she was attempting to designate.

Chall: What exactly was she attempting to designate? There was a women's rights platform adopted, but I think that was something else again.

Eliaser: And these are areas of compromise, because you don't get something else.

What she was trying to do was abolish the women's division, not to abolish women. But to have them equal in getting offices of the party, equal in their activities, equal in the making of policy.

Chall: Well, how would you achieve this?

Eliaser: I was able to debate the other side of that, and I still can. By abolishing a women's division, you're abolishing a place for people who, in their own minds, may not be ready to accept equality with men. That's important, because there are still a lot of women, particularly older women, who are more comfortable working with other women. And what you're saying is, there's no place anymore. There's no umbrella under which you are welcome or can work.

The other side of that are women who feel they are equal to men, who work as hard or harder, who know as much or more, who feel put down by being left in a women's division and being told you are lesser persons. At the time of that debate, and I remember it very well, they were not ready for Adele at all.

Chall: Are they ready for her now?

Eliaser: Some are, some aren't.

Chall: What would happen if you had a single division of the party, and didn't have women structured into something separate? They could still be active doing the work in campaigns that they do now under a different aegis; the committees could be set up. But what about the leadership? Would women ever have an opportunity at any level to be party leaders?

Eliaser: Probably not. As things presently sit in front of us, possibly not. There are ways of changing that, because women are organized today and they have the sense of sisterhood that they

Eliaser: did not formerly have, and certainly didn't then. They were watching out for themselves, or for the little corner they'd already won.

I think that all you do is take a walk. I'd be, probably, for abolishing the women's division now, and hoping that we would have equality for officers, and policy makers, and office holders, legislatively. And if there was a concerted effort to keep us out, I'd say, "Fine. Let's take a walk, women." Just absent yourselves. Just organize. Men can't get where they are without us. They may think they can. No way can they get where they are without the effort and the support of women. There's one marvelous way of getting them to understand it. That's not to debate, or compromise, or anything else; that's just to leave for a very short time.

Chall: The next time around, in 1973, Patricia Nisbet tried to become chairman of the party and she didn't make it either.

Eliaser: She had a very small base of support. She's fine--she's a very attractive, very able woman. But, she didn't ever work at a level in the party where she could do it. And I don't think the women's issue was at stake there.

Chall: She made it seem so by saying that--

Eliaser: It was not the case.

Chall: --the regular bi-annual attack on the existence of the women's division of the party might come about; she felt that women would lose what little influence they now had and get nothing in return.

Eliaser: I'm not sure.

Chall: Would it be possible, do you think, to set up a sort of fifty-fifty representation in the party; that is, to insist that women have half the leadership roles every year?

Eliaser: I'd be opposed to that, because I think that if there are better women, more of them, they should have more. But I wouldn't want to make a judgment on the basis of sex, because I think it's a kind of reverse discrimination. I think we've gone beyond that now, and we maybe don't know it.

Chall: What do you think prevents women from becoming chairman of the party?

Eliaser: Past experience and fear of trying. Once you've been put down often enough, you feel in your head that you're put down before you find out.

Chall: Do you think women just aren't going to try?

Eliaser: Well, I think that your statistics on women seeking public office in the last couple of years show that.

Chall: More women are trying for public office, but they're not trying to become head of the party.

Eliaser: No.

Differences Between Men and Women in Politics: Myth and Reality

Chall: Not in California.

Eliaser: No. Not. But, generally women who are trying to achieve, let's say, something electively have not been too successful. There was a push forward and then a year or two ago, a considered drop back because of the losses, the inability to get money for women candidacies. I think for instance if you saw, when I ran, what I spent as opposed to what Jack Brooks probably spent, you'd see that intra-party stuff is the same as running for office in the outside world.

Chall: You actually think that women are finding it hard to raise funds for their own campaigns?

Eliaser: Yes. I'm active in a national group [Women's Campaign Fund] that has tried in the past to raise funds for women. And currently, the National Women's Political Caucus wants to hire Compass Associates to raise money for their next national convention. [September, 1977] I finally got a proposal off to them yesterday. I have very mixed feelings about it. I'm not sure we can do it.

Chall: That you could raise the money?

Eliaser: No. And I'm trying to tell them that without putting it in writing.

Chall: Why is it hard? Of course there are several organizations now that are raising money for women candidates.

Eliaser: That's it. They have to pull their act together.

Chall: It's a hard job.

Eliaser: It's competitive. The minute you set up an organization, you're going for administrative costs and a lot of other things. I think you have to set forth your goals, and in fact I put that in my proposal.

Chall: You're considering, for Compass, it would be raising money in order for them to have their convention. It isn't for the candidates fund?

Eliaser: What we put forth was raising seed money for their convention, but what they want of us primarily is to raise all the money that's being raised at their convention. It's my contention that you have your own cadre. The individual women have spent their resources in transportation and housing, and they're going to have very little else to spend at a fund-raising event or for philanthropy, as I--trying to be humorous--said in my proposal. I asked, "Are there people in the Bay Area community or nationally who are interested enough in your convention to participate in funding events for it?" I'm not sure if they exist. What I was trying to point out is that you can't keep going back to your own people for more and more, when it's not there.

Chall: Are women just not giving money?

Eliaser: They don't have it. Women who have it, give. They hear from Joan Palevsky, I'm sure. And Mrs. Norman Lear, now and then. And Maya Miller of Nevada. But it's a short group.

Chall: Well, it's been said that women can't raise campaign funds, and I suppose that's a real problem, but they also have said--I don't know that this is true, since many women have shown that it isn't--that women can't state the issues and that they have difficulty organizing a campaign. Is that so?

Eliaser: Women don't have difficulty organizing a campaign, and women candidates can certainly define the issues. There are many, many articulate women. They have to be allowed the time and the training and experience to gain it. You just can't come up from nowhere and start talking about national policy, or state policy, or San Francisco policy. But if you've been active for years, and involved and informed, there's no reason you're not as good as any man, and very often better.

I think Dianne Feinstein here is a good example. She does her homework; but she's in the extraordinary position, because of her own wealth, to be able to spend full time at this. Most women activists today are earning to support themselves and very often supporting a family unit as well, and that, therefore, puts a natural limit on the time they've got for study and organizational participation.

Chall: But men also--most of them have jobs and they still seek out these extra positions. And I'm wondering, do they spend much time on their homework?

Eliaser: Well, on their homework, possibly, but not on their homes. Neglect to family. Those of us who work, go to work at eight o'clock or so and come home at six or seven. We run households. If we were fortunate to have children, we are concerned with their well being; not only economically, but we want to consult about problems, keep them company on various of their endeavors. We do all of that, plus our job, plus our volunteer activities whether it be politics or something else. The burden of the woman, if you want to call it a burden, is about triple what it is for the average man who does conduct a work career and a political one.

Men have much more freedom than women. They don't know the price of a loaf of bread. And it's only now that men are beginning to see the inside of the supermarket, of the kitchen, know what it is to take care of the diapers and the formula. That's so new, but traditionally-- I think the numbers of divorces in the Congress and locally show you that there really isn't time for family, and the desired interpersonal relationships within families, for a political leader. It just doesn't exist. It's impossible.

Chall: Whether it's a man or a woman?

Eliaser: That's right.

Chall: Do you think that'll ever change? We still need political leaders and we still need good homes. Are they mutually exclusive? Or only to certain kinds of individuals?

Eliaser: I don't know. Possibly mutually exclusive.

Chall: So individuals who might have good sense on issues, and also a family, might have to sacrifice one for the other?

Eliaser: Perhaps it's a new sense of sharing for the mate, if the wife is the elected person. There must be some kind of sense of sharing on the part of the husband, or more often the wife who is left at home, because the male is the candidate.

I've noticed all kinds of symposia and so forth being developed in Washington for the candidates and the congressional wives, but we ought to think of it first at the local level, because you can't just develop into that kind of person once you've got to Congress. It takes years of understanding and mutual striving to get there in the first place, and it's usually too late once you're in Washington, let's say, to get your training for this kind of thing. I think that's a whole field that maybe isn't being dealt with that's important--how you keep families together, and keep them healthy, and have this large trip that public office is all about--what it means to egos, which is where it's at. Sexual implications. Lots of things.

Women's Activities

Tuesday, February 22, 1968

THE FRESNO BEE

Party Leader Mixes Home, Politics

By Eva Altintop

A woman whose primary concern is the well-being of her home and family can best serve her interests by becoming involved in politics.

This is the opinion of Mrs. Ann Alanson, whose climb to the highest nonelective office within the state Democratic party structure began by ringing doorbells for her local precinct.

"I'm no feminist," said the bubbly national committee-woman from California, "but when it comes down to the basic issues—education, labor, consumer problems — women are exceptionally 'hep.' In many respects they are better equipped to discuss these issues than men.

"Because of circumstances of their role as housewife or mother, women are constantly concerned with budgets, marketing and education — and they know what they want. Getting them to activate or participate in these issues is another matter."

Former chairman of the Northern California Women's Division, Mrs. Alanson has been active in the Democratic Central Committee since 1956 and the San Francisco Democratic League since 1952. She visited Fresno yesterday to address members of the Fresno County Democratic Women's Club.

Asked why there are so few women in the higher echelons of political office holders, Mrs. Alanson declared many women feel they can't combine home with politics.

"What has held women back mainly is that so many can't leave their home for protracted periods of time because of children. What we need to examine is a means to find a way of permitting women with talent more time to give greater service."

Mrs. Alanson admits she is one of the "fortunate ones." The mother of a college coed, she feels confident about leaving her San Francisco home for occasional trips and is sometimes joined by her hus-

band, Lionel, a registered Republican.

"What we can't overlook is that women can do the greatest service by working at the local level, in the party headquarters and precincts."

Mrs. Alanson cited one drawback was the lack of recognition for serving the parties at the local level.

"There are women who neglect the home base in order to attain recognition for ego gratification. They can neither be successful women nor politicians if their home and children suffer. Women whose political aspirations come before the home can't really offer substantial contributions to politics, either," she declared.

But many women are doing their community service at the local level by joining women's organizations, she added.

"We would be lost without them and there's a crying need for more."

On the subject of women becoming motivated and involved Mrs. Alanson said:

"Women today have a quality of education which permits them to become better informed than we were 20 years ago.

"Many of the young coeds in colleges today have a genuine interest and knowledge of the national and state political issues because of the quality of education they are getting. They can be as active as the men.

"There's no reason to be concerned about the double standard today. I've always considered myself equal with men and I've never felt subjugated. I really feel that much of the 'double standard' is self-imposed. As women we cluster together in little groups instead of taking on something on our own.

"Having constantly worked with people these years, I've gained a little confidence and although my job is a legally nebulous one, I feel I am fulfilling my obligation. I might even consider actively running for office."

Mrs. Alanson, whose appointment as committeewoman by Gov. Brown came as a complete surprise, also discussed the current student unrest in colleges.

"We sometimes tend to look askance at some of the student demonstrations which

usually take a leftist viewpoint. I think we can be consoled if we remember that many of these students are simply rebelling at their parents' viewpoint and that once they are out of school they will be faced with the same economic and employment pressures as the rest of us.

"They will have to adjust their views and perhaps will even change them. What I think is good is that these same people will be the ones who will be able to offer and perhaps influence the thoughts within their own party groups. I'm always in favor of open dialogue."

Chall: I guess the questions are being raised now because women have wanted entrance into politics, and they resent the fact that they're always asked about the family, and the men have never been asked these questions.

Eliaser: Wouldn't have the answers if they were!

Chall: It's also claimed, and you've probably been able to see a great deal of this, that women can't handle stress, that they're too emotional, they show their feelings, that this is embarrassing maybe to men. At the very least women can't handle stress as men can. Men, at any rate, don't show how they feel about things. Is that so?

Eliaser: I think you have to separate, for the purposes of this conversation, stress and emotion. I think we all face stress in whatever we do in life, and people have different levels at which they handle it. Emotions are something else. I don't think it's ever wrong to be honest about one's emotions. Anyone who's out front about how he feels and reacts is an honest person. The guarded person is the one I fear. Not the man who cries. Not the man who speaks from anger, and if he's able, to apologize afterwards if he's incorrect, or to back it up if he has been correct. This is for either a man or a woman. There's nothing the matter with that.

I think women have a better base in which to react to stress than men, because their life's experiences totally have equipped them, where men haven't had to deal with certain stress factors. They have been protected by women, starting with their mothers. But women really have to have dealt with stress.

I think perhaps families in war better show this. It's a hard thing, and I haven't read a lot, I'm just talking to you--I'm reacting--but with respect to families in war, it's the woman who is separated from the mate, who has the economic and emotional responsibilities of her family. She rises to this generally, and manages, whereas the man goes off and fights the battle, and is faced with the blood and guts of the situation, and the deprivations, and the heroism, and the women, and the whole other thing. I just think in recorded history, that women have developed into the stronger grouping--only historically, not necessarily as individuals, one person as another, but in terms of their life experiences and how they've had to deal. Possibly it's because they've been pushed down so far that they have dealt, along with everything else that's affirmative, with that terrible negative position of being a second class citizen.

Chall: What about women whom you've seen in public life, and men? Let's even consider the stresses of the campaigns or party leadership, the elections and all that go with it. Do you find that men and women react to the same situations in approximately the same way?

Eliaser: Yes. I remember when I ran and I was defeated, or even before the vote was taken. We were asked--the major candidates were asked, once we were nominated--to address the convention. I had very few written remarks, a little outline I think I made on one card, because I'm not good unless I extemporize. I got up and I spoke for twenty minutes to four thousand people or whatever it was, and it was somewhat stressful. I got so I enjoyed the sound of my own voice and it went pretty well. I felt good about it after it was over. I was proud that I held my head high, because I knew I was going to lose. Then I went on to address these caucuses we've alluded to. But Moscone's staff people were saying, "You know where she is? She's behind the stage in tears. She collapsed immediately after that."

##

Eliaser: "She just can't stand that kind of stress." I wasn't even thinking about it. I was off to my next challenge.

Chall: Therefore, it's just a myth that women can't handle stress?

Eliaser: Some women can take stress. Some men can't. It has nothing to do with sex. That's ridiculous.

Chall: There is a feeling that women are not going to get very far in the party or as candidates unless they begin to show that they are seriously working up the ladder, that this is an intention of theirs. Once that's realized, they probably will then be able to achieve these positions.

Eliaser: Women have been working up the ladder in the twenty-one years or so of my experience. We've all started someplace stuffing envelopes, and then taking the districts chairs, or the county designated offices, and worked our way up to vice-chairmanships or those slots that are allowed to women. I've rarely seen a woman try to start from the top. There's one instance recently where this happened here. But men always start from the top.

Chall: Then it's expected that they're in the party for some position.

Eliaser: Oh, when a man comes in, he's not coming to serve a particular issue. Occasionally, it's to support a friend or coworker who's trying to achieve office. Men come in and they definitely are looking for a slot somewhere, and that's usually for a slot someplace else outside of the party.

- Eliaser: I think women haven't had the money, and very often not the experience, to know this or to have done it that way, so they'll have to be creative and experimenting in order to get to the same end. That's fine. I think it enriches the total political experience to have that, particularly if you win.
- Chall: And so you feel that women--?
- Eliaser: Out of necessity.
- Chall: Are they less assured and less confident than men in the same spot?
- Eliaser: Yes. Because they don't have the cash. They don't have the backing and support, because of their femaleness, and there is good and proper cause for fear.
- Chall: Does this fact that they are less self-confident, less self-assured mean that they tackle their work in a somewhat different way?
- Eliaser: Women are more thorough. Less superficial. Have to be, again. They have fewer people to do it for them. They can't take anything for granted.
- Chall: When you were working with Claire Dedrick did you find that her approach to her job was different, let's say, than some of the men with whom you'd worked in somewhat similar positions?
- Eliaser: I knew one other resources director, the first one for the state of California, who had been a state senator from San Diego, Hugo Fisher. I saw sameness in their approach, because of their liberalness, and their approach to the issues, and their great care about the environment. For the little I've seen of both of them, I would say they came from the same place, and were doing the same job the same way, and from the same high degree of motivation.
- Chall: There was a survey made of Democratic women--this was a survey made of women who had been delegates and alternates to the '64 convention--and it showed that they were generally more liberal than men on whatever the scale was that these writers used.* This gave rise to their theory that female leaders probably contributed to intra-party tension and conflict, and more generally widened the inter-party

*Edmund Costantini and Kenneth Craik, "Women as Politicians: The Social Background, Personality, and Political Careers of Female Party Leaders," Journal of Social Issues, Volume 28, Number 2, 1972, pp. 217-235.

Chall: differences along the liberal-conservative dimension. Do you think, first of all, that the women whom you've known in Democratic politics are more liberal than the men you've known, by and large?

Eliaser: No.

Chall: So, if there's any intra-party tension it isn't due to the fact that the women are there?

Eliaser: The women have less to lose 'cause they have nothing to start with, so if there's a matter of principle to debate, it's a lot easier to take a strong liberal position, since you have no place to go anyway or no high office to lose. In that respect, perhaps these writers are correct. I see a woman's motive very often different than the man's, who has to negotiate, give a point here and there in order to stay in. That's not how I see women thinking.

Chall: So the intra-party tension, if there is any, results from other reasons than that the women are more liberal than the man?

Eliaser: Women look down the road further. Men look to how we're going to solve this problem right here, because we have to. Let's take 1964, 'cause it's a good example, on that compromise of the southern delegation seating. Fannie Lou Hamer--may God rest her soul--I saw she died last week.

Chall: That was the seating of the Mississippi Freedom Delegation?

Eliaser: That's right. And I certainly was among those that might be said to have caused more tension, because I was the first vote of the California delegation in that it was an alphabetical role call, and I insisted that we go with the more liberal point of view. And the male leadership was simply appalled at what I was doing.

[interruption]

Eliaser: We were talking about the Mississippi situation of the '64 convention. If we were to break down the vote in the caucus, and I'd be hard put to do it, I'd say that the women voted almost in a body.

Chall: Is that right?

Eliaser: I'm sure Carmen would confirm this.

Chall: Yes. I'll check that with her.

Eliaser: Libby Gatov was a leader up there on the stage. She voted with Pierre Salinger, and Governor Brown, and the male leadership, to go with the Lyndon Johnson-Hubert Humphrey compromise, which was to seat three people of the blacks and let the red-necks still hold on to their power.

Chall: Except that they made a ruling that there was to be equality in 1968.

Eliaser: That was the compromise they ended up with, but what we wanted to do was to show our good faith immediately. The leadership, which was predominately male, was very interested in our caucus at least assuring Hubert Humphrey the vice-presidential nod from Johnson. They were told, true or false, but that's how Humphrey was able to get us to behave on this matter, that this was his guarantee of the nod. It was ridiculous. Johnson was going to take him no matter what. They just wanted to get through that convention. Johnson had insisted we get through that convention, as he tried four years later, unsuccessfully, peacefully, with no ripples.

I think, in this instance, on the vote in the California caucus at least, we were looking down the road another way. Not to how the convention would be in four years, which was a disaster which nobody could have understood at that time, but looking down the road to our society and what an act of great good faith would mean in terms of peace in the cities. Really building in the community outside the Democratic convention, which is a very small matter indeed, by seating a bona fide, racially balanced, correct delegation that legally was entitled to be there at that time.

When I say looking down the road, I wasn't talking about keeping the peace or worrying about a convention in four years. I was talking about racial strife in the cities, and I think you'll find--and I'm sure Carmen will confirm this--that women and urban congressmen voted as a bloc to seat them all then, because they saw the handwriting on the wall. Because peace in the convention--who's going to be a vice-presidential nominee when it was really, honestly, if you could see your way through the booze and the smoke, decided anyway--is not awfully important as compared to where we were going in those years in our big cities. We were on the brink of disaster. In many cases we had the disaster.

Chall: Generally speaking though, have you found that the balance of liberals and conservatives in the party is about equal?

Eliaser: Yes. And I think that's fine. It's really important that we have an umbrella under which people of many ideologies can come together. And whether they represent male or female isn't too relevant.

Chall: Today women have it easier when they run for office, certainly easier than it was in 1956. Do you think that you would have done it if it had been generally as easy as it is now, or acceptable?

Eliaser: To run for public office? No. I've never been interested in it.

Chall: Have you noticed any changes in women as candidates compared to what they were when you first saw them?

Eliaser: Yes.

Chall: What's the difference?

Eliaser: They're much less defensive, far more aggressive, have demonstrated their equality as candidates, the equality with men. Because we started out, I think early, with chips on our shoulders. Much of this has left, and we're out front on issues and organization. I find women, as a matter of fact, much more organized as candidates than the male candidate, because that was their only role for so many years!

Chall: What about sex discrimination? Were you as aware of it twenty years ago as you are today?

Eliaser: Yes. I maybe didn't think about it so much. I accepted it. I was a woman. I didn't know anything else--whether it was in employment, or politics, or just a general social situation. When I was a bride here in San Francisco, we'd walk into a room and the women were on one side of the room talking about babies and diapers, and the men were on the other side of the room. It was awful.

Chall: And the same thing held true in your other public activities at that time.

Eliaser: Oh, surely!

There were women's committees. I worked on a women's committee for the Jewish Welfare Federation, women's committee for the United Way, and so forth.

Chall: Now, does it upset you? Do you sort of fight against it if you can?

Eliaser: I do. Even in philanthropy I've become very vocal. I told the Jewish Welfare Federation this last year that I'd double my contribution if I would be invited into a general meeting, or if I was not considered part of a women's division. I said I won't give if I'm solicited by the women's division. But I was solicited by a delightful young woman. It was very obvious that this was the first time she'd ever asked anybody for anything. I've been a volunteer all of my life, and I couldn't refuse her. She didn't know about this. I wouldn't put anybody who's working and giving in that position. So I said, "You don't need to call on me; I'll just send you my check." And I gave her a raise from last year as I do every year. That was it! [laughs] I tried.

The Women's Movement and Family Interests

Chall: About the trend in the women's movement. Do you think that it's good for men, women, and children, and society at large? That's the whole idea of sharing, and women having the same opportunities as men if they can cope with it, and want it.

Eliaser: You mean do you think equality is good for men, women and children? Yes. And I think that bringing children into it is really the point. We learn when we're young. We just don't accidentally fall into this at age twenty-one, and have it happen, even though I have cited examples, just in the last question, of that. I obviously grew up expecting that to happen to me or I would have fought it then.

Chall: Are you for the ERA?

Eliaser: Certainly. I don't think it'll accomplish much, but we've got to make that first step someplace. Oh, really I'm for it.

Chall: And you do work with the National Women's Political Caucus and these other groups so you feel that they are aiding women, I assume?

Eliaser: That's right.

Chall: That's the background.

Eliaser: Exactly. And I'm convinced that these women's groups, either as groups or individuals, will help men who are their friends also. I don't want to see reverse discrimination happen to us during this fight. It's easy to have it happen.

Chall: Your daughter seems to be interested and active, to some extent, in politics. Would you want her to follow in your footsteps in politics--working up in the party--giving so much of her time and energy to it?

Eliaser: Yes, though it's less likely.

Chall: Dr. Eliaser, I assume, has an interest in what you do, and truly supports your political activities. Does he enjoy the excitement you generate around the house here? Could you do it without his support? Does he attach any restrictions to your activity?

Eliaser: Dr. Eliaser does support my political activities, in spirit as well as financially. He claims not to enjoy the excitement generated in the house but I am told by his colleagues that he enjoys talking about it and basking in it outside of the house.

Eliaser: I could do it without his support but the quality of our marriage would not be as wholesome and desirable as it is presently is.

He attaches no restrictions on my activities. Any restrictions to which I may have alluded have been instituted by me--often out of consideration for him.

Personal Disappointments and Goals

Chall: I really think I have finished. So what can be done with the next few minutes is for you to think of anything that you want to put on tape that we may have left out, or I have forgotten to ask you.

Eliaser: We've spent so many hours over such a long period of time that it's hard for me to recollect those things we touched upon. If you were to play this back to me its entirety, I'd say, "Oh, my goodness. I forgot to tell you of so-and-so."

Chall: Yes. Well, you will get your edited transcript, and then you can add if you want to.

Eliaser: I feel, for instance, my political life experience is an on-going one. And my learning in this whole system is a continual learning, too. And I'm discovering that there are things I would have done differently back there if I had known what I now know. But isn't that true of life?

Chall: Yes.

Eliaser: I was struggling, and I was having some huge emotional, terrible emotional reactions to things--to get back to that question.

As a woman in the party structure--not for losing a battle where I ran for something, 'cause I always conducted myself I think perfectly, but when I felt discriminated against as a woman or discriminated against because I didn't have as much money as the large contributors, I would be reduced to tears.

Now a man might react differently, but he'd have the same feelings. And I think a woman's crying occasionally is a lot better way to handle tension or stress--distress, is really the word--than a man who bottles it up and uses it in a very negative or else in a dangerous and fighting way. Best to feel really badly for a while and work it through, or express it, verbalize it, and go on with your work, than do what many men have to do, because of the role we feel men have, which is not to react to distress, not to be emotional, cry, angry, whatever.

Eliaser: You hold that in, and it comes out sometimes in another way that's very awful. Being against a person, not handling an issue well, not handling money in a responsible fashion. I think, far better to react, if it's honest and it isn't overly embarrassing, and let it go. Then, go on with your work.

I remember wanting an appointment from the governor. I think we may have mentioned it on the tapes. Carmen left the Fair Employment Practices Commission, when she was very angry with the governor and quit.

Chall: Is that why she quit?

Eliaser: That was what the papers said. Again, her version may be different. She may have some other important reasons in her life that we don't know about.

In any case there was an opening, and I wanted to do that work very, very badly. I saw it as a perfect place for me to work for the state, which I had never done, in a field where I had done a lot of homework, where my sympathies were correct from the administration's point of view, and so forth. I saw it as a beginning of a lifetime career, ultimately out of politics. I believe that in everything that I've done, I've looked for avenues where I could keep on working, possibly outside of the structure. Just interests, which would grow, and where problems would be solved.

It was pretty well promised. I had the support of the attorney general here, and another state senator, and help from any numbers of people like Bill Coblentz, and so forth--Libby, Roger, and Tom Lynch, Gene McAteer. The governor was very interested. His appointment secretary, who was then his sister-in-law, May Layne Bonnell [Davis], was very hopeful.

Pat was about to go into (or was already in) his third campaign then. And a very large contributor in Los Angeles came up with \$50,000 and the quid pro quo was that his wife have this appointment. Brown was so embarrassed. It was terrible. And when I found out, I must say that I really wept. I was angry and insulted, because I really had earned it, and was educated into doing the job. I just felt awful. It was a lovely woman, and she was dedicated to it, but they had to leave in the middle of her term. Pat was not elected. He found business interests abroad, and they moved to Switzerland or Paris, or both, I guess. So she left, and so Reagan got that appointment, which is a far more serious vacancy than when I leave a Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, for example, and help my governor to find my replacement so that our ideology continues. Leaving Reagan with that appointment was shocking in something as critical and sensitive as that.

Eliaser: But, she was a fine gal and did a good job for as long as she was there. I feel that I was better equipped to do it, more deserving, and everything else. I didn't have fifty thousand, I didn't have fifty dollars to give him then! I remember reacting just terribly to that. But I went right on working. I could express the hurt, and really be terribly upset for two or three days, but my job never suffered from it because I was able to express it and feel it. Embarrassed everybody else for a couple of days. They all felt awful, but the job was done, and then the new job was taken on, and so forth.

Financially I'm in a different position today. I'm in a position of a middle giver, not a big giver, but a very generous middle giver, and I've come to work far more closely with the rich people, and have appreciated where they are coming from and what their problems are. But where I am in my head, and where I am in my work is with the have-nots, or with the people who are very little, trying to find leadership places for them within our work in our society. I feel very strongly about it. Not because I was once there, because I've always had a privileged life, but because I've understood it, and because of the way I was treated in politics. I understand it because I'm so sensitive to all of those problems. If I continue to work, that's where I'm going to stay. I'm never going to be in a social or structured sense with the rich people.

Chall: Good. That sums it up quite well.

Transcriber: Harriet Older, Cheryl Ishida
Final Typist: Keiko Sugimoto

TAPE GUIDE -- Ann Eliaser

Interview 1: July 6, 1976	1
tape 1, side A [side B not recorded]	1
Interview 3: October 27, 1976	22
tape 3, side A	22
tape 3, side B	30
Interview 4: November 30, 1976	57
tape 4, side A	57
tape 4, side B	74
insert from tape 5, side B	94
resume tape 4, side B	100
Interview 5: January 6, 1977	102
tape 5, side A	102
tape 5, side B	117
insert from tape 6, side B	130
Interview 6: February 3, 1977	134
tape 6, side A	134
tape 6, side B	153
Interview 7: February 14, 1977	165
tape 7, side A	165
tape 7, side B	176
tape 8, side A	188
tape 8, side B	200
Interview 8: March 24, 1977	214
tape 9, side A	214
tape 9, side B	226
tape 10, side A	239
insert from tape 3, side B	243
Interview 2: September 16, 1976	250
tape 2, side A	250
tape 2, side B	266
insert tape 10, side B	278
resume tape 10, side A	280
resume tape 10, side B	287

INDEX -- Ann Eliaser

- Abbott, John, 50-51
 Abel, Bess, 145
 Abernathy, Elizabeth, 98
 Alanson, Bertram, 22, 24-25, 35, 39
 Alanson, Lionel, 3, 12-13, 20-35, 37, 112, 130, 143, 147, 199, 218, 237-238
 Alanson, Mary (Mrs. Millard Rosenblatt, Jr.), 26-28, 30-32, 121, 168-169, 188, 262, 294
 Alexander, Shana, 189, 195, 197-198, 200
 Alioto, Angelina, 238-239
 Alioto, Joseph, 171, 209, 236-237, 239
 American Federation of Television and Radio Artists [AFTRA], 36-37
 Anspacher, Carolyn, 98-99
 Arvey, Jacob, 148
- Bailey, John, 99
 Barron, Alan, 235
 Bayh, Birch, 234
 Behrens, Earl (Squire), 90
 Board of Permit Appeals, San Francisco, 236-240, 248
 Boas, Roger, 24, 129, 222-223
 Books Incorporated, 9, 30, 36-42
 Bowles, Chester, 114-115
 Bradley, Don, 46, 79-82, 96, 103, 112-113, 119, 125-126, 138, 156-158, 160
 Brann, Joan Finney, 129
 Breyer, Ann (Mrs. Irving), 48
 Broder, David, 89, 150, 182, 188-189, 276
 Brooks, Jack, 219-224, 226-227, 229, 232, 234, 283
 Broom, Janet (Mrs. George Murphy), 215
 Brown, Edmund G., Jr. (Jerry), 60, 124, 198-199, 240, 243-244
 1976 presidential campaign, 266-277
 Brown, Edmund G., Sr. (Pat), 60, 73-74, 78, 103, 121, 123-129, 135-136, 138, 155-159, 163-164, 168, 170, 172-174, 178, 208, 242, 291, 296
 Brown, George, 223, 230
 Brown, Robert McAfee, 167
 Brown, Rudd, 77-78
 Bruce, Marie de Martini, 53-54
 Brundage, Albert, 83
 Burton, John, 188
 Burton, Phillip, 47, 52-56, 74, 83-84, 105, 115, 127, 137, 163

- Caen, Herb, 263
- California Democratic Council (CDC), 50, 54-55, 58-59, 61-64, 73-75, 77, 79, 81, 104, 135-136
 and Vietnam war, 150-152, 166, 168, 174
 1958 endorsing convention, 101
See also Democratic party, California state; Golden Gate Democratic Club
- California State
 Fair Employment Practices Commission, 296
 Horse Racing Board, 244, 246
 Park & Recreation Commission, 244
- California State Commission on the Status of Women, 123-124
- Canson, Verna, 103-104
- Carter, Jimmy, 100, 240, 247
 1976 presidential campaign, 253-261, 265, 270-271, 274, 276
- Carvey, Tom, 76-77, 103-104, 114, 116, 139
- Casady, Simon, 150-152, 166
- Champion, Hale, 125
- Christian, Winslow, 124-125
- Christopher, George, 157
- Church, Frank, 50, 258
 1976 presidential campaign, 260-266, 274
- Clark, Blair, 198
- Coate, Robert, 96, 106, 127, 129-132, 166, 168, 170, 178, 213, 223, 232-233
- Coblentz, William, 45, 206, 209
- Coffey, Bert, 233
- Cohelan, Charlotte Danforth, 88-89
- Compass Associates, 240, 247-277, 283-284
- Cooper, Leon, 139, 230
- Cranston, Alan, 50, 55, 57-61, 73-74, 77, 86, 88-89, 104, 109, 153, 160-161, 235-236, 254
- Cranston, Geneva, 75, 109, 235-236, 254
- Crown, Robert, 226-227
-
- Dalton School, 7, 14-19
- Day, Madeleine Smyth, 51
- Dedrick, Claire, 240, 243-244, 246, 290
- Dellums, Ron, 224-226
- Democratic Central Committee, San Francisco County, 52-55, 57
- Democratic League, San Francisco, 83
- Democratic National Committee, 50, 57-58, 61, 97-100, 123-129, 134-179
 and the Vietnam war, 148-150
- Democratic National Convention
 1960, 102, 111-118
 1964, 102-108, 121, 291-292
 1968, 201-214

Democratic Party (California)

- delegates to national conventions, 49-50, 168-175, 279
- State Central Committee, 45-46, 54-55, 57-59, 64-67, 69, 81, 83-89, 129-132
- 1966 contest for state chairman, 160-165
- 1971 contest for state chairmen, 219-234
- women's division, 92-97, 109, 277, 280-283
- See also California Democratic Council; Dollars for Democrats; election campaigns; Vietnam War
- Democratic Women of the Bay Area, 90-94, 143, 278
- Dempsey, Van, 80, 167
- Dollars for Democrats, 57, 59-61, 70, 118-119
- Dutton, Frederick, 157
- Dymally, Mervyn, 224-225

Edwards, Don, 105

Edwards, India, 100

Eichler, Joseph, 110

election campaign financing, 44-46, 48, 53-66, 69-73, 91-92, 141, 153-154, 183-191, 211, 215-222, 233, 247-275

election campaigns, California state

1958 attorney general, 66-69

1964 Senatorial, 109

1966 gubernatorial, 155-165

1968 Senatorial, 153, 214-216

1974 gubernatorial, 238

election campaigns, national

1956 presidential, 37-38, 42-48, 51-52, 88

1960 presidential, 118-121

1964 presidential, 107-108, 291-292

1968 presidential, 165-214

1972 presidential, 110-111, 157

1976 presidential, 253-277

election campaigns, San Francisco

1971 mayoral, 236-239

Eliaser, Ann Wertheim Alanson

childhood & education, 1-34, 69, 70, 82, 122

early work experience, 30-34, 36-42

in politics

as member, S.F. Board of Permit Appeals, 236-240

as member, Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, 240-244, 246

as national committeewoman, 123-129, 134-179, 250

as professional campaign manager & fundraiser, 247-266

as women's division chairman, Northern California Democratic State Central Committee, 92-97, 109, 277

See also Alanson, Lionel; Alanson, Mary; Eliaser, Maurice

Eliaser, Maurice, 239, 244-245, 248, 255, 262, 269, 294

Eller, Jerome, 166-167

Engle, Clair, 101, 115-117

Equal Rights Amendment [ERA], 294

Eu, March Fong, 129

- Factor, Jack, 173-174, 178
 fair housing (Prop. 14, 1964), 156, 158
 Feinstein, Dianne, 215, 223, 236-237, 284
 Finney, Tom, 189, 193
 Fisher, Hugo, 290
 Fowle, Eleanor, 89, 128, 156-157, 170-171, 215
 Friedenrich, David, 84
 Fair Employment Practices Commission. See California state
- Gatov, Albert, 124-125, 233
 Gatov, Elizabeth (Libby), 46, 57, 70, 77, 79-82, 94-95, 97, 104, 110, 121-126, 135, 138, 156, 168, 223, 233, 239, 247, 291, 296
 Gehrels, Katherine, 83
 George, John, 225
 Giobetti, Leo, 97
 Golden Gate Democratic Club, 66-69
 Goodwin, Richard, 198-199
 Grady, Lucretia, 120
 Green, Otho, 225
 Grier, Roosevelt, 212
- Haas, Walter, 73, 78-79
 Harmon, Martin, 270-272
 Hawkins, Augustus, 104, 161
 Heller, Elinor, 42, 64
 Heller, Elizabeth, 58
 Hellman, Marco, 216
 Hill, Gerald, 166, 187
 Holifield, Chet, 170
 Holsinger, Joseph, 191, 222, 229, 232-233, 238
 Huff, Martin, 122
 Humphrey, Hubert H., 103, 134, 183, 202, 208-210, 213-214, 252, 258, 291-292
 Humphrey, Muriel, 252
- Jaicks, Agar, 36
 Jewel, Howard, 149
 Jewish community, and politics, 71-73
 John Birch Society, 159-160
 Johnson, Lady Bird, 91-92, 143, 145, 251
 Johnson, Lyndon B., 102-104, 115-117, 142, 145-147, 149, 165, 174, 178-179, 180, 193, 204, 252, 291-292
 Joseph, Geri, 142, 148
- Kantor, Micky, 272
 Kennedy, Edward M. (Ted), 252
 Kennedy, Ethel (Mrs. Robert F.), 196-197

- Kennedy, John R., 114, 116-120, 262
 Kennedy, Robert F., 177, 182, 187-188, 190-196, 202, 211
 Kent, Roger, 46, 49-50, 53-57, 59, 61, 64, 70, 79-80, 82-84, 93-98,
 105-107, 118, 129, 138, 156, 161, 204, 223, 232, 234, 296
 Killion, George, 116
 Kline, Anthony, 243-244
 Knickerbocker, Nancy, 83
 Koshland, Daniel, 67-68
 Kossen, Sidney, 67
- Larner, Jeremy, 198-199
 Lauter, Robert, 64
 Lauter, Naomie, 64, 66-69, 106-107, 111-112
 Lawrence, Betty (Mrs. William), 113, 129
 League to Save Lake Tahoe, 241-242
 Lear, Mrs. Norman, 284
 Leopold, Adele, 280-281
 Lilienthal, Sue, 42-45
 Louchheim, Katie, 51, 100, 250-251
 Lowell, Robert, 195-197
 Lowenstein, Allard, 198
 Lucey, Patrick, 200, 271
 Lurie, Louis, 92
 Lurie, Robert, 91
 Lynch, William (Bill), 259
 Lynch, Thomas, 52, 102, 105, 107-108, 116, 131-132, 168-170, 172-175,
 180, 202, 212, 223, 296
 Lytton, Bart, 115
- MacLaine, Shirley, 209, 212
 Macauley, Jean, 42-43, 65
 Magnin, Cyril, 171-172
 Manatt, Charles, 223, 228, 230-231
 Marcus, Gerald, 106, 126-127, 129
 Maugham, Somerset, 22, 25, 39
 McAteer, Eugene, 85, 105, 107, 296
 McCarthy, Abigail (Mrs. Eugene), 184, 189-192, 200-201, 213
 McCarthy, Eugene, 144, 166-168, 174, 177, 180-182, 184-187, 189-202, 205,
 208-211, 213-214, 216, 230
 McCarthy, Leo, 85, 265
 McCarthy, Robert I., 67
 McGovern, George, 110-111, 157, 208-210, 234
 McCoy, Tom, 189, 193
 McGrory, Mary, 189, 195, 200
 media
 newspapers, 84, 89-90, 98-99, 108, 231, 255, 265
 television, 195-197
 Merlo, John, 229

- Mexican-Americans, 235
 Meyer, Agnes, 114
 Miller, George, Jr., 116, 170
 Mississippi Freedom Delegation, 102, 107-108, 291-292
 Mixer, Madeleine Coddling, 123
 Morrison, Jack, 83, 85, 91, 95, 185
 Morrison, Jane, 48, 83-86, 91, 93-95, 97, 122
 Moscone, George, 219-220, 224, 226, 230, 236, 287
 Mosk, Stanley, 66-69, 110, 122, 125, 159
 Murphy, George, 182, 196, 215, 231
 Murphy, Janet Brown (Mrs. George), 215
 Music Corporation of America [MCA], 253, 255
 Muskie, Edward, 234
- National Women's Political Caucus, 283
 Nevada, gambling interests, 241, 243
 Nisbet, Patricia, 282
 Norris, William, 205-208
 Nothenberg, Rudy, 47
 Novelli, Michael, 233, 237, 249
- O'Brien, Charles, 67-69, 111, 132, 223
 O'Connell, John, 45, 61, 115
 Odegard, Peter, 101
 O'Neil, Kathy, 272
 Onorato, Carol, 242-243
 Orrick, William, 127, 129
 Oshins, Ellen, 136
 Ostrow, Lenore, 87-88
 Owens, Trudy, 97, 127, 170
- Palevsky, Joan, 270, 284
 Palevsky, Max, 270
 Parker, Mrs. Alan, 129
 Patek family. See Eliaser, Ann Wertheim Alanson, childhood and education
 Porter, William, 228
 Price, Margaret, 97-100, 142
- Rafferty, Max, 215-216
 Reagan, Ronald, 156-157, 296
 Reese, Norvell, 189-190
 Reginatto, Elizabeth, 113
 Reinhardt, Stephen, 138-139, 202-203
 Republican party
 and the 1968 Senate campaign, 215-216

- Rhodes, Herbert, 245
Rich, Ken, 255
Richey, John, 237
Ringwalt, Louise, 87-88
Roosevelt, James, 104
Rosenblatt, Millard, Jr., 168
Roth, William Matson, 83, 238, 248, 262
Rowland, Pauline, 55-56
Rumford Act, 158-159, 164
Rumford, William Byron, 84
Russell, Madeleine, 216, 263, 265-266
- Salinger, Pierre, 104, 153, 209, 291
Saunders, Tom, 58-59, 61-63, 107, 158, 169-171, 175-178, 214-215, 221
Schaefer, Philip, 271
Schuman, Adolph, 209, 219
Shaskan, Frances, 53, 84
Shirpser, Clara, 94, 250-251
Shorenstein, Walter, 169-172, 175, 214
Sisk, Bernie, 127-128
Sloss, Nancy, 58, 78, 126
Smith, Lee Sherry, 215-216
Smith, Libby. See Gatov, Elizabeth
Sprague, Irvine, 142, 169, 171, 178
Steinberg, Lionel, 56, 59
Stevenson, Adlai, 37-38, 42, 44, 51-52, 88, 114, 116-117, 120-121
Swadesh, Nancy, 60, 77-78
Swig, Ben, 120, 195
Symington, Stuart, 115, 117
- Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, 240-244, 246
Teitlebaum, Bernard, 119
Tolmach, Jane, 170
Tomlinson, Jack, 232-233
Tuck, Dick, 195
Tunney, John, 164, 230-233
Turnbull, Wendy, 215
- Unruh, Jesse, 63, 76, 105, 138, 154, 162, 202-203, 208-210, 212, 217,
219, 235
- Valenti, Jack, 149
Vietnam War, 131-133, 147-152, 159, 165-169, 174, 178, 194, 207-208,
213, 216

- Waldie, Jerome, 105
 Warren, Charles, 86, 160-161, 163, 170
 Warschaw, Carmen, 86, 95, 97, 105, 121-122, 124, 126-128, 137-139, 153-154, 160-163, 170, 201-203, 231, 296
 Wasserman, Lou, 253, 255-256
 Watkin, Rebecca, 211
 Watt, Reginald, 59-60, 119
 Weigel, Marianne, 95, 108
 Weiner, Sanford, 215, 224, 233
 Wertheim family. See Eliaser, Ann Wertheim Alanson, childhood and education
 Western States Democratic Conference, 1957, 50-52, 55, 250
 Williams, Mennen (Soapy), 98, 100, 116
 women and work, 32-34, 80, 248
 women in politics
 and stress, 286-287, 295-297
 as candidates, 292-293
 as fundraisers, 91-92, 283-284
 as leaders in political parties, 239, 280-297
 as liberals, 290-292
 as volunteers, 43-44, 47-54, 58, 61, 71, 75-76, 80, 82, 88, 90, 96, 219-220, 239, 250-251, 277
 discrimination, 77-79, 162, 227-228, 230, 277, 282-283
 family support for, 33-34, 81, 112, 217-218, 284-286, 294-295
 in the Democratic party, 81-88, 90-99, 173-174, 201, 280-283
 Women's Campaign Fund, 283
 women's movement
 and family interests, 294-295
 and volunteers, 293
 See also Equal Rights Amendment; women in politics
 Wright, [Congressman] James, 205
 Wyatt, Joe, 55, 64, 75-77, 90
 Wyman, Eugene, 122, 125, 139-141, 154, 170, 174, 178, 202, 204, 209-210
 Wyman, Rosalind, 163

 Yorty, Sam, 155, 160, 170
 Young Democrats, 47, 50, 53, 55

 Ziffren, Paul, 101, 116, 122
 Zirpoli, Alphonso, 68

Malca Chall

Graduated from Reed College in 1942 with a B.A. degree, and from the State University of Iowa in 1943 with an M.A. degree in Political Science.

Wage Rate Analyst with the Twelfth Regional War Labor Board, 1943-1945, specializing in agriculture and services. Research and writing in the New York public relations firm of Edward L. Bernays, 1946-1947, and research and statistics for the Oakland Area Community Chest and Council of Social Agencies 1948-1951.

Active in community affairs as a director and past president of the League of Women Voters of the Hayward Area specializing in state and local government; on county-wide committees in the field of mental health; on election campaign committees for school tax and bond measures, and candidates for school board and state legislature.

Employed in 1967 by the Regional Oral History Office interviewing in fields of agriculture and water resources. Project director, Suffragists Project, California Women Political Leaders Project, and Land-Use Planning Project.

118370



