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Peace and Prejudice

Lucy stayed in Europe for some time after her visit to India, speaking at the Commonwealth Countries League about the education of women in New South Wales, as a delegate for the United Associations of Women (which still called the organisation the British Commonwealth League).¹

As the finale to her trip, Lucy attended the World Assembly for Peace in Helsinki in June 1955.² The 31 Australian delegates who attended brought with them a petition signed by over 200,000 Australians calling for the banning of nuclear weapons and the destruction of existing stocks.³ Held in Finland, the Assembly brought together representatives from China, India, Japan, Burma, Indonesia and Vietnam. Jessie Street spoke about the importance of the United Nations in offering a platform for negotiated resolutions of conflicts. Lucy was among the Australians there who issued a statement published by the NSW Peace Council, endorsing the overall conclusions of the Assembly.⁴ They prioritised total nuclear disarmament, negotiated resolution of conflicts and an end to partitions, like those in Korea and Vietnam. They argued that the recent Bandung meeting in April 1955 had given a model for Europe. Its 'Five Principles

1 Lucy Godiva Woodcock ASIO file, Vol. 1, f 203, A6119, 2030, NAA. This sheet is the flyer for the Peace Council in Western Australia advertising Lucy's speaking engagements in Perth immediately after her return, in August 1955, close to Hiroshima Day, the commemoration of the dropping of the first atomic bomb.

2 Ibid.

3 *Peace* (NSW Peace Council), no. 2, May 1955; no. 3, June 1955; no. 4, July 1955; no. 5, August 1955.

4 *Peace*, no. 5, August 1955, 4.

of Peaceful Coexistence’ – first framed in an even earlier meeting between Jawaharlal Nehru and Chou En Lai, then rebadged by Sukarno as *Pancha Sila* – could form the basis for universal peaceful coexistence:

India, recently freed from colonial domination, has demonstrated the importance of such freedom in the special position it occupies in Asia in the struggle to safeguard the peace. The clear and obvious fact [is] that in Asia and Africa, peace and national sovereignty are indissolubly linked.⁵

When Lucy reached Australia by sea, she arrived in Perth in time for Hiroshima Day, the commemoration of the atomic blasts in Japan in 1945. Although she spoke at a number of venues, including delivering a sermon at the Wesley Church, the Western Australian Education Department refused her permission to speak at any schools. ASIO had been following her travels in Asia and Europe, compiling a file on her activities, which was apparently used against her almost before she set foot ashore.⁶

After a busy series of talks in Perth, Lucy returned to Sydney and began a period of frenetic activity. She plunged into organising a Sydney conference for ‘Peace and Co-existence’ with the NSW Peace Council – to be held in inner-city Sydney on 26 and 27 November 1955.⁷ It aimed to contribute to the formulation of an Australian policy for peaceful coexistence through two strategies: friendly diplomatic, cultural and commercial relations with all countries and arms reduction with a refocus on using atomic power for peaceful purposes.

Lucy was inspired by the advances in women’s rights in emerging, decolonising nations while the Peace movement also looked to this new Asian world to find strategies for Peace. The Afro-Asian conference had taken place at Bandung in April (1955) and the Peace movement in Australia and elsewhere argued that the Bandung concept of ‘non-aligned nations’ should be the immediate basis for planning for peace in Europe and around the world. Bandung’s Five Principles stressed non-interference in others’ internal affairs and respect for each other’s territorial unity, integrity and sovereignty, thus enabling cross-cultural and transnational cooperation between newly independent, non-aligned nations. The goal

5 Ibid.

6 Lucy Godiva Woodcock ASIO file, Vol. 3, A6119, 2032, NAA.

7 *Tribune* (Sydney), 12 October 1955, 3; 2 November 1955, 2.

of the Sydney conference in November was to demonstrate Australians' commitment to this concept of non-alignment and to consider the strategies for developing policies of Peace.

Bill Morrow, a Queensland unionist and former ALP senator, became the NSW Peace Council Secretary in 1954 after travelling in China and the Soviet Union. He remembered Lucy as a stalwart of the movement. Along with Morrow himself, Bill Gollan (a teacher and Communist Party of Australia member) and Elsie Wakefield (a Hunter River organiser for the CPA), Lucy became one of the regular speakers for the Peace Council from the time of her return from overseas in 1955:

These people made their time available whenever and wherever a speaker on peace was requested. They spoke at large public gatherings – some in the Sydney Town Hall – where police and plainclothes photographers were always present to get a record of what was said and to whom. There were smaller gatherings in country towns, church halls or private houses.⁸

Bill Morrow preferred to talk to the miners and other unionists, but Lucy and the others would speak anywhere.

Lucy was a frequent speaker at a series of local preparatory meetings for the Peace Council conference for Peace and Co-existence, which she was organising during 1955. One such local meeting was at Chatswood in early November, when Lucy spoke alongside scientist Richard Makinson (Rachel's husband) and architect Maurice Edwards.⁹ Notably, Lucy shared a platform with the Christian minister Neil Glover and the Peace Council's Frank Nieass at a 'Friendship with Asia' meeting at Ashfield Congregational Church.¹⁰ Lucy's own networks in the Chinese Australian community may have been a part of this Peace Council work.

8 Audrey Johnson, *Fly a Rebel Flag: Bill Morrow, 1888–1980* (Ringwood, Vic.: Penguin, 1986), 256–57.

9 *Tribune* (Sydney), 16 November 1955, 2.

10 *Tribune* (Sydney), 23 November 1955, 2.

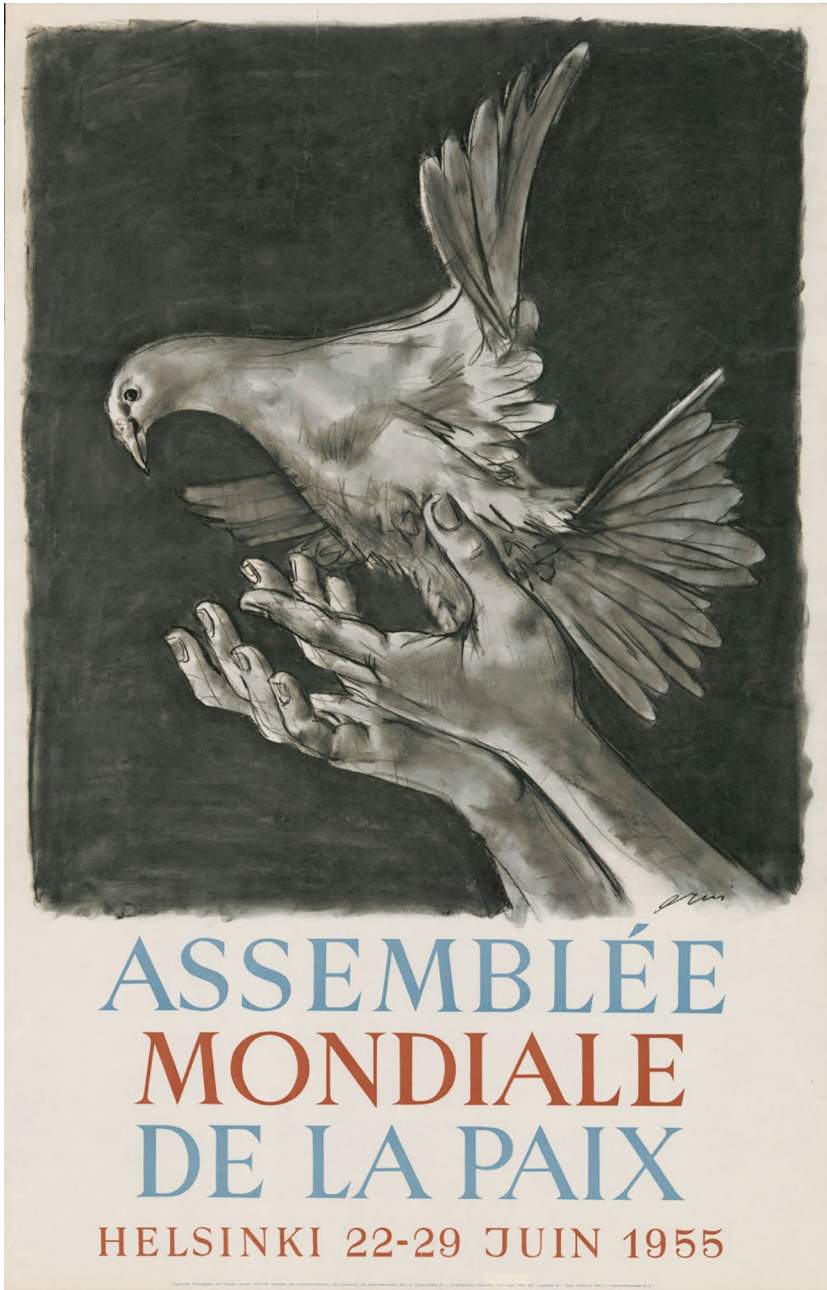


Figure 12.1: Helsinki Peace Conference, June 1955, program cover.
Source: Melbourne University Archives, Special Collection on the Peace movement, 1980.0172 AND 1980.0068, Box 6, folder 3.

On 16 November, at the height of this Peace movement planning activity for the late November conference, Lucy took on the role of convenor of the first Women Workers' Conference, initiated by the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU), and to be held in Vienna in June 1956.¹¹ The WFTU, like the women's body, the Women's International Democratic Federation (WIDF), was seen by the West as aligned to the Soviet Union – and was often accused of being a 'communist front'. It had suffered from the same Cold War polarisation that had split the Australian union movement. Lucy's role involved awareness-raising, encouraging unions to elect their delegates and then coordinating the fundraising, to cover fares. Her calls to union activists to plan and raise funds for delegates were frequently mentioned in the pages of *Tribune*.¹²

The Peace and Co-existence conference was not advertised in any of the mainstream newspapers, but information was locally disseminated in Peace movement circles and it went ahead with around 330 delegates on 26 and 27 November 1955.¹³ In line with the theme of coexistence and the example of Bandung, the conference motions laid stress on international support, with messages from India and Italy, and had called for a withdrawal of Australian troops from Malaya, and for globalised, free and unimpeded trade with all countries, regardless of political or religious affiliation.¹⁴ Bill Morrow placed particular stress on global networks opposing nuclear weapons, reporting that 300,000 Australians had signed the World Appeal against Atomic War. The conference voted to broaden the membership of the NSW Peace Council, in recognition of the organisational problems facing the isolated, state-based Peace movements and launched plans for a nationwide Peace conference to coincide with the Olympic Games in 1956.

While Lucy's attention was focused on these activities, her close friend and union ally Sam Lewis faced a major problem. Lucy had known Sam since the 1920s and had worked closely with him in the Federation and elsewhere since the mid-1930s. Teachers had been expressing concerns through the Federation for some years about increasingly unruly playground behaviour. The union argued this was related to the rising pressures on the education

11 *Tribune* (Sydney), 16 November 1955, 2.

12 *Tribune* (Sydney), 23 November 1955, 11; 14 December 1955, 10; 18 January 1956, 12; 15 February 1956, 10; 18 April 1956, 11.

13 *Tribune* (Sydney), 30 November 1955, 2; 7 December 1955, 2.

14 *Tribune* (Sydney), 7 December 1955, 2.

system as postwar migration was unaccompanied by parallel rises in resources, infrastructure or teacher training. Consequently, there was a strong Federation campaign, led by Sam Lewis, for increased staffing and better resources to allow teachers to deal constructively with such situations.

It was ironic, then, that Sam lost his temper with a student at Newtown Boys' Junior Technical High and slapped him across the face. There were suggestions that the boy, who had a troubled past, had abused Sam with a racist slur, denigrating his Jewish background. To make the slap even worse, the boy only had one eye. Lewis's defence that he had hit the boy on the other side of his head did nothing to placate his understandably angry parents. Yet this was so out of character for Lewis that many teachers, including the Newtown headmaster, defended him.¹⁵ Harold Wyndham, then Director of Education, launched a formal investigation, which concluded that Lewis had been subject to extreme provocation and given his longstanding satisfactory record, a formal caution would suffice.¹⁶

After this decision, the Public Service Board made an unprecedented intervention. It reopened the case and ordered Lewis to be transferred to Bankstown Boys, a more distant suburban school.¹⁷ This exacerbated the NSW Teachers Federation's ongoing concerns over the shadowy role of the Public Service Board. The power the board held to sit in judgement over teachers had been visible in the case of Beatrice Taylor in 1933 (see Chapter 5). The board had since then been increasing its control over education decision-making and teacher conditions.¹⁸ The Federation was particularly concerned about teachers on the Left like Lucy because Harry Heath, the right-wing teacher who had won the Federation presidency from Lewis in 1952, had unexpectedly become a member of the board. Heath defeated Lewis a second time in 1954, but abruptly left the presidency in 1955 when offered a position on the Public Service Board. All of this made the intervention of the board in the matter of Sam Lewis in December 1955 seem even more sinister.

15 Prof. Bob Carr, former premier of NSW, who had been taught by Sam Lewis at Matrville High in 1963, said in his experience Lewis had never physically disciplined a student and it would have been uncharacteristic for him to have done so. Pers. comm., 24 November 2017.

16 *SMH*, 25 November 1955, 11 December 1955; *Canberra Times*, 2 December 1955; *Tribune* (Sydney), 18 January 1956, 12.

17 *SMH*, 20 January 1956; A.D. Spaul, 'Teachers and Politics: A Comparative Study of State Teachers' Organizations in Victoria and New South Wales Since 1940' (PhD thesis, Monash University, 1972).

18 Bruce Mitchell, *Teachers, Education and Politics: A History of Organisations of Public School Teachers in New South Wales* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1975), 175–79.

Over the summer of 1955–56, Lucy wrote *The Lewis Case and You*, published in April 1956.¹⁹ Although she had previously reiterated her opposition to gender and racial discrimination, Lucy did not mention the racist abuse Lewis might have suffered, nor did she defend his physical violence although she emphasised that it was uncharacteristic. Instead, her book pointed out that the Public Service Board was a danger to all citizens since its administrative, legislative and judicial powers were not open to legal review. It operated as an opaque and punitive arm of government: an exercise of secret power. Lucy summed up:

In the Public Service Board the State has created an instrument of government violating the accepted principles of democratic social organization. These are the principles which we teach as being fundamental to the ‘democratic way of life’ and for which century-long struggles have been fought.²⁰

Lucy brought the very charges against this NSW Government system that were then, ironically, being laid against the Soviet Union. She was an advocate of open and honest debate. Her view of democracy demanded that government action be transparent and open to the law – the Public Service Board was violating that fundamental principle of democratic governance. Lucy’s argument was lucid and cogent, including photographs that showed not only the arid playgrounds of a working-class school but also, beyond the school fences, the backyards of street after street of working-class inner-city housing. In Lucy’s view, the problems of discipline in schools were a reflection of the fact that the schoolyards were not isolated from the rising and intolerable pressures on the working-class communities in which their children lived. She believed that teachers should be heard on the questions of better resources for working-class parents and for education in general.

Through that summer, Lucy decided to formalise her role in the United Associations of Women, becoming vice president in February 1956. This allowed her to speak with the authority of the UA in her continued campaigning for equal industrial, legal and social rights for women. She continued to speak regularly for the Peace movement, on call, as Bill Morrow

¹⁹ *Tribune* (Sydney), 13 June 1956, 11.

²⁰ Lucy Godiva Woodcock, *The Lewis Case and You* (Sydney: self-published with donations, 1956), 27.

remembered, on subjects such as nuclear disarmament and non-alignment 'anywhere and anytime'. From February 1956, she began attending peak trade union conferences and events as a UA representative. She became a frequent presence in the UA *Newsheet*; she had much in common with the editor, Vivienne Newson, who was a committed Peace activist and drew on Lucy increasingly to summarise the industrial dimensions of a number of the Equal Pay and education issues. Lucy brought an economic and political analysis to the pages of the *Newsheet*, which had not been present before. As well as her own views, she was able to call for contributions from the women she had become close to in the union movement, particularly Flo Davis in the Hotel, Club and Restaurant Employees' Union.²¹

* * *

Another border that Lucy helped to bridge was that between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal activists. The Aboriginal-Australian Fellowship (AAF) was formed in March 1956.²² As Beverley Bates remembered, Lucy had already worked in Erskineville with Aboriginal children and their parents. She knew Pearl Gibbs, the activist from Brewarrina, who had been heavily involved in the Aborigines Progressive Association with Bill Ferguson and Jack Patten and in the planning of the Aboriginal-only Day of Mourning in 1938. Pearl wanted to develop an organisation that would involve both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people and discussed it with Faith Bandler, born in Tweed Heads from a South Sea Island background and married to a German migrant who had fled Nazism.

We have important insights into this process from a recorded interview with the late Faith Bandler in 2016, quoted here extensively as there are no other sources. Faith recalled that, when Pearl first discussed a new organisation with her, Pearl had said:

21 UA *Newsheet*, April, May and June 1956.

22 The history of this organisation has become confused by biographer Bruce Mitchell who thought its title included 'evangelical' and was some sort of Christian body. (See Mitchell, 'Woodcock, Lucy Godiva (1889–1968)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, The Australian National University, adb.anu.edu.au/biography/woodcock-lucy-godiva-9172/text16197, published first in hardcopy 1990, accessed online 14 February 2012.) As will be very clear from the memories of AAF co-founder Faith Bandler and member Jack Horner – and indeed from Lucy's own background – it definitely had *no* Christian affiliations!

We've got to get something going. And we don't want any of those churches in it or any of those trade unions, or Liberal party, Communist party, Labor party. We've got to keep them all out. But it will be a fellowship of black and white.²³

Pearl approached Lucy to assist with organising. After years in the union movement, Lucy was very good at chairing meetings – as Sam Lewis and others have recalled, Lucy managed meetings with tact and humour but also with ruthless efficiency! Jack Horner said:

Lucy Woodcock, a retired primary school principal who had encouraged mature-aged Aboriginal people to attend the Cleveland Street Evening School, was a popular recruit among black and white members alike ... When it was thought there were enough interested parties to form the new group, Pearl Gibbs arranged for the first official meeting to be held at Woodcock's small flat in George St Sydney in March 1956.²⁴

As Faith Bandler explained:

So there was a woman by the name of Lucy Woodcock. She was the President of the Teachers Federation. And also I think President of one of Jessie Street's organisations for feminism. The United Association of Women. Lucy lived in George Street where the Regent Hotel is now. She was on the first floor there ... Well at that stage I guess she was in her 60s.

She was a woman who knew how to conduct a meeting.

And how! And she would rule with an iron rod. (laughs)

So Pearl knew Lucy very well and Lucy offered her flat for a meeting for the fellowship. Because Pearl had been around Sydney coming and going for a long time. She knew what feminism was about. Anyhow, Pearl said, 'Lucy's going to chair this meeting.' Most undemocratic I must say! (more laughter) So, we all got into Lucy's flat.

Now by this time the La Perouse people had come good. Pearl had said to them, 'Now we don't want any churches and we don't want any political parties. And that's it. Nobody's going to dominate

²³ Faith Bandler, interview with Carolyn Craig, 2016, SLNSW, amplify.sl.nsw.gov.au/transcripts/ml0h307-0001-0010-s001-m, accessed 1 January 2019.

²⁴ Jack Horner, *Seeking Racial Justice: An Insider's Memoir of the Movement for Aboriginal Advancement, 1938–1978* (Canberra: Aboriginal Studies Press, 2004), 18–19.

this organisation'. Well they thought this was good, you know? They didn't want to be told what to do. They wanted to make the decisions.

So, Lucy said, 'Order please. Order!'

And there was silence and ... Lucy said, 'Look if you've got an organisation you have to give it a name.'

Well Muir [Holburn] was there so one of the first things on the agenda was that we should find a name for the organisation and this is fresh in my memory as though it all happened yesterday. Muir said, 'Let's call it...' he said, 'I have been thinking about this and I thought we should include the word fellowship'. And he went on to speak about the foundations of the Fellowship of Australian Writers and how fellowship brought people together and we want to bring the black and the white people together and let's call it fellowship. Well there was agreement that that word could be used.

And then we all went on and I said, I would suggest that we call it the Aboriginal Australian Fellowship. And the [Aboriginal] tram driver said, bowed his head and said, 'No. Don't use that word. Don't use that word.'

And Lucy said, 'Which word is it you're referring to?' He said, 'That word'.

She said, 'Is it Australian?' And he said, 'No, the other one'.

'Aboriginal is it?'

He said, 'Mm, what we'll get is "Abos". They'll call us "Abos." We've had enough of that'.

But the people from La Perouse said: 'And what's wrong with it?' You know? They put up a battle and so [he] saw the light and accepted it.

And it's my opinion that [because] that organisation was formed to have a title that included that word – Aboriginal – it contributed to the dignity of the Aboriginal people of New South Wales.

More and more people began to come out and say I'm Aboriginal.
I found that meeting very moving because I had never in fact fully
realised how ... what it was like to be an Aboriginal person.²⁵

The AAF began its activities with a series of public meetings and included many teachers in its membership. Faith's family remember that she spoke about and with Lucy Woodcock often, in particular because of her contact with teachers and the Federation.²⁶

Lucy had maintained her work as the convenor of the Australian contingent to the WFTU Women Workers' Conference, which had been planned for Vienna in early June. Cold War politics intervened, however, forcing the conference to be moved to Budapest, Hungary, and held later in June. Lucy herself did not attend, explaining to Rewi Alley in her letters to him at the time that she had been travelling from Sydney to London with her sister Beth, her grazier husband Fred Cowley and their two children, Janet and Tom, over June, arriving in London only in early July and remaining there till January 1957.²⁷ At least four Australian women attended, all active unionists and all in the Communist Party, including Kath Williams and Esther Taylor who had been sponsored by Lucy and Flo Davis. Although she had not attended, Lucy was certainly aware of the high tension that the Australians had felt in Budapest in July, a precursor to the Hungarian uprising of October and the invasion by Soviet troops in November.²⁸ In January 1957, Lucy wrote to Rewi Alley that 'there is much confusion in Australia over the Hungarian situation' and significantly did not reveal her own position.

Lucy spent much of the second half of 1956 showing her sister and her family around London, but she also delivered a paper to a seminar on women and work, organised by Jessie Street and the Six Point Group, which was held in association with a much larger British trade union conference in Brighton in August. Like her previous contributions to the *Newsheet*, Lucy's paper to the 'Women and Work' seminar focused on the themes of

25 This extended quotation is a lightly edited extract from Faith Bandler, interview, 2016.

26 Dr Lillon Bandler, pers. comm., 2016.

27 Lucy Woodcock to Rewi Alley, 14 July 1956; 31 January 1957; Rewi Alley Papers, MS-Papers-6533-307, NLNZ. Beth was Lucy's only surviving sister – another, who had lived with Lucy's mother in Enmore, had died some years earlier. We do not know the location of Beth's property.

28 *Tribune* (Sydney), 18 January 1956, 18 April 1956; Eric Aarons, 'Remembering and Reflecting: 1956', *The Hummer* 3, no. 10 (Winter 2003), www.labourhistory.org.au/hummer/vol-3-no-10/1956-aarons/.

Equal Pay and education for girls. These were Lucy's ongoing interests but she again crossed boundaries. British conditions dominated the conference but Lucy insisted on comparing them to Australian conditions. In the *Newsheet*, she highlighted a warning for Australians in the talk by Miss B. Harrison, the Tobacco Workers' Union representative, who explained that, although women's wages had risen in the United Kingdom, the continuing classification of jobs into 'men's work' and 'women's work' meant that the margins between men's and women's take-home pay had not reduced. In terms of education, Lucy reported that Australians should reject the model of some regional British educational authorities that had limited the number of girls who could enter secondary schools because girls were performing better than boys in entrance exams. Furthermore, like the conditions Harrison had pointed out in the tobacco industry, Lucy warned that the hierarchies of teacher employment in British education had been perpetuated, even though the British claimed that 'equal pay' was being brought in by installment. So the outcome would be the same inequalities: there would always be jobs – the higher paid ones – which were classified as 'men's work' and so would simply never be offered to women teachers. While these examples would bring no joy to Australian women, Lucy could also report more hopefully on the slowly rising number of British women able to practise their professions in law, architecture, science and diplomacy.²⁹

During this time in London, although Lucy saw Jessie at some events, she was most occupied with union networks in the UK, and following up on her attendance at the Brighton trade union conference.³⁰ But she also tried to follow British news about the treason trial in the United States of friends of Rewi Alley, the journalists J.B. and Sylvia Powell and Julian Schuman, the former editors of the *China Monthly*, an American magazine published in Shanghai until 1952. Writing to Rewi early in October, Lucy expressed her fears that the trial of the Powells and Schuman would replicate that of the Rosenbergs.³¹

Lucy was also following Australian politics, even from the United Kingdom. She expressed her relief to Rewi that the expulsion of extreme anti-communists from the Australian Labor Party late in 1954 had finally borne fruit in another Peace Assembly, just held in Australia in September

29 UA *Newsheet*, October 1956, 1–2.

30 Lucy Woodcock to Rewi Alley, 1 September 1956, Rewi Alley Papers, MS-Papers-6533-307, NLNZ.

31 Lucy Woodcock to Rewi Alley, 18 October 1956, Rewi Alley Papers, MS-Papers-6533-307, NLNZ.

1956, when – without the constraining conditions imposed by the presence of the anti-communist ‘Groupers’ – many continuing members of ALP had felt free to attend. Lucy was finally confident, she told Rewi, that the ‘Grouper influence of which I wrote earlier is definitely on the wane’.³² Optimistic as ever, Lucy wrote to Rewi a year later, still following the American court cases like those against the Powells and Schuman, that ‘it would appear that the days of witch hunting are drawing to a close’.³³

Lucy remained in Europe, returning to Australia in April 1957, although Jessie Street had returned earlier, in January 1957. In February and March, Lucy had travelled to the Soviet Union with Elizabeth Mattick, the researcher to the Teachers Federation in the early 1950s.



Figure 12.2: Teachers Federation executive group, c. 1953.

Standing from right of image: Harry Norington, Lucy Woodcock, Elizabeth Mattick and Sam Lewis (in glasses, looking forward), next to whom stood Harry Heath (tall man with striped tie, in glasses, looking directly at camera), who had defeated Lewis as president.

Source: NSW Teachers Federation archives, undated photograph P8552.

32 Lucy Woodcock to Rewi Alley, 1 September 1956; 18 October 1956, Rewi Alley Papers, NLNZ; Paul Strangio, ‘Australian Politics Explainer: The Labor Party Split’, *The Conversation*, 18 April 2017, online at theconversation.com/australian-politics-explainer-the-labor-party-split-74149, accessed 4 January 2019.

33 Lucy Woodcock to Rewi Alley, 16 July 1957, Rewi Alley Papers, MS-Papers-6533-307, NLNZ.

As she had been in China, Japan and India, Lucy was again particularly interested in the education system and how it worked for girls. She wrote up her observations about the system in the USSR, based on conversations with teachers and visits to some city schools, in two articles for *Friendship*, the journal of the Australia–Soviet Friendship Society. She was interested in the economic priority given to education, which ensured that there were adequate schools and equipment for school children, as well as high-quality training for teachers. She contrasted this with the lack of funds for education and teacher training in New South Wales, as well as the lack of adequate equipment in new schools, which had to be found through extensive parent and teacher fundraising.

She was also positive about the after-hours ‘Pioneer Palaces’, which provided a range of recreational and cultural activities. These appeared similar to those in the Children’s Library and Club in which Lucy was involved in Erskineville.

Lucy inquired particularly about the examination system, which consisted of a sequence of internal testing carried out by the class teacher in younger years, with the goal of equipping the children to pass the tests rather than using the tests to rank the students. The external test was the matriculation at the end of the 10th year and a good record throughout school was necessary for a university stipend. All education was coeducational and women were strongly represented in the professions and trades.

What Lucy found most interesting, however, was not the infrastructure but the high level of enthusiasm among students wherever she went. Forty years earlier, there had been few schools and low literacy, but now there was higher literacy and widespread interest in attending schools. This, she felt, was the greatest achievement of the Soviet system – engendering enthusiasm for learning.

She was careful not to comment where she could not make personal observations – she had not actually visited a teacher training institution so could not say what it was like. And while she observed equality for women in wages and promotion, she did not have firm data on the promotion of women to positions of responsibility, although she observed many women in charge of schools. She recognised the reluctance of many Australian teachers to consider Soviet educational approaches:

Teachers in Australia may not agree with the pattern of education in Russia. I could only attempt to get essential detail, gleaned from teachers while I was there, but you feel that in the 40 years of Soviet rule, impetus has been given to a tremendous network of educational establishments that are part of the life of the people ... Sputnik I and Sputnik II are not accidents or lucky hits, but are one of the direct results of the educational activity of the Soviet Union.³⁴

In her second article, which focused more on teachers' conditions and training, she reiterated:

You may not believe in the Russian way of life, but as a teacher, one must be aware of the changes occurring in other parts of the world. The teacher cannot work in isolation because he is educating pupils not only for the present but for the future so his horizons must be forever expanding, otherwise his work stagnates.³⁵

Lucy made clear in this article that, despite advances in science like the Sputnik satellites, it was the 'outstanding performance in education of the millions of Russian men and women that is without parallel'.³⁶

Her views would have been met with caution in Australia. Some members of the Communist Party of Australia, like Helen Palmer and the group who formed around the journal *Outlook*, had left the party after the Soviet intervention in Hungary in November 1956. Neither Lucy nor Jessie, who had been active 'fellow travellers', distanced themselves irretrievably after 1956.³⁷ Lucy – as she so often did – maintained a non-aligned position, speaking to the Australia–Soviet Friendship Society in May 1959, alongside other UA office bearers Jessie Street, Millicent Christian and Muriel Tribe, in a forum titled 'The life and interests of Soviet women based on the personal recollections of Australian citizens'.³⁸

Yet Lucy was not unaffected by the tensions and eventual split within the CPA, and it had an impact on the Peace Council. The biography of Bill Morrow, then secretary of the NSW Peace Council, covers this period and

34 'They Have Made People Value Education', *Friendship* 2, no. 3 (March 1958): 8 (four pages illustrated).

35 'The Soviet View on Education...', *Friendship* 2, no. 4 (April 1958): 15.

36 *Ibid.*

37 Lucy Woodcock to Rewi Alley, 31 January 1957, Rewi Alley Papers, MS-Papers-6533-307, NLNZ.

38 Lucy Godiva Woodcock ASIO file, Vol. 2, A6119, 2031, NAA.

its complexities. As Morrow had recorded, Lucy had been a frequent and reliable speaker for the council. Lucy had become close to Carl and Susie Heins, political refugees from the Nazis, since Susie was Jewish. They were both active in the Peace movement and were affiliated with both the CPA and the Australian Labor Party – despite such ‘double card holding’ being disallowed by ALP rules. In their case, although the Heins’s affiliations were known, they were overlooked by their supportive ALP branch.

The NSW Peace Council was loosely connected to the Victorian body, the Australian Peace Council. The Peace Assembly was established in September 1956 to bring together all interested parties. Eventually, in February 1958, the NSW Peace Council, which was reputed to be influenced by the Communist Party, merged with the Assembly. This merger was fostered enthusiastically – if somewhat ironically – by the CPA members of the Assembly, who felt it would allow the Peace movement to be more popular because it would be perceived as less ‘political’. As a result, however, Carl and Susie Heins were pushed out, eventually resigning as the CPA members of the new body felt they were ‘too political’.³⁹

Lucy wrote to Susie and Carl Heins in October 1958:

I have been very worried about rumours that I have heard about the way you and your husband have been treated by [the] Peace Assembly. I for one thoroughly appreciate the warm-heartedness, generosity and width of vision both of you had concerning this all-important matter of Peace. I know how sincerely interested both of you were and I know also how much you helped others.⁴⁰

Nevertheless, Lucy did not withdraw from the Peace movement. She remained committed to the long struggle, continuing to talk about Peace to all manner of ‘groups’, including those who had very conservative positions like the Esperanto organisation, as she told Rewi Alley in a number of letters, and appeared on the platform of major Peace rallies in 1960 and 1962.⁴¹ She was unfailingly available, as Bill Morrow appreciatively remembered, despite feeling daunted by the enormity of the task, as she wrote to Rewi in 1962:

³⁹ Johnson, *Fly a Rebel Flag*, 266–73, outlines the conflict and then quotes Lucy’s letter in full to Susie and Carl Heins, 273.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 273.

⁴¹ Lucy Woodcock to Rewi Alley, 23 May 1957; 15 August 1961; 16 December 1961; 2 March 1962; 19 December 1963; Rewi Alley Papers, MS-Papers-6533-307, NLNZ.

It seems a long time since I have written to you but time just flashes by as you become so much involved in this vital struggle to preserve the peace and security of the world. Things are such a tangle here that the ingenuity of men has been taxed to their utmost to promote goodwill.⁴²

Appearing with her in so many of the rallies at which she spoke were her long-time political allies, who displayed a range of political affiliations: the Anglican priest and co-operative teacher the Reverend Alf Clint, the communist teacher Bill Gollan and the ex-ALP unionist Bill Morrow.⁴³

This chapter has discussed Lucy's years of activism after her first trip to Asia. The impact can be seen throughout her work once she returned to Australia. It is clear in her enduring role in the Peace movement – in all her speeches thereafter, she frequently referred to her first-hand experience in Japan, along with her personal interactions with Chinese, Japanese and Indian Peace workers. It is just as clear in her commitment to industrial and gender justice as well as her recognition of the importance of decolonisation and self-determination as a way to combat racism in Australia as well as overseas. The following two chapters – 'Uniting Women' and 'Bringing the World Back Home' – trace the varied ways that Lucy brought the world back home to Australians during the last decade of her life.

42 Lucy Woodcock to Rewi Alley, 2 March 1962. Rewi Alley Papers, MS-Papers-6533-307, NLNZ.

43 *Tribune* (Sydney), 18 May 1960, 12; 2 May 1962, 2.

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