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CROW - BOX 33 - 27/28 - Doc 7

AVG/98

HOPE (VIDEO)

The Life and Times of Ruth Hope Crow

SYNOPSIS

Hope is Ruth Crow's middle name. She was born in 1916, in the despairing days of the Great World War. Her parents chose the name Hope because they hoped that the War would end and that Australians could build a "land fit for heroes (and heroines)"

Now in her eighties Ruth still hopes to build a better society. What have been Ruth's hopes over the past four score years ?

PERSONAL AND POLITICAL BACKGROUND

In the dark days of the 1930s Depression Ruth was one of the many thousands of hopeful people who thought they could change the world by becoming members of the Communist Party.

Ruth's politics have always been practical and personal, at the same time she has, through her writings, contributed to the development of theory in a range of ecological and sociological areas, such as children's services, nutrition, housing, energy conservation and urban planning. The citation on the AM (Member of the Order of Australia) she received in 1994 stated that it was for her contribution to "participatory social and environmental planning".

In addition to their own commitments on issues which particularly affected them, Ruth and her husband, Maurie, worked closely together on some projects. Through membership in a variety of organisations they helped many individuals to find connections between issues, thus strengthening the collective spirit and creating conditions for links to be developed between organisations with seemingly diverse aims.

RESOURCES

There are unusually rich resources for a video about Ruth Crow's life and the personal and political issues which shaped it.

Ruth and Maurie Crow's life-time of working together is well documented in the books and manuscripts which are in the Crow Collection at the Victoria University of Technology. These are supplemented by her personal photographs and letters. Such primary resource material gives resonance to Ruth's own words.

Archival footage, music and interviews with colleagues, politicians, and academics could provide a multi-layered backdrop to the 80 years of Ruth's life, drawing parallels with what is happening today and presenting Ruth's hopes for the future.

Footnote :- Maurie Crow died in 1988. Ruth donated the Crow Collection to the Victoria University of Technology in 1990. It is at the Footscray Campus..

HOPE PRESENTATION

Introduction

Not all the following information could be included as dialogue in a video. However, the listing provides a range of topics from which the interviews, discussion, displays, exhibits, locations and so on, can be chosen

The word HOPE is used as a refrain. The places in the text where HOPE is indicated or expressed are denoted by use of brackets and capitals, thus : (HOPE)

1. Early Influences (mid 20s to mid 30s)

A short segment based on Ruth's memories from the age of about 9 or 10 years. A photo of Ruth in 1924/25, in an extended family group, is available.

Ruth discusses her childhood and the political issues of her youthful years - the family's sudden poverty, struggle to get scholarships (lack of educational opportunities), unemployment, indignity of mother's economic dependence on youthful breadwinners, the beginning of consciousness about social/political issues - malnutrition; the position of women in society; and in world politics - Nazism/Fascism, the Soviet Union, the Spanish Republican War. Women as models, both in Australia and overseas (HOPE) Ruth joins the Communist Party (HOPE) "I would rather die fighting than live on my knees", said La Passionara. (HOPE)

This could be filmed in the Crow Collection Room at the VUT where some of the archival material (especially 1930s pamphlets and news-cuttings) could be on display on the walls or as documents referred to in discussion/interview.

2. Expectations from Marriage (from mid 30s to mid 40s)

Another short segment, but a little longer than segment 1.. Photos of husband and daughters in early 1940s are available

Introducing husband, Maurie and daughters, June and Julie (as children in the early 1940s) - economic hardships/ housing shortage, the search for birth control information, wartime employment; Maurie/unions, Ruth/mal-nutrition - "Food, Health and Income", . Wartime factory canteen innovations, housewives left out of war effort; the campaign for child care in wartime. Ruth's role in establishing the first federally funded wartime child care centre (involvement of women as voluntary helpers - learning to network (HOPE), the 1944 federal referendum (effect on funding of child care etc). Jubilation when Second Front was open (HOPE). Jessie Street and the Women's Charter (HOPE)

This could be filmed in Brunswick or with cut-ins of photos of Holeproof, Millers and other sprawling Brunswick factories which employed hundreds of women. Crow Coll. photos and leaflets of Brunswick children's centre could be used.

3. Post War Years and the Cold War (mid 1940s to mid 1950s) A short segment. Consider, Margaret Walker's archival films (ANU), children/dancing

UN charters, (HOPE), post war reconstruction campaigns, community centres (Exhibition Youth Centre), unsuccessful efforts to re-establish wartime children's services/the adverse social effect of family centred government policies, the sudden impact of the Cold War - its effect on social services - its effect on Crow family/friends, cultural movements and revival of an Australian tradition. (HOPE) Dean of Canterbury's peace visit "I smile because I am on the winning side!", (said the the Dean).The start of the anti-atom bomb movement (HOPE)

This could be screened outside the Exhibition Building where the Dean spoke in 1949 (or was it 1950?) and where Ruth was responsible for managing the Exhibition Youth Centre (reports from the Youth Centre have some useful photos in them)

4. Suburbanisation - the Car-way-of-life; Work-places Changing (mid 1950s to mid 1960s). A short segment

Australian home life and working life rapidly changing :- suburban sprawl - easy terms for home loans, cheap cars, factory exodus to outer suburbs; increase in white collar jobs, increase in migrants, community movements for schools, kindergartens, roads etc. Maurie/white collar unions, Ruth/ education/campaign for permanency for married teachers/campaigns for federal aid for education, Marge Nunan and the pensioners movement (HOPE) Ailsa O'Connor and the Asian/ Australain Children's Art Exchange (HOPE) equal pay campaign and, the Union of Australian Women (HOPE), international friendship and anti-racism "I have a dream" (said Martin Luther King) (HOPE). Ruth is awarded Life Membership in Clean Air Council of Victoria. .

This segment could be screened in Crow Collection Room.

5. The New Social Movements (mid 1960s to mid 1970s)

A longer segment. Segments 5 and 6 to be the longest.

Changes in world politics, Vatican 2, the beginning of the demise of the influence of the USSR, less conservative Federal and Victorian Governments, however continuation of destruction of inner-urban community fabric through freeways/urban renewal/ city carparking. MMBW Report on metropolis. Ruth and Maurie publish "Plans for Melbourne I, 2, 3. presenting alternatives to State Govt. plans; growth of new social movements, community action/ participation (All HOPE), Ruth and Maurie develop/ popularise /practise theories on the process of creating community (how to avoid deferring hope etc.. Proverbs.. "Hope Deferred makes the heart sick"), the 1967 Town Planning Research Newsletter (now called Ecoso and still being published), bridging the generation gap (HOPE), Community Child Care, change in role of local government/ women councillors (HOPE).new capacities developed in thriving community organisation (eg Citizen's Action Plan for North and West Melbourne) (more HOPE). Unions and the Living Standards Convention (still more HOPE) Ruth/Maurie awarded Barrett Medal by the Town and Country Planning Assoc and the Robin Boyd Award by the Royal Australian Institute of Architects,

This could be filmed at the North and West Melbourne Neighbour-hood Centre. This segment could include interviews eg with Winsome McCaughey, (former Lord Mayor), Barry Pullen MLC, Joan Kirner (ex Premier), Brian Howe (Ex MHR) or some academics for example Leonie Sandercock, Peter Newman (WA)

6. Conservation of the World's Unrenewable Resources (1975-1985) Another fairly long segment, Segments 5 and 6 to be featured

The Radical Ecology Conference - the Movement Against Uranium Mining - "Seeds for Change"(HOPE) Vic Govt awards "Seeds for Change" an Energy Award. The Unions and Green Bans (HOPE); Business Owners and Managers Assoc and developers opposition to MCC Strategy plan; Melbourne City Council dismissed; community newspapers, neighbourhood centres, etc (HOPE). Ruth is awarded Life Membership in Community Child Care.

Filming could be at The North/ West Melbourne Neighbourhood Centre.

7. Economic Rationalism (mid 1985 to 1995 and beyond)

A fairly long segment, giving ample time to Crow Collection and its projects

Maurie's 3 last reports (1987): "What Sort of City ?" "Metropolitan Strategy" and the "Finished and Unfinished Business on the MCC Stratgey Plan". Ruth and Maurie's contribution to "Make Melbourne Marvellous" (1985); personal issues such as coping without a partner, the Crow Collection (HOPE), the projects based on the Crow Collection :- "Putting Magic in the Lives of Children", "What Sort of Society Do We Want ?" "The Public and the City Plan". Response to Ecoso Exchange Newsletter (all HOPE);no need to deal with economic rationalism, people know from own experience. This segment to be exuberantly hopeful. Ruth is honoured with Member of the Order of Australia for her "contribution to particpatory social and environmental planning (1994). Ruth awarded Life Membership in Town and Country Planning Association (1997).

This could be filmed in Crow Collection Room or at Ruth's home.

8. Where to from here (the 21st century)

A fairly brief segment, Re-introducing Ruth as part of her own family

Finding social solutions on emerging/escalating issues :- information technologies and network society. Hopes and fears for for future generations. Ending with quote from Deuteronomy about a young lad called Caleb."Moses put his hand on Caleb's head and said "I will not see the promised land, but you, Caleb, will see it." (HOPE)

This may be best filmed in Ruth's home, Short scene where she shows a photo of a group of her eight great-grandchildren and selects one other photo... of great-grandchild, called CALEB, born Oct 1997.

Fade out with Rosetti's painting of HOPE.