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## Helen Ferber interviewed by Susan Marsden [sound recording]

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**Repository** National Library of Australia, Oral History and Folklore Collection

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**Reference** [ORAL TRC 5612](#)

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**Date Range** 2006 - 2006

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**Access** Access open for research, personal copies and public use.

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**Finding Aid** Timed summary (15 p.) and uncorrected transcript (typescript, 85 leaves)

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### Details

Helen Ferber, born in Adelaide speaks about her family background; her father's career at BHP; life in Whyalla, Newcastle and Melbourne; her education; father's views on career options for girls; family's educational background; recollections of her uncle, Sir Richard Butler; her university education, travels to Italy and Germany, language studies; WWII preparations; her impressions of pre-war Italy and Germany; her studies in Munich; Germany under Hitler; Nazi propaganda; summer schools, anti-Nazi friends, anti-Jewish action; the war build-up; studying in Perugia, Italy; being caught up in war preparations for the invasion of Czechoslovakia; her return to Australia; completion of her university education; interpreting work for the Army, monitoring foreign broadcasts; her employment as monitor at Listening post, responding to crucial world news; censorship; writing wartime reports; her work for the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) Mission in Yugoslavia: the growth of Communism; her letters, excerpts, uses and responses. Ferber discusses American security; the American threat to the Mission in Yugoslavia and later impact on staff; the build-up of the Cold War; her sisters' lives and careers; her work with UNRRA's Public Information office in Paris; Arthur Calwell; working with postwar migrants, her involvement in Jewish migration and refugees; her return to Australia; her marriage to David Ferber and his career; Foreign Service life in USA and Philippines; returning to employment in Melbourne; working on the Henderson Report, a study on poverty, research team members; Ronald Henderson; her contribution as Australian Economic Review's business manager; David Ferber's later work, their children and their daughters' careers; her publications; her role in the Federation of University Women; return visits to Europe, compares visits to Germany in 1938, 1947 and 1968 and Yugoslavia in 1945 and 1968; influences of her work on social policy in Australia; perspective on her own history and family history.

### Author Details

Nikki Henningham

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