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Red Scare

... the best means to understand people is to get to know them.¹

Lucy had been a committed pacifist since her brother's death in World War I, but during the Depression she had focused her formidable campaigning on the issues of women's and working-class education and then, during the war, on gaining well-resourced childcare for working mothers. The end of World War II and the flurry of activity in 1946 were just the beginning for Lucy in her campaign for international peace. She had undergone an operation to restore movement in her damaged leg and, no longer needing to use a walking stick, she expected to be able to contribute even more. But her intentions to work for Peace met a series of unexpected obstructions, requiring all her negotiating skills to overcome.

One of the many things on which Lucy and Elsie Rivett had found common ground in 1936 was on the fundamental importance of Peace. The Rivett family had a long background in the religious world, but many were activists. Elsie's father, the Reverend Albert Rivett, was an unconventional Protestant pastor, born in 1855 in England and the son of a bricklayer. He had a Quaker training but took up a role as a cleric in the Congregational church, coming to Australia with the Colonial Missionary Society. He was a pacifist, who spoke out against the Boer

1 Lucy Woodcock, Foreword to Helen Palmer, *An Australian Teacher in China* (Teachers' Sponsoring Committee, NSW Peace Council, 1953).

War and opposed conscription.² Elsie's older sister, Eleanor (1883–1972), became a missionary teacher in Calcutta and later Madras, India, where she became an advocate of women's education and Indian independence.³ Elsie's brother David Rivett, a renowned scientist, was more circumspect than his father but was committed to internationalist principles.⁴ In his later years, Albert Rivett himself became a regular contributor to the *Australian Worker*, an outspoken advocate of international justice, strongly supporting C.F. Andrews's campaign against the indenture of Indians in Fiji.⁵ So Elsie's dedication to working-class children, to international justice for working people and to Peace were all well grounded in her family's interests, and she and Lucy had much in common besides the Children's Library in Erskineville. They would work together in the Australian Peace organisations for the rest of their lives.⁶

Lucy had always been a strong exponent of the New Education Fellowship argument that education was a powerful strategy for nurturing peace through understanding. As early as 1936, Lucy and Jess Rose had argued for 'international history to be a feature of all school syllabuses with the object of fostering world peace'.⁷ Lucy put this approach into practice in her teaching at Erskineville. Beverley Langley remembers Lucy to have fostered understanding across cultural barriers at Erskineville Public School by teaching children that skin colour was irrelevant and encouraging them to share lunches and to learn and play together at the school and the Rochford St Children's Library.

2 C.B. Schedvin, 'Rivett, Sir Albert Cherbury David (1885–1961)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, The Australian National University, adb.anu.edu.au/biography/rivett-sir-albert-cherbury-david-8512/text14381, published first in hardcopy 1988, accessed online 31 January 2013.

3 Margaret Allen, 'Eleanor Rivett (1883–1972): Educationalist, Missionary and Internationalist', in *Founders, Firsts and Feminists: Women Leaders in Twentieth-Century Australia*, eds Fiona Davis, Nell Musgrove and Judith Smart, Australian Women's Archives Project ([Melbourne]: eScholarship Research Centre, University of Melbourne, 2011), 45–63; also at www.womenaustralia.info/leaders/fff/pdfs/rivett.pdf.

4 Judith Godden, 'Rivett, Elsie Grace (1887–1964)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, The Australian National University, published first in hardcopy 1988, adb.anu.edu.au/biography/rivett-elsie-grace-8514/text14385, accessed 31 January 2013.

5 For example, 'Cheap Labour and Fiji', *Australian Worker*, 16 October 1919, 7; 'The Case for Indian Self-Government', *Australian Worker*, 2 April 1930, 14.

6 Campaign for International Cooperation and Disarmament (CICD) Papers, Box 52, 3/88, UMA/SC.

7 FSSTA meeting, Hobart, *Mercury* (Hobart), 9 January 1936, 10.

During the Sesquicentennial Year of 1938, Ethel Teerman had led a group of supportive teachers, including Lucy, in the NSW Teachers Federation Peace Group, which had affiliated with the International Peace Campaign. As a senior educator, Lucy led the discussions at the National Women's Peace Conference in April on the 'School Child and Peace'.⁸ She expressed her concern at what teachers faced trying to counter the attitudes of 'jingoism' that children were learning from their families or the 'love of power' and 'competitive spirit' they were taught in the current school curriculum.⁹ Knowing how damaging Nazi anti-semitism was for European Jews, Lucy nevertheless did not see war as a solution to racism – instead she was consistent in naming the war as 'destruction'.

Angered by the way the war effort was diverting funds from education in working-class areas by 1941, she was arguing 'that teachers would be failing in their job if, even in the midst of war, they did not attempt to awaken public responsibility to the fact that education was as necessary as guns'.¹⁰ As an economist, Lucy pointed to the real financial burden. Rebuilding of the whole infrastructure of public schooling was going to be costly, as was better training of new teachers. The demands of war – not only for armaments and war machinery but for the training of soldiers – had all placed a grave strain on the national budgetary resources. Lucy made the point again and again that this cost had actually already been paid – by the children whose education had been undermined by the diversion of funds to war:

Never again should cost be cited as a cause for the non-introduction of reforms, for we are spending more in one month of destruction than would finance the Federation's demand for an additional 25,000,000 for education.¹¹

It was education that was in real need of expenditure, but as long as war seemed to be the more urgent demand, schools – and children – would suffer, just like it was the big sisters in families who were paying the real costs for poor childcare.

8 Held in Sydney and Perth, see Chapter 7, this volume.

9 'Train Children in Ways of Peace', *SMH*, 8 April 1938, 4; "'Mothers' Army": Women to Work for Peace', *SMH*, 9 May 1938, 13.

10 *Argus* (Melbourne), 8 January 1941, 2.

11 *SMH*, 22 November 1943, 7.

The terrible lessons of the war's end – the dropping of the first nuclear weapons on Japan – had shown Lucy how important education was. When giving a major lecture to the Tasmanian State Schools Teachers Federation, she insisted that ignorance was 'more dangerous than the atom bomb'.¹² In 1946, in the immediate aftermath of the war, Lucy had been an organiser for both the Australian Woman's Charter and the New Education Fellowship conferences – titled 'Education for International Understanding' – that had called for education reform to focus on strategies for peace. She had learned even more about decolonisation and the importance of freedom in the region from her time with Kapila Khandvala and Mithan Lam during their 1946 visit. This strengthened her motivation in becoming involved with the NSW Teachers Federation engagement with UNESCO, supporting Sam Lewis's role there in 1947 and working with Ellen Reeve to take the Teachers' Charter, based on the UNESCO principle of 'no discrimination on the basis of race, colour, sex or religion', to the Australian Teachers' Federation (ATF) meeting in January 1949. Ethel Teerman could no longer be directly involved in the NSW Federation's Peace work as she had married Sam Lewis in 1940 and so was forced to resign as a teacher, but the momentum of the Teachers' Peace Group was kept up by Ellen Reeve, who took over the role of secretary, while Thistle Harris and Lucy remained vice presidents.

By mid-1949, the various bodies working on Peace began to coalesce at a national level with the formation of the Peace Council, initiated with involvement of the Communist Party and clergymen in Melbourne. For some years, state-based branches operated largely independently. Much of the analytical focus has been on the extensive Melbourne archive, into which the records of the NSW organisations were eventually deposited but seldom noticed.¹³ Organising had continued, however, after 1949 among Sydney activists in the NSW Peace Council, of which Lucy was an Executive member, hosting its meetings frequently in her George Street

12 *Mercury* (Hobart), 12 May 1949, 8.

13 Barbara Carter, 'The Peace Movement of the 1950s', 58–73; Ralph Summy and Malcolm Saunders, 'The 1959 Melbourne Peace Congress: Culmination of Anti-Communism in Australia in the 1950s', 74–98. Both in *Better Dead than Red: Australia's First Cold War: 1945–1959*, eds Ann Curthoys and John Merritt (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1986); Les Dalton, 'Politics of the Australian Peace Movement, 1930s to 1960s', *Centre for Dialogue Working Paper Series*, no. 2011/1 (Melbourne: La Trobe University, 2011).

flat.¹⁴ This group saw itself as part of the wider international movement, and it was understood by security observers to be the 'Asian and Pacific Peace movement'.¹⁵ For Lucy, achieving Peace necessitated influencing the federal government, so she challenged it at the ATF annual meeting in January 1950 to ensure that 'the States were defended educationally on the same basis as preparation for armed defence'.¹⁶

A few months later, in March 1950, Lucy chaired the meeting to affiliate the NSW Teachers Federation with the Australian Peace Council. Then in April, she chaired the Sydney meeting of the Peace Council itself, which was organised to hear the key speakers from a major Peace conference in Melbourne, notably the Dean of Canterbury.¹⁷ Soon after, the UNESCO journal *Courier* carried the front page headline 'All Wars Are Fought Against Children'.¹⁸ The Teachers' Peace Group had at the same time published its own first newsletter, headlined 'Education for Peace'.¹⁹

For Lucy, the Teacher's Charter initiated by UNESCO had a central Peace dimension as well as its value in securing fair conditions, status and respect for teachers. The NEF had been influential among the people and organisations who had initiated UNESCO, which in its 1947 Mexico meeting had echoed the theme of the 1946 NEF conferences in Australia: 'Education for International Understanding'. The core UNESCO principle, that there should be no discrimination on the basis of race, colour, sex or religion, was aimed at nurturing an orientation towards cultural openness and interaction among both learners and teachers. To this, UNESCO had added an activist dimension, which was the approach Lucy favoured – it was not enough to foster culturally open and non-discriminatory education, but it was necessary to campaign to ensure the prioritisation of expenditure to achieve high-quality education rather than divisive and militaristic policies, attitudes and expenditures.

14 Lucy Godiva Woodcock ASIO file, Vol. 1, ff 86, 90 and 104, A6119, 2030, NAA. Some of the papers of this NSW Peace Council, including the minutes of the planning meetings for the 1953 Convention on Peace and War, are now held by Melbourne University Archives in its Special Collections, in CICD Papers, Boxes 49 and 52, 3/88, and Records of the Victorian Peace Council (VPC), Box 6, Folder 3, UMA/SC. Deery has explored the material on the 1953 Sydney Convention in Phillip Deery, 'Menzies, the Cold War and the 1953 Convention on Peace and War', *Australian Historical Studies* 34 (2003): 248–69, doi.org/10.1080/10314610308596254, reviewing the perspective of Melbourne-based SRC observer, Geoff Chapman.

15 Lucy Godiva Woodcock ASIO file, Vol. 1, ff 86, 90 and 104, A6119, 2030, NAA.

16 *Mercury* (Hobart), 13 January 1950, 22.

17 Ellen Grace Reeve ASIO file, Vol. 1, ff 6–10, A6119, 1500, NAA.

18 UNESCO *Courier* 3, no. 4 (1 May 1950): 1, en.unesco.org/courier.

19 Ellen Grace Reeve ASIO file, Vol. 1, f 18, A6119, 1500, NAA.

Sam Lewis, who had attended the Mexico conference despite the outcry in Australia, made this point forcefully in his presidential report in December 1951 at the NSW Teachers Federation Annual Conference:

the greatest single factor on the world scale causing inflation and leading to the undermining of the living and cultural standards of the people is enormous expenditure on production of armaments. Teachers are concerned very deeply with conservation: conservation of natural resources, conservation of human resources. They are the agents in the battle against material and moral erosion, against the scorching of human flesh and the searing of the human spirit.²⁰

Lucy continued the theme at the next ATF annual meeting in January 1952, when she formally moved that it accept the Education Charter that was the outcome of UNESCO work on the Teachers' and Youth Charters. Her 1949 motion to the ATF to accept the draft Teachers' Charter had been passed unanimously and without amendment but, by January 1952, tensions around anti-communism had risen. There was an active Teachers' Anti-Communist League, formed inside the NSW Federation in 1946, and the campaign for Peace was regarded as a communist-controlled attempt to weaken the West.²¹ So there was dissention over Lucy's wording of the 1952 motion because it called for the defence of the child and education against 'inroads into educational budgets due to the expenditure on armaments and as a result of high profits and prices'. Furthermore, she had called for teachers to sign the Charter to indicate their commitment. Both of these elements of her motion were removed by amendments, although the Education Charter itself was then endorsed completely by the ATF.²²

Lucy did not retreat from her commitment to the Peace movement despite the atmosphere of rising hostility. As Judith Emmett had said of her, Lucy 'always had a willingness to stand up for things that were not popular!'²³

20 *Tribune* (Sydney), 2 January 1952, 8.

21 *The Sun* (Sydney) 15 October 1948, 7; *Canberra Times*, 16 October 1948, 3; *Daily Telegraph* (Sydney) 22 December 1948, 14; *SMH*, 3 November 1949, 1.

22 *Biz* (Fairfield), 17 January 1952, 5.

23 Judith Mitchell, now Judith Emmett, phone interview, 31 July 2017. Judith was – and remains – a very active Christian and she met Isobel and Richard, and their son Barry, in the Belfield church.

So when she was elected as the NSW Teachers Federation delegate to attend the Asia-Pacific Peace Conference to be held in Peking in late September 1952, Lucy grabbed the opportunity and began organising her trip.²⁴ She applied to the Australian Government for travel documents and to the NSW Education Department for her well overdue long service leave to cover her absence. The coming trip was widely advertised and the invitations had been issued for friends to come to see the delegates off at the airport on 16 September. Lucy explained that her special reason for wishing to go was to 'study the development of education and the position of women in China and other Asian countries'.²⁵

But, at the very last minute, the conservative federal government and NSW state Labor Government acted together. Lucy was told that her passport would be recalled and that she would be prevented from taking her long service leave. She was shocked – as were many sympathisers. Mrs Margaret Parker, from Erskineville, a mother whose four sons had all fought in World War II, where one was killed, had attended what she expected to be a rousing farewell for the delegates at Trades Hall on 10 September. Instead, as Mrs Parker wrote to the NSW Education Minister Mr Heffron:

I was astounded when Miss Lucy Woodcock, Headmistress of Erskineville Public School, announced that she had received a letter from you refusing to grant her long service leave after 46 years of service ... Up to date, war has never solved anything and, in my opinion, never will. I ask you to start thinking and working for peace and to assist all you can those who want to work for peace and seek the truth for themselves.²⁶

With such short notice, it was difficult to organise a replacement who would be able to take leave, be able to speak for the Teachers Federation and bring home information about education both at the conference and more broadly in China. Hurriedly, a young teacher named Helen Palmer agreed to fill Lucy's place. One of the daughters of the authors Vance and Nettie Palmer, Helen had herself begun to write, but was a shy and retiring person, who had previously been reluctant to take

24 *Tribune* (Sydney), 3 September 1952, 4. See for comparison, John Burton's similar experience in Phillip Deery and Craig McLean, "'Behind Enemy Lines': Menzies, Evatt and Passports for Peking', *The Round Table. The Commonwealth Journal of International Affairs* 92, no. 370 (2003): 407–22, doi.org/10.1080/0035853032000111125.

25 *Tribune* (Sydney), 10 September 1952, 2.

26 *Tribune* (Sydney), 17 September 1952, 2; *Scone Advocate*, 17 September 1952, 4.

high-profile roles. Yet she wrote a thoughtful account of her time in China, titled *An Australian Teacher in China*, for which Lucy wrote the Foreword. In it, Lucy gave an insight into her own motivations as well as those of Helen Palmer:

Miss Palmer went to China because like so many of us, she felt that the best means of understanding people is to get to know them ... I commend this small book to you in the hope that her courage will inspire others to seek the truth and serve the cause of peace.²⁷

This was not the only foray outside the national borders in 1952. Late in the year, Lucy's good friend Lotte Fink made the long sea voyage to Bombay to attend a conference on family planning. Lotte made good use of her time on the ship and in India, not only meeting many people in the family planning field but also catching up with those people with whom she had shared common ground. One of those was Kapila Khandvala, who Lucy had introduced to Lotte at the 1946 Australian Woman's Charter Conference in Sydney. Lotte wrote back to her family in Sydney about her frequent contacts with Kapila, who had in turn introduced Lotte to women involved in the education structure that Kapila had been managing in Bombay. Through Kapila's introductions – and the use of Kapila's car – Lotte was able to visit a number of schools in and around Bombay to see for herself how they were operating in independent India. She compiled her thoughts into a talk she gave to the Sydney NEF some weeks after her return. So Lucy was able to keep in touch with the developments taking place as colonial rule was shaken off, as well as to have a taste of what she could see for herself if only she could get out of the country.²⁸

* * *

Lucy had remained furious at the 1952 denial of her long service leave and her plans to get to China. Yet she held her frustration in check and simply redoubled her efforts in 1953 to contribute to the Peace campaign as best she could within Australia. At a meeting at Federation House on 10 April 1953, for example, Lucy spoke in defence of Julius and Ethel

27 Lucy Woodcock, Foreword to Helen G. Palmer, *Australian Teacher in China* (Sydney: Teachers' Sponsoring Committee, Australian Peace Council, 1953).

28 Lotte's letters have been transcribed by her daughter Ruth Latukefu and are cited here courtesy of Ruth. Letters, each written in Bombay, and dated 26 November 1952, 5 December 1952 and 11 December 1952.

Rosenberg, who had been condemned to death in the United States for allegedly passing secrets about nuclear weapons on to the Soviet Union. Lucy argued that the Rosenberg verdict had set a troubling precedent for Australian freedom of speech. Like the American laws, the Australian Atomic Energy Bill, then before parliament, would similarly categorise people who spoke out against nuclear weapons as traitors.²⁹

Later in April, a group of 10 clergymen in Sydney developed a proposal for a conference that would bring together:

a broad, representative section of the people in every city, town and country centre, to meet and discuss ways and means of winning the peace and saving humanity. Peace cannot wait – it must be won ...³⁰

This initial gathering on 27 April was confirmed in a formal meeting on 18 May that set up the convening committee, drawn largely from Sydney activists, for what the group termed 'The Australian Convention on Peace and War', to be held in Sydney in September 1953. The minutes of this Convening Committee give an insight into how Lucy worked in the Peace movement, which had a different composition to either the trade unions or the women's organisations in which Lucy continued to take active roles.³¹

The clergymen's initial statement was endorsed by the 18 May meeting not only by those among them who went on to be listed as convenors like the Reverend N. St Clair Anderson, but also other clergymen who were to take a high-profile role including the Anglican priest Alf Clint, an activist in cooperative organisations in Papua New Guinea and among Aboriginal people in Queensland and New South Wales. Lucy Woodcock was present, as was Elsie Rivett and her sister Eleanor, along with Lucy's friends in the artistic world, like the children's illustrator Pixie O'Harris and the painter Rah Fizelle, who had taught at Darlington Public School with Lucy, had worked in London in 1927 when Lucy was there and

29 Executive Meeting notes 27 April and Minutes: 18 May, 25 June, 29 June and 22 July, 1953, CICD Papers, Box 52, 3/88, UMA/SC. Despite such meetings in support of the Rosenbergs, they were executed by the United States on 19 June 1953.

30 Extract from 'Roneo-ed leaflet issued by the Asian And Pacific Peace Movement', dated 29 May 1953 and held in Lucy Godiva Woodcock ASIO file, Vol. 1, f 90, A6119, 2030, NAA.

31 These minutes are some of the very few records of peace activism in Sydney that have survived the amalgamation of the NSW Peace Council with those of other states, eventually to be consolidated into a national organisation, CICD, based in Melbourne. CICD Papers, Box 52, UMA/SC.

lived in a flat near hers in the 215A George St block. There were, as well, long-time supporters of the Peace movement like the pharmacologist S.E. Wright and his university colleague Miss D. Lange and the architect and Lane Cove councillor Maurice Edwards, who all became involved in the Convention organising.³²

Lucy and Elsie took joint responsibility for the mobilisation of women to take part, convening a women's planning meeting in August focused specifically on increasing the numbers of women as participants and speakers. They aimed for between 5 and 10 per cent of delegates to the Convention to be women. Lucy, long familiar with the practicalities of organising, undertook many of the tasks. She approached the mainstream and women's press, to try to gain publicity aimed more specifically at women; called meetings in Newtown and Erskineville, to build support and gather ideas to bring to the Convention floor; and finally wrote to the National Council of Women with the aim of contacting each of its affiliated women's organisations. This Convention Women's Committee advised the convenors to develop publicity aimed specifically at women. The committee's suggestions make uneasy reading today, as it argued that material aimed at women should be simpler and less wordy than that previously published. The committee proposed that women should be able to send in written responses to a simply worded question about the meaning of Peace, allowing them to avoid the discomfort – or the domestic conflict – of attending. Finally, the committee suggested that the Convention program be altered to include a session specifically for women participants, although it pointed out, emphatically, that this advice did *not* mean that women delegates were not to attend or speak at other sessions:

We consider that women's point of view can be expressed at both sorts of session [with women-only or open attendance], but some women are so used to leaving all discussion publicly to men, that [an] attempt should be made to overcome this.³³

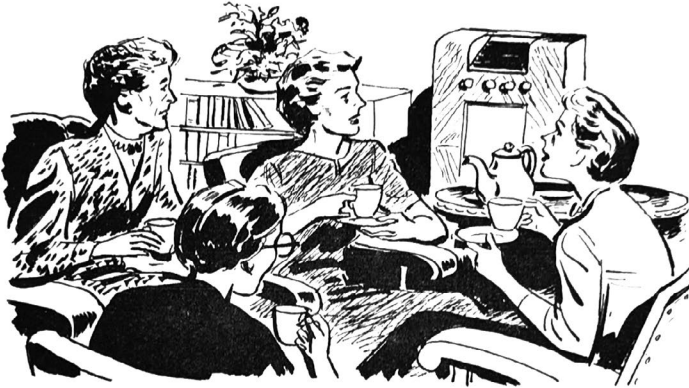
One result of their work was a leaflet, one of the six produced by the Convention planning group, in which much of the Women's Committee advice was incorporated.

³² CICD Papers, Box 52, 3/88, UMA/SC.

³³ Women's meeting, 11 August 1953, CICD Papers, Box 52, 3/88, UMA/SC. Some of the other women involved in this Women's Planning Committee were named in various sets of minutes as Mrs Kempster, Mrs E. Parsons and Mrs L. Barnes (a member of the Union of Australian Women).

PEACE and WOMEN

We were drinking tea and talking



a group of women at the home of a friend, with the wireless turned low, when we heard the announcer's voice—"Truce in Korea! Troops sang and danced last night as the Korean War ended after three years—a Conference will be arranged."

We were silent for a while until an older woman said bitterly, "A Conference will be arranged. They should have talked it over before a shot was fired!"

All of us thought of what the firing of those shots had meant.

**360,000 children dead!
In South Korea alone 5,000,000 people depending on relief
to stay alive--Korea a land of widows and orphans!**

It could have happened to our own people.

please turn over

Figure 10.1: The women on the organising committee for this 1953 conference, including Lucy and Elsie Rivett, attempted to address women's interests and tailor communication strategies towards women who were not in unions or existing peace organisations.

Source: Courtesy of University of Melbourne, Campaign for International Co-operation and Disarmament (CICD), Melbourne University Archives, Series 3, Box 52, 3/88: Australian Convention on Peace and War. 3 CICD (1979.0152 consolidated).

The title 'Peace and Women: We were drinking tea and talking' was followed by a line drawing that could have been straight out of a women's magazine of the time, depicting women sharing tea around a radio cabinet, from which they heard the news that a Peace conference was to be called in Korea. An older woman among the group is said to comment bitterly: 'A Conference will be arranged! They should have talked it over before a shot was fired!' The leaflet style was direct and accessible, putting peace into very personal terms, converting the statistics of the dead, of widows and orphans, into individual stories of death and loss. At the end of the four-page flyer, there was a tear-off section to allow women to write into the Convention, answering the simple question: 'What does peace mean to me and my family?'

Another result of their work – not only in this pamphlet but, perhaps more importantly, in their many formal and informal meetings with women activists – was the overall representation of women at the conference. Women made up 31 per cent of the delegates, an increase on expectations.³⁴

To consolidate representation at the Convention, Lucy not only worked in convening the women's committee but continued working in the other arena she knew well, the trade unions. As Teachers Federation delegate to the NSW Trades and Labor Council (TLC), she moved in August 1953 that the TLC invite a speaker from the Convention to address members on the coming meeting, arguing that 'peace was the most important ingredient in the happiness of men, women and children'.³⁵ This view was being put within the Communist Party as well. In the same issue of *Tribune*, J.D. Blake argued that it was essential to consider peace and war as integral to any solution to problems about either industrial conditions or the problems of education, hospitals or housing, 'otherwise no real perspective for a practical solution of these problems was possible'. Yet at the same time, although less publicly, conflict among communists was building. Blake's article betrayed some of it when he insisted that:

Communists must attentively heed the views of non-Communist people who desire peace ... We are opposed to any attempt to 'use' the movement for peace for any ulterior motive.³⁶

³⁴ *Convention Record*, 2.

³⁵ *Tribune* (Sydney), 26 August 1953, 3.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

While this was certainly a rebuttal of the anti-communist assertion that the peace movement was a 'communist front', it was also a reflection of the pressure against Blake's more liberal position, which was not held by party leaders like L.L. (Lance) Sharkey and others who sought more direct intervention in the broader movement.

Yet the grassroots work of the planning committees could not overcome the reality that Cold War tensions had escalated. The Peace Convention was being denounced as communist-inspired by the conservative Menzies Government and the strongly anti-communist Labor Party of the time. This was a continuation – and in fact an escalation – of the hostility that had blocked Lucy's attempt to attend the 1952 Peace conference in Peking. It resulted in 1953 in an effective blackout of news about the Convention – few articles and no advertising appeared in any of the mainstream newspapers.

At the same time, while there were effective collaborative relationships between the so-called 'peace parsons' on the Peace Council and the Communist Party of Australia (CPA),³⁷ there were also tensions. Those in the CPA who argued for engagement and dialogue with Christian pacifists, socialists, feminists and the many others associated with the peace movement were regarded with suspicion by the hardliners in the party. An example of the more inclusive approach was that of J.D. Blake, whose intellectual and political standing in the CPA seemed secure in 1952. He was, however, becoming marginalised over this time in an internal conflict with Lance Sharkey and Ted Hill that eventually confined him, in what he remembered bitterly as a humiliating defeat, to working only with the Peace movement.³⁸

Yet, as the Cold War polarisation deepened, the CPA was losing the allies it had gained during the Depression and this led the party to increase its involvement with the Peace movement.³⁹ Early in 1953, the party executive had itself planned to initiate a conference on peace to take place late in the year. But once the Peace Council's Convention was announced

37 Ian Turner, 'My Long March', *Overland* 59 (1974): 36–38; Phillip Deery, 'Shunted: Ian Turner's "Industrial Experience", 1952–53', *The Hummer* 4, no. 2 (2004): 18–29.

38 Phillip Deery, 'The Sickie and the Scythe: Jack Blake and the Communist Party "Consolidation", 1949–56', *Labour History*, no. 80 (May 2001): 215–23, doi.org/10.2307/27516780.

39 Douglas Jordan, *Conflict in the Unions: The Communist Party of Australia, Politics and the Trade Union Movement, 1945–60* (Sydney: Resistance Books), Chapter 3; P. Deery and D. Jordan, 'Fellow-travelling in the Cold War: the Australian Peace Movement', in *The Past is Before Us. Refereed Proceedings of the Ninth National Labour History Conference*, eds Greg Patmore, John Shields and Nikola Balnave (Sydney: Australian Society for the Study of Labour History and University of Sydney, 2005), 115–23.

for September, the CPA shelved its own plans and decided to participate in the Convention on Peace and War. Seized documents showing that the CPA had planned to hold a Peace conference during 1953 were used by the federal Menzies Government to campaign relentlessly against the Sydney Convention, with the resulting refusal by the mainstream press to cover the preparations for the Convention. The Reverend J.E. Owen, a Presbyterian minister from Melbourne and a major figure in the Convention planning, protested in person to Menzies and was shown the security documentation that had exposed the CPA planning. This allowed Owen to point out that there was a confusion between the two conferences.⁴⁰ His insistence that the CPA was not in control of the September Convention was ignored not only by Menzies but also by the broader anti-communist lobby, including the mainstream press and most Christian churches. Only after the Convention were there some apologetic Church admissions that there should have been more support.⁴¹

Lucy was at the centre of this tension because she worked very closely with both Communist Party members and Christian peace advocates. Her commitment was personal and professional rather than religious: it was well known that she had been a consistent advocate of learner-centred education as a powerful tool in fostering intercultural communication. She had been involved in the Peace Convention planning with the Sydney clergy from the very beginning. Her close friendship with Elsie Rivett, who was embedded in a radical pacifist but Christian family, had consistently been expressed through shared work in the Peace movement. Through this relationship, Lucy was close to many of the activist clergy, particularly those who had strong socialist affiliations, like the Reverend Alf Clint, who was prominent as an advocate of decolonisation as well as being prominent in the Peace Council. At the same time, in the Federation and through her teaching in working-class schools like Cessnock and Erskineville, Lucy had become close friends and allies with teachers like Ellen Reeve, Ethel Teerman and Sam Lewis, all either members or associated with the CPA and actively involved in the party's activities. Lucy had been drawn to them not only because she supported their causes but also because of their sustained support for her own – in the Federation there were few men other than Sam Lewis who so consistently supported Lucy and the tight group of women who were advocates of Equal Pay. So Lucy embodied the reality of shared goals across widely diverse ideological positions within the Peace movement.

40 Deery, 'Menzies, the Cold War and the 1953 Convention on Peace and War', 248–69.

41 CICD Papers, Box 52, 3/88, UMA/SC.



Figure 10.2: A photograph of the only known remaining poster for the NSW Convention on Peace and War in November 1953.

This poster is now held in the Peace Archives of Melbourne University.

Source: Courtesy of the University of Melbourne, CICD papers, Box 49, 3/52, UMA/SC.

Her strength then, as it had always been in the Federation, was to make ideological space for all sides. She undertook this role during the five-day Convention.

The overall goal of the conference was to gather ‘citizens together to discuss and promote international goodwill and peace’, with representation of ‘every constructive viewpoint’. There were to be three commissions inquiring into central questions of Australian responsibility to foster international peace, each with three subcommissions that were to undertake their discussions on the second and third day (Sunday and Monday) of the Convention, drawing their conclusions into consolidated ‘Findings’ over the fourth and fifth days (Tuesday and Wednesday). Lucy had a major role in Commission C, which was to inquire into ‘how the best achievements and the promise of Australian life could be preserved and extended’. She chaired one of its subcommissions, which asked ‘do war preparations affect Australian standards today?’, while she also took a role in some of the ‘special commissions’, notably those focusing on women, youth and that on ‘education and culture’ chaired by C.B. Christesen.⁴²

On the floor of the Convention, the conflicts were visible. Geoff Chapman, a Melbourne student who attended as a Students’ Representative Council (SRC) delegate, kept notes of the proceedings, although he took part only in Commission A. He expressed frustration at a doctrinaire ‘party line’, which he and other participants felt had shaped all speakers on the joint first day of the Convention, but when the Convention broke into the commission and subcommission sessions, the dogmatic tone of the first day broke down. On the second and third days of the Convention, according to Chapman in Commission A, the tone had noticeably changed. Instead of dogma, there was very active debate between all sides, with the views of non-communists not only more evident but eventually dominant in the findings. There appears to have been active and broad-ranging interchanges in the other two commissions, although C.B. Christesen, the *Meanjin* editor who chaired the ‘special commission’ on ‘Education and Culture’, felt there were too many major themes to be discussed together. He felt, however, that there had been vigorous free discussion that had led to three major outcomes – the most urgent of which expressed:

42 *SMH*, 28 September 1953, 4; Convention Flyer, CICD Papers, Box 52, 3/88, UMA/SC; *Convention Record*, p. 3, VPC, Box 6, Folder 3, UMA/SC.

Profound dissatisfaction with the inadequacy of our present educational system and the gravest alarm for the future welfare of children. Delegate after delegate emphasized that conditions of peace were essential to permit the adequate education of children and adults and that, in turn, an enlightened educational system would play a highly important role in achieving world harmony and understanding among the peoples ...⁴³

Nevertheless, despite Christesen's reservations, there seemed to most participants to have been lively discussion and wide debate, rather than the imposition of any one party line. The CPA made the best of what appeared to Chapman and others as the failure of its intervention. *Tribune*, the party newspaper, published CPA member Bill Wood's full-page review of the Convention under a heading that reflected his theme: 'Came as Strangers, Parted as Friends'. He gave an account of his personal highlight:

This writer's big moment came when he heard a viewpoint violently opposed to his own being expressed at one of the Commissions. You don't usually like to hear your views trampled on, but this particular speech, like many others, showed that every viewpoint was genuinely represented at the Convention. The speechmaker was elected to a committee which drafted the Commissions finding. He wholeheartedly accepted the general findings of the Convention.⁴⁴

Chapman was less sanguine – he felt that those with more right-wing views had not been welcomed. Nevertheless, the diversity of views was unusual and certainly far wider than any one position might advocate.⁴⁵

What was particularly significant, too, about the proceedings of the Convention was the presence of two Aboriginal delegates, one of whom was Shadrack James, a staunch unionist who had defended Aboriginal workers in the harvesting industries along the Murray River. He was a Yorta Yorta man from Cummeragunja, the son of Ada Cooper, nephew of William Cooper and an articulate spokesperson for south-eastern Aboriginal people's identity and land interests, as all his family had been. His father, Ada's husband, was Thomas James, the Mauritian Indian who had turned his strong educational background and awareness of colonialism

43 *Convention Record*, p. 9, VPC, Box 6, Folder 3, UMA/SC; C.B. Christesen, Report, *Meanjin* Files, Box 274, UMA/SC.

44 *Tribune* (Sydney), 7 October 1953, 7.

45 SRC Report, VPC, Box 6, Folder 3, UMA/SC.

across the Indian Ocean to the service of education and campaigns of protest in Australia.⁴⁶ Shadrack James's speech to the Convention drew on this background to ensure that this Convention was not thinking only of remote and 'traditional' Aborigines, but instead was calling for justice for all Aboriginal people, including those of mixed descent who were working in the cash economy and living in south-eastern Australia.

This shift to a recognition of immediate Aboriginal demands as well as their colonial context was evident in the events of the time. The close of the Convention on 30 September occurred before the first detonations of British nuclear weapons on the Australian mainland, the Totem tests at Emu Junction in South Australia, on 15 October. It is notable that the front page of the *Tribune* issue that covered the Convention was dominated by news of the coming detonations, referring to the danger to the Aboriginal population of the area.⁴⁷ Unlike the earlier, widely circulated concerns expressed about the intrusion of the rocket and bomb testing grounds onto 'primitive' Aboriginal communities, which had been a hallmark of the previous campaigns, this 7 October 1953 coverage foregrounded practical, concrete dangers to living Aboriginal people rather than threats to their 'traditional' culture or inviolate reserve space. Its headline read: 'Aborigines in Danger. A-Bomb on Reserve?'

Sadly, such fears of irradiation to nearby Aboriginal people turned out to be accurate, although the decision to fire the tests against meteorological advice and in disregard of a known Aboriginal presence was not revealed till many years later.⁴⁸

Much of the published findings of the Convention echoed Lucy's views. The findings of Commission C, on the 'Future life of Australia', began with a statement that she would have fully endorsed:

There can be no true development of the Australian nation without the fullest participation of the people in all its problems. The full flowering of our nation requires an atmosphere freed from prejudice and intolerance, and implies love in its widest sense, and courage in the search for self-determination.⁴⁹

46 George Nelson and Robynne Nelson, *Dharmalan Dana: An Australian Aboriginal Man's 73-Year Search for the Story of His Aboriginal and Indian Ancestors* (Canberra: ANU Press, 2014), doi.org/10.22459/DD.04.2014.

47 *Tribune* (Sydney), 30 September 1953, 1; 7 October 1953, 9.

48 Australia. Royal Commission into British Nuclear Tests in Australia, *Report of the Royal Commission into British Nuclear Testing in Australia* (Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1985).

49 *Convention Record*, pp. 7, 9, VPC, Box 6, Folder 3, UMA/SC.

Convention
on Peace and
War stories

--Pp. 3, 5 and 9

TRIBUNE

REGISTERED IN THE G.P.O. OFFICE, SYDNEY, AS A NEWSPAPER. ADDRESS OF MARKET STREET, SYDNEY. No. 813 (New Series). WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 7, 1953. Price 6d

ABORIGINES IN DANGER

A-bomb in Reserve?

Many Australian Aborigines will almost certainly be killed in the atom bomb tests on the Woomera Rocket Range.

The bombs will be exploded in the vicinity of the Great Central Aborigine Reserve.

Ban the A-bomb

THIS story dangerous for human life emphasizes the danger to all Australians of the failure to ban the atom bomb.

The Great Central Aborigine Reserve straddles the borders of South and Western Australia and the Northern Territory. Over 22,000 of its 85,000 square miles are in SA.

Less than 200 miles away is the Woomera Rocket Range land. The Reserve is in a north-westerly direction from Woomera, and the range, in its course, passes right through the territory set aside as the inalienable right of the First Australians.

The Israelite Mission is a few miles east of the Reserve.

The test area for the atom bomb, reports the *Sid Herald* (Oct. 5), is believed to be about 30 miles north-west of Woomera village. That is, close to, if not in, the Reserve.

In 1948 Defence Minister Dorman said there were about 1800 Aborigines on the Reserve, about 1000 of whom were in the SA section.

"Rounded up"

Truth (Oct. 4), said that "nomadic tribes of Aborigines have been rounded up." It is impossible to round up these tribes, impossible to stop them returning to their hunting grounds, — as impossible as it is to protect the population of a big city from the effects of an atom bomb.

It would be an act of supreme meanness and supreme wickedness that would win the gratitude of most Australians if Minister, who says he would be at the tests because he would be "in the way," were to personally supervise on the spot, the safety of the Aborigines while the tests are in progress.

Even if the atom bomb does not kill and mutilate a number of Aborigines, it will devastate their hunting grounds, destroy their waterholes and devastate tribal territory that is sacred to them, and to which they believe their spirits will return after death. The inevitable result will be disaster to the tribes.

The atom bomb should be banned. That is the will of all ordinary people, expressed in the 500 million signatures to the Ban the Atom Bomb petition in 1949-50.

Not military

For the atom bomb is not a military weapon. It is a weapon of mass destruction. It is unsuitable for use against cities, where it would kill and maim thousands of innocent people. It is suitable in the case of the battle lines.

Truth said (Oct. 4), that "it is believed there will be nobody except

the official party within 100 miles when the explosion occurs." Who, men, women and children (not the "official party," the brass band, politicians and owners of the armaments factories) 100 miles away from Sydney, Melbourne, and other capital cities if the Third atomic World War is not prevented?

For Australia's capital is in real danger. There is nothing to prevent Japan, now getting aircraft carriers and jet planes as well as a big army, from getting the atom bomb. And despite the pious hopes of Pug Trotsch, the Japanese are more likely to march southward than attack China and the Soviet.

Dr. Evatt said (Sept. 30) that the "free world could not give up the atom bomb while an enemy held it." By "enemy" the "Silver Dollar Doc" meant the Soviet Union. Has he forgotten the time he thanked the Soviet for its efforts to get employment written into the UN Charter? Has he forgotten the Soviet's fight against the infamous "League of Nations" which aimed at unlimited disarmament? Has he forgotten the Soviet's consistent struggle for the banning of the atom bomb?

Fraser (Sept. 10), retorted the Soviet position. Dr. Evatt could have quoted this statement but prefers instead the Wall Street line.

(Continued on Page 2)

A MAN STOOD HERE: All that remained of a man caught in the Japanese A-bomb blast—the unbelievable heat generated by the explosion seared his shadow into the pavement; the only trace left of the man.

Workers seething —union to Court

BRISBANE.—Workers in industry had exhausted their patience. Mr. G. M. Dawson told the Arbitration Court last week.

THIS was especially true in the railways—where the workers were seething with discontent because of failure to grant them some quick adjustments in wages," he said.

Mr. Dawson, who is president of the Queensland Trade and Labor Council and state secretary of the Building Workers' Industrial Union, was appearing on behalf of the BWIU in the application for new unions for marginal increases ranging from 11 to 12 1/2 per cent for all tradesmen working under the State Railway award.

"In our view the key question is the maintenance of the standard of living."

"If there is any pegging of the basic wage, pressure in industry will quickly get to breaking point."

"One section of the employers—the State M.A.s—have given themselves a 16 1/2 week adjustment."

This unacceptably influences the workers."

Mr. Dawson tendered copies of a leaflet setting out Railway awards and contrasting the basic wage in June, 1948, with the basic wage in May, 1949.

"I might point out that the leaflet was prepared mainly for workshop distribution and not necessarily for this Court," Mr. Dawson explained.

Mr. H. J. Harvey (from the bench): "That's fairly obvious."

"The leaflet bears the heading: 'With compliments of BWIU. The tables below show how you are robbed'."

Challenge

The document showed that building tradesmen on the Railways had suffered an average shortage of 61-6-8 in their marginal secondary wages compared with 1948.

Painters and plumbers had suffered similar shortages, and the sanitary plumber had lost £214-9-9 per week.

"We challenge anyone to argue against these calculations," Mr. Dawson said.

"Delegates to the ACTU Congress," Mr. Dawson told the Court, "almost unanimously endorsed the proposition that there must be substantial increases."

"The ACTU endorses stoppage in any part of industry if it is thought necessary to improve the authorities."

Mr. Justice Barry: "It is undoubtedly a most important question—it could be described as a burning question."

Mr. Dawson went on: "We were before the Court in September, 1947, asking for an adjustment on the very same principle."

"During that time, we had nine days of stoppage in which that sort of thing happened," Mr. Dawson said.

"Delegates to the ACTU Congress," Mr. Dawson told the Court, "almost unanimously endorsed the proposition that there must be substantial increases."

"It is a matter for consideration. We do not want the 1948 experience again, when the authorities went through an awful day-dilating and jockey-poke, until we finally got down to agreement," Mr. Dawson said.

POW RIOTS STAGED FOR WAR AGAIN

(From Wilfred Burchett)

PANAMUNGAN—An Indian spokesman this afternoon confirmed that although the body of Chao Yu Lung, murdered late on Saturday, has not yet been located, a count of prisoners showed one missing from compound 328 where the atrocity took place.

A fellow prisoner from the same compound, Yu Tzuoh Ho, described to me today stark details of the torture and murder of Chao Yu Lung, a 22-year-old university graduate. After Chang Shih Ying managed to escape by trying to commit suicide," said Yu, "we were ordered to hold his anti-Indian demonstrations on the two following days. It was during the first day that Chao shouted Long Live Mao Tse Tung."

An agent grabbed him. Later in the day every prisoner in our compound had to stand two minutes in a special tent. In that tent they had Chao Yu Lung. He was beaten with a steel pole over his face and body. The pole was broken three times and the doctor, it was said, the harder they beat Chao.

"He was half dead they poured gasoline over his head and set it on fire. Only then he shouted 'I am a Communist. I will die for a Communist.'"

Removed heart

"Then we took his heart and put it open his chest and removed his heart. They took his heart and put it in his body where tattoo marks had been made of Taiwan and slogans."

"Then they wanted that this would be the fate of any one wanting to be home. And if anyone present ever revealed what they had seen they would suffer an even more painful fate."

Their eyes would first be gouged out and badly hurt but later is actually used as Ribbe's headquarters."

"They said that there is a hospital of the Americans outside the compound. An American controlled hospital outside the compound with the latest instructions."

Documents proof

One set of five documents with instructions to kill and make prisoners' attempts fail into the hands of Chao Yu Lung, brother of Chao Yu Lung, who returned yesterday.

"They said that there is a hospital of the Americans outside the compound. An American controlled hospital outside the compound with the latest instructions."

Prisoners said they never saw or heard a doctor. They said that the men by the NNHC explaining their rights."

"We knew something was sent to the prisoners. They said that they had seen a man in a uniform who had been taken to the camp. When a broadcast of it started over the loudspeakers, agents cut the wires of the speakers."

Other prisoners told similar stories. "While terror inside the camp is being stepped up to the stage where threats to murder 'waverers' are actually being carried out, pressure from outside is also being intensified."

After SYCARM Rhee's threat "to resort to arms" Chinese are gleefully reporting that ROK troops "are today, unprepared to be ready for action just south of the Neutral Zone."

The American ROK "and is openly sabotaging the plans of explanations while new agencies are speculating that they will never begin."

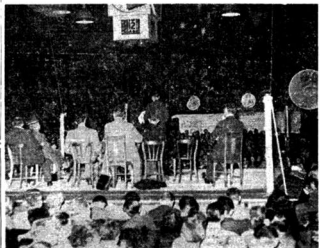
Yank trickery

The American report yesterday that it would take seven days to erect 20 tests, and upwards of one month to provide the facilities asked for by NNHC is plain sabotage. The mere so-called Mark Clark at the same time demands that the time deliberately wasted by the Americans should be deducted from the ninety days allotted for explanations.

According to the American plan full explanations could not start until almost half of ninety days had passed.

For Americans who never cease boasting of their technical efficiency and speed, to demand a week to erect twenty tests and a month to put up a lot of facilities and buildings is once again to expose their scheme "to make a mockery of the truth."

The Americans cannot face up to the challenge of the NNHC. They hope to wreck the peace talks and sabotage the NNHC on the verge of complete exposure.



HISTORIC CONVENTION: Photo shows part of the huge crowd disappearing into bleachers during the final rally of the Convention on Peace and War in Sydney's Leichhardt Stadium.

Figure 10.3: Front page of *Tribune*, 7 October 1953, shows one of the earliest recognitions by Australia's Communist Party that living Aboriginal people were threatened by atomic testing, rather than an isolated culture.

Source: *Tribune*, 7 October 1953, 1. Trove, National Library of Australia.

In its specific statements on education, the Convention called for the recognition of the potential value of all forms of media to serve the best interests of Peace, rather than fostering militarism and conditioning children to war as contemporary media were doing. Then it called for prioritising of resources for education at all levels – in schools, in technical education and in lifelong learning – in order to make better democratic citizens, capable of independent thinking but also of cross-cultural awareness:

In helping to make better citizens in a more peaceful world, ample opportunities for a broader development of our cultural heritage are desirable.

In the field of Education, the guiding principle should be to promote to the full the capacities of all, so that each may faithfully play his part in the nation's development and in the determining of the people's destiny.

... self-education would continue through life, and assist in achieving the elementary democratic principle of the participation of the people in Government at all levels, including their intelligent participation in the activities of the United Nations organization on a world level ... We feel that only the allocation of adequate resources for the extension of educational facilities, including staff, broad cultural activities and freer provision of textbooks and also a better cultural content in technical education can resolve the crisis in education today.⁵⁰

The Commission's findings were published partially in the mainstream press and then in full in the communist press, contributing to the conversations circulating at the time although doing little to alter the prevailing fears of communist control over the Peace movement. The Convention itself published its findings in full in the *Record*, with many resonating with the concerns Lucy had expressed over many years. In particular, those concerning 'Prejudices' accorded with the approach she had taken in 1938 in the public conferences hosted by the Teachers Federation when she spoke out against discrimination towards women and against racism both in Australia and in Europe. Her emphasis on continuing colonial inequalities had strengthened after her time with Kapila Khandvala and Mithan Lam in 1946, a theme that Shadrack James would have reinforced, which led to its prominence in the findings:

50 *Convention Record*, p. 7, VPC, Box 6, Folder 3, UMA/SC; *Tribune* (Sydney), 7 October 1953, 9.

Prejudices

Cultural exchange must be facilitated. Obstacles such as restrictions on travel, the banning of books and films, and the censoring of news must be removed.

Racial prejudices and hatred foster war and should be vigorously opposed. Basic education in racial understanding should be encouraged.

Our national policy on the restriction of Asian immigration was established in our Australian way of life, but it could justifiably be revised in the future.

We should use our natural resources and our technical knowledge to improve living standards of our Asian neighbours in the spirit of active goodwill, and not from motives of political expediency. The Colombo Plan should be continued and extended.⁵¹

Lucy wrote an article that was published in the back page of the *Convention Record*, with her words as its heading: 'Weight of military burdens falls on children'.

She was described at the Convention as 'a Sydney headmistress', although when she repeated much of this talk as the main speaker at a follow-up meeting held at Cessnock in November, it was her executive position as Federation Senior Vice President that was stressed:

Since 1913, war has taken toll of the heritage of Australian children, has destroyed their chances of a good education. The Australian child of today is the citizen of tomorrow, but during war preparations he is practically forgotten. Our schools and national education have been malnourished and in some cases almost brought to a bankrupt state. At present, Australia faces a crisis in education which is unparalleled – for we cannot supply schools, teachers, or equipment necessary.

If we have the time and we have the right setting for children, their minds can be set in the moulds of peace, but unfortunately these things cannot be done without money. Money is being found in ever-increasing amounts for war, but it is sadly lacking for children ...

51 Embodied particularly in the findings of Commission B ('How Can Australia's Relations with Other Nations Be Improved?'), *Convention Record*, p. 11, and Commission C, *Convention Record*, p. 10, VPC, Box 6, Folder 3, UMA/SC; *SMH*, 1 October 1953, 2; *Tribune* (Sydney), 7 October 1953.

War preparation means malnutrition.

Peace is born in happiness. Peace does not thrive in fear and suspicion. Therefore it is on man the living being that the emphasis must be placed. We spend a lot of thought and preparation on atom bomb tests – I think it is ill-spent because the emphasis has been on the machine, not on the common man. It is on the common man that we must poise and rivet the attention. He must come into his own.⁵²

The NSW Peace Council – including its Christian members – recognised Lucy's commitment. At its annual Christmas party in December, Lucy was the guest of honour, where she was presented with an award by the Reverend E.E.V. Collocott, a Methodist minister long associated with the Peace movement, 'in recognition of her sterling work for peace'.⁵³

In December, too, Lucy's long career as a teacher reached an end. She retired, with first a farewell from Erskineville Public School itself and then a formal presentation evening at the Teachers Federation. Each in its own way offered a glimpse into Lucy's work and into her world. We have discussed some of the speeches at the Federation farewell in earlier chapters and we will return to it for its unique insights. With particular relevance to this chapter's focus on the Peace campaigns in Australia, some issues raised in speeches at Lucy's retirement give an insight into her political role. The Minister for Education in the state Labor Government – R.J. Heffron – praised Lucy for her courage and intelligence in the hard industrial negotiations in which she had been involved:

I have come to know you by sitting on the opposite side of the table as a strong unionist insisting on things being better for teachers and better for the youngsters being taught. So I have learned to know you and to respect you.⁵⁴

The then president of the Teachers Federation, Harry Heath, had just won the position in election by Federation members from Sam Lewis after a heated campaign. Heath was a right-wing candidate but, despite

52 *Convention Record*, p. 16, VPC, Box 6, Folder 3, UMA/SC; *Cessnock Eagle and South Maitland Recorder*, 17 November 1953, 3.

53 *Tribune* (Sydney), 6 January 1954, 7.

54 Transcript of speeches from Lucy Woodcock's Teachers Federation Farewell, on her Retirement in December 1953. UAW Files, Extracts from *Education*, 3 February 1954, 2, AU NBAC Z236, NBABL.

its efforts, the anti-communist case waged against all three Executive members had unseated only the incumbent president. The membership had re-elected Lucy as senior vice president, although her margin was reduced, along with Don Taylor as vice president. Nevertheless, Heath, like Heffron, was fulsome in his detailed praise of Lucy, 'an outstanding headmistress ... of immense energy' who 'has given to teachers loyal and unstinting service'.⁵⁵

Lucy's capacity to elicit such appreciation even from her adversaries was explained by the third speaker, Sam Lewis, who praised her tenacious advocacy for women teachers and her long-time service to the Federation itself. So all three of them had pointed to Lucy's skills and courage – but Lewis then explained that even though Lucy held strong and committed positions, she was nevertheless an excellent negotiator, who could bring together people from all sides. Lewis continued of Lucy's role as Federation delegate to the NSW Trades and Labor Council:

She is one of the most respected persons on the Labor Council, and possibly about the only person on the Council who will be listened to by all sides with respect and in silence.⁵⁶

* * *

The farewell from the Erskineville School community had been even warmer. Hundreds of former students and their families had come to say goodbye to Lucy and thank her for her role at the school. At the Federation farewell, Heffron, Heath and Lewis all pointed to this community affection as the greatest testament to Lucy's commitment and tireless advocacy on behalf of her working-class students and their families. Yet it was the mothers of Erskineville who gave Lucy the gifts that recognised her real intentions. Despite having few funds to spare, they had purchased a beautiful set of travelling luggage and a rug to keep her knees warm on her journeys.⁵⁷ They knew – better than the minister or even the union leadership – that Lucy did not plan any quiet retirement, but instead had bigger plans for an international, activist future.

* * *

55 Ibid.

56 Ibid.

57 Ibid.

For some, retirement from the profession to which they had devoted their lives might seem to mark the end of their active life. For Lucy, retirement was just the beginning! It released her from the chains of control by the NSW Department of Education so that she no longer had to keep her political campaigns so tightly under wraps. She had never been one to shirk a fight and so this release from constraints made her all the more visible.

Lucy was acclaimed late in 1953 as a hero of the campaign for women's rights, when the United Associations of Women (UA) honoured her alongside Dame Mary Gilmore and Henrietta Greville at a dinner to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Women's Franchise in Australia.⁵⁸ Lucy was very visible, too, at meetings of the Union of Australian Women (UAW), which aimed to address the goals of working-class women and had substantial communist as well as non-communist membership. Lucy attended their monthly lunch in February 1954, when she spoke about Equal Pay, and then was guest of honour in March, speaking about education.⁵⁹

Over the same period, Lucy maintained her work in the Peace movement, contributing particularly to the emerging campaign against atomic weapons, which had been expanding since British testing on mainland Australia had begun the year before. On 8 April 1954, Lucy chaired a meeting at the Sydney Town Hall, attended by Chinese and Indonesian activists as well as Australians, condemning the first test of a hydrogen bomb on 1 March by the United States in the Marshall Islands.⁶⁰ In its May *Newsheet*, the UA announced a message from Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, the president of the UN General Assembly, calling on all member nations – and particularly all women – to condemn the H-bomb.⁶¹ This campaign was to become even more significant to Lucy when she later visited Japan.⁶²

Her goal in 1954 was to make very direct and personal contact with the international Peace movement. Lucy had sustained her anger over the refusal of her long service leave and the withdrawal of her passport in

58 *Tribune* (Sydney), 27 January 1954, 9. UA event took place 16 December 1953.

59 Re November 1953 UAW meeting and coming February meeting, 26 January 1954, Lucy Godiva Woodcock ASIO file, Vol. 1, f 108, A6119, 2030, NAA; Re UAW meeting March 8 at International Women's Day, 3 March 1954, *ibid.*, ff 112–13, NAA.

60 Re H Bomb Symposium, 13 April 1954, Lucy Godiva Woodcock ASIO file, Vol. 1, f 116, A6119, 2030, NAA; *Daily Telegraph*, 9 April 1954; *SMH*, 9 April 1954.

61 UA *Newsheet*, May 1954, 1.

62 See Chapter 12, this volume.

1952 when she had wanted to attend a Peace conference in Peking. It was, however, in recognition of her continuing high role in women's civil rights that the UA and the Australian Federation of Women Voters (AFWV) elected Lucy as their representative at the summer school to be held in Copenhagen from 28 July to 24 August on 'Women and their Status in the Community'.⁶³ Lucy planned to visit her friends in UNESCO in Paris as well as visiting Denmark, Sweden and other places in her study of education methods abroad.⁶⁴ At the same time as Lucy was seeking to travel, Bill Gollan and Freda Brown, both members of the CPA, were also making travel plans, which included some of the same events to which Lucy was going. The government was intensely suspicious of them all.

Lucy at first expected she would have no difficulty as she was a delegate from the UA and AFWV. So she booked her plane ticket for 10 June. In its classified files, however, it is clear that ASIO regarded her as a 'suspected communist' and viewed her with deepest suspicion. It knew that Bill Gollan had a current passport but withdrew it, while it began making inquiries about the validity of Lucy's,⁶⁵ including gathering further information from R.J. Heffron, who only months before had been so glowing in his praise of Lucy.⁶⁶ In an attempt to stop the delegation leaving at all, the federal government withdrew the passports of the former ALP senator Bill Morrow as well as CPA member Bill Gollan, and refused to issue new ones to two clergymen, the Reverend Neil Glover and Father A. Haley, Rector of Darwin, all due to attend the Peace conference in Sweden, the 'Stockholm Gathering on International Understanding'.⁶⁷ Lucy chaired the protest meeting held in the Teachers Federation Hall, attended by Alf Clint, Clarice McNamara (NEF) and many others, in which she said:

I believe we have the right to our own opinions and the right to travel freely to other countries.⁶⁸

63 Evaluation, 7 July 1954, Lucy Godiva Woodcock ASIO file, Vol. 1, f 144, A6119, 2030, NAA; *Tribune* (Sydney), 27 January 1954, 9; UA *Newsletter*, September 1954.

64 Memorandum, 25 June 1954, Lucy Godiva Woodcock ASIO file, Vol. 1, f 142, A6119, 2030, NAA.

65 Memorandum, 6 May 1954, Lucy Godiva Woodcock ASIO file, Vol. 1, ff 123–24, A6119, 2030, NAA.

66 *Ibid.*, f 123, where she is referred to with Bill Gollan as 'the above named communists'. It is not clear if this was Heffron's terminology or that of the ASIO agent.

67 See St Clair Anderson's report in *Tribune* (Sydney), 24 November 1954, 10. Anderson attended the Stockholm 'Gathering'.

68 *Tribune*, 2 June 1954. Held in Lucy Godiva Woodcock ASIO file, Vol. 1, f 134, A6119, 2030, NAA.

Then Lucy learnt that her passport, too, was in doubt, forcing her to cancel her ticket, explaining to the travel agent that she was having trouble gaining access to a passport. In protest, she appealed to the clergymen in the Peace Council to mobilise support for her. The Reverend Alf Dickie pursued a number of options through the Victorian Peace Council, recorded in an ASIO report, which quoted Dickie describing Lucy as 'former leading member Teachers Federation, now retired, never belonged to any Party, life-long service to children's education'.⁶⁹

After a flurry of such activity, Lucy was granted a new passport on 15 June 1954, with a visa allowing her to enter France. She left on 17 June with a one-way ticket to London via Amsterdam.⁷⁰ Sam and Ethel Lewis were there to farewell her, along with others, and so Lucy finally made it out of Australia. One of the first things she did once in Europe was to make arrangements to acquire a British passport so that the Australian Government could never detain her again.

But the Australian controversies did not end even though Lucy had finally left to go overseas!

As Lucy was leaving, she had mentioned to a friend that she was considering going to the last part of the Peace conference in Sweden as an observer if she were able to arrive in time. This 'friend' had passed the news on to ASIO and it had then inexplicably been given to Jack Lang, formerly ALP premier of NSW but, by 1954, a vitriolic anti-communist crusader, for whom any Peace-related activity was a sign of communism. Lang regarded Lucy's travel as suspicious, raising the earlier refusal of her passport to attend the Peace Council conference in Peking, and publishing his accusations in his *Century* newspaper. On this pretext, the AFWV on 20 July, just days after Lucy had finally left the country, telegraphed her and the various women's organisations associated with the Denmark workshop, cancelling its endorsement of Lucy 'because of the Press controversy'.⁷¹

The UA described the incident with deep regret, expressing 'great indignation ... that a woman of Miss Woodcock's distinction and integrity should have been subjected to such a humiliating experience on the word of a paper of the nature of *The Century*'. The *Newsheet* continued that

69 Report, 18 June 1954, Lucy Godiva Woodcock ASIO file, Vol. 1, f 138, A6119, 2030, NAA.

70 'Teacher Pierces Holt's Curtain', *Tribune*, 23 June 1954. Held in Lucy Godiva Woodcock ASIO file, Vol. 1, f 141, A6119, 2030, NAA.

71 UA *Newsheet*, September 1954, 2.

there had been no reason for the AFWV to act in the way it had, despite the 'scurrilous attack' by Lang's *Century*. After pointing out the lifetime of service Lucy had given to the cause of women as well as to education, the UA described Lucy's reaction to the AFWV cable as 'mystified' but reported that her reply had been 'characteristic of the writer – expressive of a spirit of the utmost generosity, dignity and poise'.⁷²

Lucy had gone to Sweden but she cancelled her visit to Denmark after her disendorsement. She remained committed to working with the UA, which supported her strongly and encouraged her to continue to represent it in the Peace campaign and all other events. Lucy had in fact already delivered a UA report to the Open Door International Conference on the Economic Emancipation of the Woman Worker, held at Oxford from 26 to 30 July. This UA report was a concise and realistic outline of conditions in Australia. It recognised the divisions among women themselves and was honest about the setbacks faced as the war ended. Nevertheless, this was a constructive report, with a clear-eyed focus on the tasks to be accomplished to make improvements. This was the approach that Lucy's work in the Teachers Federation had always taken – realistic but constructive and strategic – so it must have confirmed her confidence in the organisation. It allowed her to begin her busy journey with a sense of purpose, which was ultimately demonstrated in the report on her travels that she delivered to the UA on her return in 1955.

For its part, the organisation wasted no time in making the decision to disaffiliate from the AFWV. As reported in its November *Newsheet*, the UA had decided 'after earnest consideration' that it should withdraw affiliation. The UA argued tactfully that financial difficulties had led to its decision, and pointed out that its own goals were more limited than those of the AFWV. The timing of the decision made clear, however, that the AFWV repudiation of Lucy Woodcock was the key issue. After assuring the AFWV that continuing opportunities for cooperation would be welcomed, the UA affirmed that its priority would be 'improving the status of women'. The UA pointedly explained that by this it meant focusing primarily on the issue of Equal Pay, which it felt would be best pursued by working on a national campaign with bodies as focused on Equal Pay as the Council for Action on Equal Pay had been earlier.⁷³

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ UA *Newsheet*, November 1954, 1.

This text is taken from *Teacher for Justice: Lucy Woodcock's Transnational Life*, by Heather Goodall, Helen Randerson and Devleena Ghosh, published 2019 by ANU Press, The Australian National University, Canberra, Australia.