

THE SEARCH FOR TURNING POINTS

I was born in 1916 at a turning point in history. My mother used to say "We called you hope, because in those desperate time only hope could bring an end to the Great War. Soon after you were born the allies began to win. You were born at a turning point in history." *states belt*

Looking back, the word "hope" and the phrases "desperate times" and "turning point in history" seem to have strongly influenced my destiny. *states belt*

Still photos flashes of the seven turning points I will be dealing with. (more than one photo for each point but with one main caption and sub.captions)

1. The Great War, (trench warefare but akltso starvation on home front)
2. The movement against War and Fascism (Kisch landing, Spanish women and children, La Passionara, the Depression in Australia).
3. The movement for Women tto participate in war work (lots of beautiful photos available somewhere . cover of book by Molly Bain, photos from Brunswick Children's Centre, special attention to acquiring a photo of WAAF, AWAS, Land Army, WRAN, and woman in facotyer overall which was on all railway stations in 1942).
4. The Cold War, (Mainly newspaper cuttings, Sharply, Petrov, Reberendum and cartoons by Dyson, photos of children dancing and singing'
5. The Libera on Movements, (photos of child care demonstrations, also include some visual material about Vatican 2,).
- 6.. the Ecology Movement, (car domination, uranium, cover of "Silent Spring" and Club of Rome, some unusul demonstrations)
7. Face to face with immensity, (the world car, the Accord, amalagamtions, .

Life in our family changed dramatically in the early 1930s. In the Depression, like thousands of others, our family was suddenly impoverished and had to depend on the wages of my two teenage brothers for the whole family income. My mother suffered greatly, especially through the loss of the family home and the ned to shift from a country town to Melbourne.

My most vivid impression of the early 1930s is of the day that Egon Kisch landed *(Repeat flash of still photo of Kisch)*. I can ceaily member the balmy Spring Day that I was handed a leaflet (still of leaflet or slogans ... Kisch must land, Stop Nazi, Down with Hitler). The world seemed to be standing still. I sensed that there was a world beyond my home, a world where history was being made. But how could I take part in it ?

It was not until 1936 that I found out about the Student Peace Movement That was the year I met Maurie Crow and we decided that we would spend our life together. Meeting Maurie meant that I had to closely consider the position of women in society. This question confronted me very starkly on the very first time Maurie came to a meal at our home.

As I wanted to impress Maurie with my housewifery skills I baked a sponge cake and decorated with the slogan that was being used by the Student Peace Movement (sponge cake with "Youth Against Fascism" piped on to it). To my surprise the whimsical, almost sad expression on Maurie's face clearly stated "Oh Ruth don't try to find the

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a turning point
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*epitomised his
embodiment in my
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way to my heart through my stomach! I want a partner who tries to practice Lenin's slogan "Every housewife must learn to govern the state".

(2)

The cake was the end of the ~~most~~ turning point in my life. From that point on, I have daily had to face up to the contradiction of how to dovetail in my recurring housekeeping responsibilities and participate in the world beyond the four walls of the home. For a little over 50 years I shared this problem with Maurie and for the last ten I have had to do it alone.

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Still photo of women in uniform including a women in work overalls)

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1941 was the turning point in the Second World War. Women were called upon to enter the workforce in even greater numbers and campaigns for more adequate child care were initiated. I felt very much left on the sidelines, I had one year old daughter and was expecting another child. How could I help the war effort? I found out about the Committee for Co-ordinating Child Care in Wartime. (Still photo of leaflet about Committee for Co-ordinating Child Care in Wartime. This organisation campaigned for Federal Aid for Child Care and was successful. I became involved in establishing innovative children's centres such as the South Yarra Day Nursery and the Brunswick Children's Centre. Federal funding was withdrawn after the war and was not available again until 1971. At first I contributed through my housewifery skills to help in this program, but gradually I learnt how to involve people with cultural gifts and ~~was~~ was given a bursary to study group work techniques at the Social Studies Department at Melbourne University (a special course directed at training people to help establish the community centres which were being planned in the post war reconstruction period).

(9)

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week*

In the immediate post-war period I was active in the Day Nursery Development Association which was an organisation which tried to keep the wartime childcare centres open. We succeeded for a few years but there was another turning point in history, the new alignment of political forces now called the Cold War. At first I was not conscious of the Cold War, but in 1948 the Premier of Victoria, Dunstan, refused to meet a deputation on child care if it included a member of the Communist Party. Suddenly, other women in child care and school organisation, who were thought to be members of the communist party were ostracised in various ways. It is a rarely stated historical fact that the first to suffer in the Cold War were women in the community organisations. For the next five years we had our backs to the wall. The Victorian Government's Sharply Commission, the Federal Government's Petrov Commission, the Bill to Ban the Communist Party, the Anti-communist Referendum, the frame-ups, the disruption of May day and other gatherings and so on and so forth.

italics bold

(10)

But there was a brighter side, this was a period of the great upsurge in popularising Austriana and International folklore. My experiences with the wartime child care centres (and the course in Group Work Techniques) helped me to contribute to enriching the lives of children through dancing, singing, dramas groups. There were wonderful artists like Amb... and Ailsa OConner, Dances like Margaret Walker, drama groups like New Theatre, choirs

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Cold war skills possible while while about as espulm in

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*Wides later also...
June / July / Aug
dates 1948*

such as the Australian Singers. These formed a supportive network giving children, ~~who~~ participated a hope in the future and a love of history. (show again some dance group, singing group photos, with some background music, eg Maronao Lullaby, or Andy's Gone with Cattle Droving" *called* X

(12) The tide began to turn as the campaign for peace and international co-operation gained some ground. Especially significant were the international cultural programs staged during the 1956 Olympic Games, (a still from Chinese opera could be used) Then towards the end of the 1950s J.B.S. Priestly came on a visit to promote peace and then Paul Robson, who had suffered great deprivation in America's Cold War, came to sing for peace. (Music, Paul Robson singing This is America to me) X

(13) I regard 1968 as a very historic date. It was the year of several dramatic international events in both America and in Europe. New liberation movements were emerging, the Churches were becoming less dogmatic, especially the churches influenced by Vatican 2.. Then on top of this was popularisation of the need to save the world's un renewable resources. (stills of significant liberation books and ecological books etc) X

(14) There were exciting changes in the local communities, new types of organisation were being initiated, new words were being coined describe the new-type relationships which were necessary for these pioneering efforts to succeed. Collectives, grass roots, participatory democracy, and new slogans "Small is beautiful", "Think globally and act locally". Quite suddenly the generation gap disappeared as the young people active on the social and political issues in the 1970s sought out those of my generation. Maurie and I had much to learn and we tried to learn it as quickly as possible through our membership in organisation such as the North Melbourne Association, the Town and Country Planning Association and Community Child. (*plan - possible (1968 - Paris uprising, student riots* X

(15) At the same time we tried to help the left political movement to develop more effective policies on these emerging social and ecological issue and for the left to give more attention to politics at State and Local Government level. One way we did this was through organising groups of Communist Party supporters to research State and Local Government policies and to work out socialist alternatives. (CPA publications with which Masurie and I were associated... Plans for Melbourne, Child Care, Make Melbourne Marvellous)

(16) I think one of the most important contributions Maurie and I made in the 1970s was to always ensure the organisations with which we were associated had clearly stated value judgements that give a vision of a more humanised society. Always ensuring that the value judgements were understood and acceptable to all members of the community organisation that was endorsing them. *M* Flash on screen the 1972 North Melbourne Association's value judgement.

(17) I have left no time to deal with the turning points in the 1980s and 1990s. That the world is at present at a turning point is self evident. HOW CAN WE FIND HUMAN SIZE SOLUTIONS TO THE IMMENSE PROBLEMS THAT WE ARE NOW CONFRONTING ALL OF US ?

Over the past 80 years I have had to live through many desperate

~~after 80 years I must be~~

— Of course we need real life HOPE — but HOPE
~~is an essential thing can be achieved if we are~~
helpless.

times, but there have also been times when HOPE has contributed
to ensuring that the the turning point results in a better, more
human society.