

WILPF Oral History Project - Interview summary :

Interviewee	Deirdre	Leask
Location of interview	Interviewees house, London	
Duration	1.32.47	

Track One: recorded Friday 1st May 2015

Story about how got involved with WILPF through internship advertised at university careers office, then became involved in Brighton group during masters degree study (0.43). Attendance at WILPF international conference in Costa Rica (2.17) on women and work and privatisation, story about Edith Balentine who gave up her bed for Deirdre to sleep in on arrival (4.00) and the sense of internationalism and tensions between emerging Latin American sections and established sections (6.20). After conference is elected international rep for the UK Section (8.40) talks about finding direct action uncomfortable. Talks about attendance at Earth Summit in Rio (9.20) followed by WILPF congress in Bolivia, and thinking about the impact of militarism on the environment and difficulty of getting this into the treaty. Story about staying with Margaret Turner in a hostel with the Latin America sections (14.25) and trying to get over the north/south divide in the organisation, and rights of indigenous women (16.45). Talks about the difficult politics and discussions in the organisation, sexual politics in the organisation (18.40) and Israel, Palestine (19.00) (22.40) Talks about how WILPF tackles complex and interrelated issues which makes it difficult to find a sound bite (23.20). Speaking tour following Bolivia congress (24.30) attended conferences in Helsinki and Switzerland as WILPF international rep then term ended (25.55).

Left Brighton, had children and job meant became less involved in the organisation, talks about various community projects involved in (25.20). Conference at London University about racism (26.27), which enabled the organisation to look at itself and positive impact on the organisation. Now the secretary for the WILPF Trust (29.35) talks about the work it does and fundraising and relationship with WILPF itself.

Mediation between two international WILPF staff members to deal with tensions not resolved (31.25). Talks about age of members (32.50) and growing up through WILPF and how inspirational older members are. Role of younger women international (34.25).

Changes in the perception of women's feminist analysis and acceptance of this analysis (36.50) and changing nature of women only space. Talks about own feminist journey (37.40) and women

only space (39.20) and men (41.00). Talks about 2015 conference in The Hague, experience of the conference, groups at the conference and importance of human rights (44.00) meeting of European Sections (49.50). Talks about racism in Europe, including story from working with Turkish children in Germany (52.00) and visit to Tangiers where experienced migrants attempting to travel to Europe and issue of migration (55.56). Talks about current engagement in politics and Trident and WILPF (1.01). Talks about activism and burnout and the importance of seeing impact and self-care (1.04) and the current feminist movement and changing perceptions (1.11)

WILPF as an organisation engaged with new issues (1.16) and an organisation you can trust and where ego does not come first. Influence of WILPF on professional life and management style (1.18) not being afraid of people disagreeing and having difficult conversations. Talks about people that have crossed paths with the organisation and lack of press coverage (1.19). Bubble community theatre (1.22) plays based on local oral history and potential for WILPF peace activists to be engaged in this. Influence of WILPF on professional work (1.27).