

Section 1

Forging a Communist Party for Australia: 1920–1923

The documents in this section cover the period from April 1920 to late 1923, that is, from before the inaugural conference of Australian communists to a time when the CPA had emerged as the Australian section of the Comintern, but was still dealing with issues of unity, and was coming to terms with the realities of being a section of a world revolutionary party. The main theme of this section is organizational unity, because that is what the Australian communists and their Comintern colleagues saw as the chief priority. As the ECCI wrote to the feuding Australian communists in June 1922: ‘The existence of two small groups, *amidst a seething current of world shaking events*, engaged almost entirely in airing their petty differences, instead of unitedly plunging into the current and mastering it, is not only a ridiculous and shameful spectacle, but also a crime committed against the working class movement’ (see Document 15). The crucial unity meeting finally occurred in July that year.

The CAAL documents reveal that the Comintern played a larger role in forging the CPA than has previously been thought. There were supporters of the Bolshevik Revolution in Australia, and people who wanted to create a party like the Bolsheviks’, to be sure, but Petr Simonov, Paul Freeman and Aleksandr Zuzenko helped to bring the at first wary—and later squabbling—currents of former Wobblies, former ASP socialists, and former worker radicals together. Indeed the ASP believed that it (the ASP) was, or ought to be, the Australian communist party, and it somewhat begrudgingly went through the unity process demanded by the Comintern. The ASP’s relative organizational strength allied with its reluctance to accept the others explains much of the infighting of the CPA’s first 20 months. That a communist party emerged out of this period is due in no small part to the intervention of the Comintern and its agents. The fact that it was not a rebadged ASP owed much to ill luck, as will be seen. We have used this section, in part, to allow the agents for the Comintern to speak for themselves, and we have given substantial space to Aleksandr Zuzenko, whose role in the CPA’s formation is only now receiving its due recognition because of the CAAL documents (Windle 2004a,b; Windle 2005c; Windle 2007a).

Communism of the Leninist variety came to general attention only during the First World War, despite Lenin’s seminal pamphlet *What is to be Done?* having appeared in 1902. Lenin’s Bolshevik Party took control of key centres

in Russia in the so-called October Revolution in 1917,¹ and consolidated and extended its control over the remainder of Russia during the years following. Australia had emerged from the First World War having endured more casualties per capita than any other combatant country, yet its young democracy survived while European empires—the Ottoman, Russian, and Austro-Hungarian—crumbled. The war had touched the lives of most Australians deeply, as the monuments to the fallen soldiers that soon sprang up in almost every town and city attested (Inglis 1998). And while Australia emerged as a more united nation than its founding fathers had hoped (especially with the ANZAC myth beginning to nourish an Australian identity), the war had in at least one respect divided the country. Two bitterly fought referendums on the issue of introducing conscription were narrowly lost, intensifying sectarian divisions (Catholic Archbishop Daniel Mannix of Melbourne being a vociferous opponent of conscription) and splitting the Labor Party (with Labor Prime Minister ‘Billy’ Hughes walking out of his own party in November 1916 and eventually forming the Nationalist Party with the support of the parliamentary opposition). Australia’s political party alignment was fundamentally changed, and Australia’s armed services would remain a volunteer force until the next war. But the returned soldiers who had served their country and the British Empire were poorly recompensed, and established their own organization, the Returned Soldiers and Sailors and Imperial League of Australia (RSSILA; later to become the Returned and Services League, but under whichever name a potent political lobbying group). The government eventually granted many of them plots of land for farming. The ‘soldier settlement scheme’ was not a great success; but despite their troubles few ex-soldiers were attracted to communism. Amongst other reasons, the Russian Revolutions of 1917—February and October, in the Old Style calendar—had effectively taken Russia out of the War. Communism, with its Russian connection, was considered both frightening and disloyal. Some returned soldiers attacked those who paraded the prohibited red flag in Brisbane on 23 March 1919, and serious riots ensued; some went on to join the fascist New Guard movement in the 1930s in response to the Great Depression.

As for the Australian working classes, they were no more susceptible to communist propaganda than the soldiers. With its own (‘reformist’) political party, the ALP, and with restrictive immigration under the ‘White Australia Policy’, Australian workers enjoyed relatively high standards of living at least until the Great Depression put many out of work and reduced the wages of others. Perhaps the most highly unionized working class in the world, its form was a product of the centralized wage fixing system built under the Arbitration Court and assisted by decisions such as Mr Justice Higgins’ 1907 ‘Harvester’

¹ ‘So-called’ in two respects: first, because it took place according to the modern, Gregorian calendar on November 7; second, because it is arguable whether it was a revolution or a coup.

judgment, which determined a basic wage that would provide a fair standard of living for a (male) worker and his family. Thus the CPA was composed, at least in this foundation period, of existing socialists and radicals of various stripes, some working class and some not; as it grew in later years it never established a mass base among workers, and at times consisted chiefly of unemployed men.

That the Comintern was crucial to the foundation of the CPA is confirmed by these documents: those Australian socialists who gathered at the ‘founding conference’ on 30 October 1920 would have split into many warring groups, and lost direction, had it not been for their desire to be the Australian section of the Comintern. Their relationship was shaped by respect for and deference to the Comintern, and its leading party, the Russian Communist Party. The Comintern itself would go through a number of different phases, generally reflecting the internecine struggles over leadership of the RCP and thus Soviet Russia. But the Australians, in general, never questioned the arguments of those phases, nor the authority of the winners, except for those attracted to Trotsky’s views in the 1930s. Was it thinkable that a party that had won a revolution, and was running a state, could be wrong? In the end, the authority of the Revolution (even for Trotskyists) was always the trump card.

The story of the formation of the CPA is first of all a story of the manoeuvres of the various groups that came together in October 1920 for the founding conference. The level of trust between them, despite their apparent dedication to the same cause, was not particularly high. The details can be found elsewhere (Macintyre 1998, 12–27, 53–75). The basic moves in this game, however, are familiar and predictable. Let us review them briefly. To win, use any favourable opportunity to press home a momentary advantage (say, in numbers at particular meetings); attempt to possess, or at least control, key assets such as premises and printing presses; having won an advantage, claim the moral high ground of dedication to the cause; and attempt further to turn might into right by gaining recognition from a bestower of authority, in this case the Comintern. For the losers, too, the moves are predictable: split or wreck if outnumbered, align oneself to high principle or some notion of legality, and regroup to counter-attack and prevail, whereupon employ the devices of the winners. The game is over when one side loses interest or walks away to create its own game. These moves are in no wise peculiar to communists. Furthermore, it is no criticism to say that Lenin himself was a master of such tactics (especially in connection with the 1903 conference of the RSDLP which produced the split between the fortuitously named ‘Bolsheviks’, ‘majority-ites’, and ‘Mensheviks’, ‘minority-ites’), but the early Australian communists would have known little of this.

In connection with the Comintern documents, each phase of the manoeuvres sketched above was reflected in correspondence with, and especially appeals

to, the Comintern. The would-be Communists hung on the advice and the promises of the Comintern's agents. And so there were for a time, in effect, two communist parties, usually designated the 'Liverpool Street' and 'Sussex Street' parties because of the location of their premises in Sydney. In these early years, it was a struggle of Reardon and Everitt versus Earsman and Garden. Whatever the real policy differences between them—and there were some—they were overshadowed by the struggle itself. The eventual victory of 'Sussex Street' was to some extent a matter of luck, if the misfortune of opposing delegates before the crucial Comintern congress in 1921 may be described as luck: the jailing of Jim Quinton and the accidental deaths of Artem and Freeman.

The story of the formation of the CPA is also a story of some larger-than-life characters in the Australian socialist movement, especially of Freeman, Zuzenko, and Simonov (Windle 2005). Paul Freeman was deported as an alien, without charge or trial, in January 1919, but crossed the Pacific Ocean four times as US, and then Australian, authorities denied him a landing (Evans 1989, 16). He seems to have come to the attention of authorities for his labour radicalism and for his unknown (but possibly German) origins. He returned from Moscow to Australia to organize delegates to the Third Comintern Congress, at which he was an accredited ASP delegate. He was killed with Artem Sergeev—a Russian Bolshevik with strong Australian connections—in the crash of an experimental train in July 1921. Aleksandr Zuzenko was a Russian revolutionary who arrived in Australia in 1911 but was deported in April 1919 for his political activities, particularly his leadership of the Red Flag demonstration. Back in Russia, Zuzenko abandoned his revolutionary anarchism for Bolshevism; he entreated the Comintern to send him on a mission to Australia, which he argued had enormous revolutionary potential. After a journey lasting more than a year he arrived in Australia in time for the crucial unity meeting of communists in July 1922; he was deported again in September. He never returned to Australia, but became a captain of Soviet merchant ships, and was charged in 1938 with espionage and executed. Petr Simonov was a Russian émigré in Australia at the time of the Bolshevik Revolution. He was jailed in Australia for addressing public meetings in support of the Revolution, but released in July 1919. Simonov's credentials as 'Soviet consul' were not accepted by the Australian government, and he left for Russia in September 1921. Simonov—like the others, as we shall see in this section—advised the Comintern on the situation among Australian communists and despite sponsoring the 'Sussex Street' communists seemed more interested in promoting his own role in the formation of the CPA. However, the influence of his contribution to the Comintern on the matter of the CPA is difficult for us to assess.

Communist publications in Australia during this formative period of the CPA played an important part not just in informing workers about communist aims, but in the organizational game of advantage between the different groups.

Volume 1, Number 1 of the weekly *The Australian Communist* was published in Sydney on 24 December 1920. It began with an article on ‘Where We Stand’, insisting—rightly—that the notion of the ‘dictatorship of the proletariat’ separated the communists from the socialist parties that had preceded it. But this same issue contained a vigorous attack on the Australian Socialist Party ‘communists’, as not desiring unity, even though the conference of communists held at the end of October was (somewhat reluctantly) hosted by the ASP itself. In the meantime, of course, that conference had been reconvened twice and the new executive, unable to gain control of the ASP’s journal *International Socialist* at its session of 11 December, published its own paper and commenced hostilities. Nevertheless, getting the message to workers about the changes taking place in Russia was important, and in March 1921, the paper sponsored Professor William Goode’s public lectures on Russia. In May 1921, after another failed attempt at unity between communists in March, the paper was renamed simply *The Communist*, and described the Party (inaccurately) as the ‘Australian section of the Third International’. The 21 conditions for affiliation to the Comintern, adopted by the Comintern in 1920, were published in the issue of 10 June 1921.

On 24 June 1921, *The Communist* published a ‘special unity number’, proposing to explain, as it put it in large type, ‘Why There are Two Communist Parties in Australia’, and laying bare the ‘complete correspondence’ on the discussions on unity between the ASP and CPA. There followed a blow-by-blow account. In July, the paper noted that the Comintern had also directed the two American communist parties to unite, and later in that month Petr Simonov—‘Soviet Russian Consul for Australia’—contributed an article under the heading ‘Starving Russia!’ which denied press reports of starvation. Thus began a tendency not merely to ‘gild the lily’ about conditions in Russia, but to lie. Ironically, it was not long before the paper was making desperate demands for aid to starving Russians. These would not be made by Simonov, however, who used the paper to announce that he had closed the Consulate (in August), and booked a passage back to Russia (in September).

From September 1921 to August 1922, when the Comintern formally accepted the affiliation of the CPA, the question of unity among Australian communists was a major theme of *The Communist*. Unity was desirable, it seemed, not simply because of the effectiveness it might bring to their efforts, but especially because the Third Congress of the Comintern ‘demanded’ it. On 21 October 1921, a front page headline declared: ‘Moscow Demands Unity Within Three Months’, followed by the text of the resolution. On 20 January 1922, having registered continuing problems in uniting, *The Communist* declared that the other communists (what it called the ‘ASP’, and what since the end of 1920 is more appropriately described as the ‘Liverpool Street Communist Party’) had ruled ‘the Third International Out of Order’ and rejected the demand for unity. To show its bona fides in the discussions between communists, it published further correspondence

between the two groups over the unity question (including the letter by Marcia Reardon of 28 December 1921 included here as part of Document 14). Comparisons with children snitching on each other to their parents, or to the classroom teacher, are irresistible.

A conference of communists in February 1922—held by the ‘Sussex Street’ comrades partly at the behest of Moscow, but chiefly to best the ‘Liverpool Street’ comrades—established the so-called ‘United CPA’, and dutifully reported to Moscow. But the game had begun to drift in the direction of ‘Sussex Street’ as dissent (over a couple of important matters) in the ‘Liverpool Street Communist Party’ saw the Sydney branch join with the United CPA at the crucial June 1922 meeting attended by Zuzenko. This was the core of the Communist Party of Australia that was formally affiliated to the Comintern in August 1922. But it was not yet over: in December 1922, just as the Comintern was formally welcoming its Australian section at the Fourth Congress in Russia, many of those in the Sydney branch of the (former) ‘Liverpool Street’ party, whose decision for unity in July had been critical to Comintern recognition, split from the CPA and requested that an ECCI member be sent from Moscow to adjudicate the dispute (Document 23). There were further matters to clarify over the course of 1922 and 1923, many of them related to applying the Comintern’s ‘united front’ policy, as the documents below attest. But while the CPA had by this time virtually seen off the challenge from the former ASP, there were others in Australia who believed that they should be affiliated to the Comintern. In particular, a group of Russian workers in Brisbane contacted the Comintern asking for recognition. They were ultimately advised to join the CPA. The Comintern, once again, was arbiter and ultimate authority in such matters. At this time, and despite small branches in a number of centres and state capitals, the major geographical centre of gravity of the CPA was on Australia’s eastern seaboard, with particular strength of numbers only in Sydney and Brisbane. That continued for much of the 1920s, but the Queensland Russians would not become part of the CPA. At the Party’s Seventh Annual Conference, Jack Howie reported that for the year 1927 ‘The C.E. has received only one or two considered reports from Brisbane Group, several complaints about what is taking place in Russia, a failure to recognise the duty of the Community Party ... No contact whatever has been made with Ipswich Group during the year. In 1926 a small Group existed mainly of Russian comrades, and as far as my records show, was broken up, owing to personal differences’ (495–94–35).

Late in 1922, as CPA delegates gathered in Russia to attend the Fourth Comintern Congress—and had their celebrated audiences with Lenin and Trotsky (Macintyre 1998, 85–86)—some of the realities of life in a section of the Comintern began to dawn. There were organizational issues to be addressed but, above all, the task of drawing the workers away from the ALP and towards the communist revolution, perhaps the key task confronting Australian communists throughout

their entire history, was now located firmly within the framework of Comintern policy. At this stage, 1922, it would be the 'United Front'; later in the 1920s, it would be the 'Third Period', or 'Class against Class', or 'Social Fascism'; and then in the mid-1930s it became the 'Popular Front'. Arguments about the 'exceptionalism' of particular countries may have worked for short periods, but did not go down well in Moscow. We shall have cause to revisit the phases of this policy, but for now it reinforces a key message that emerges from these documents: the centrality of Moscow.

Document 1

RGASPI 495–94–2. 14 April 1920, A.M. Zuzenko: Addresses, for Brisbane, for Sydney. In Russian, manuscript; over-written in Latin script: 'Suzenko 14.IV [1920]'. Trans. by KW.

Zuzenko, having been deported from Australia, and landing finally in Russia, contacts the Comintern early in 1920 by way of the following documents. The first fragment seems to indicate Australian contacts to whom communist publications could safely be sent; the note and attached letter attempt to establish Zuzenko's credentials to help create a Communist Party in Australia.

... best via Vladivostok—Japan, San Francisco—Sydney or Brisbane.

Addresses

For Brisbane

1. Mr Norman Freeberg, Sub-editor of 'Worker', Brisbane, Australia. Home address: Mr Norman Freeberg, Laura St, Sth Brisbane, Q-nd, Australia.
2. Mr A. Gorsky, G.P.O. Brisbane, Q-nd, Australia.
3. Mr Alex Robinson, Sub-editor of Daily Standard, Brisbane, Q-nd, Australia.

For Sydney

4. Mr Peter Brookfield,² M.P., Parliament House, NSW Sydney, Australia

For Melbourne

5. Mr Considine, M.F.P., Federal Parliament House, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia
9. ³ As soon as I am asked I can send the documents which my wife managed to send from Australia: issues of the newspaper *Knowledge and Unity* in English, proclamations addressed to English [sic] workers, a number of documents concerning my being banned from speaking out in the press and at meetings, the order to deport me from Australia, a number of

² As given, meaning Percy Brookfield.

³ Part of the text seems to be missing before this paragraph.

clippings from the English-language press describing our work, and the addresses of some comrades. At present I am the editor of the newspaper *Izvestiia Tiraspol'skago Revkoma* [News of the Tiraspol Revolutionary Committee]. If you decide to send me to Australia for liaison with the Third International and to transmit information, I shall be very glad to serve the cause of the Social Revolution once again. The field for ideological work in Australia is very wide and presents opportunities for work such as cannot be found in Europe.

While working in Australia I earned the trust of the working masses. They heeded my words and believed them. The help accorded to my wife, who was left without income (after my arrest) and the deep concern shown for her welfare demonstrate to me that I was well liked there as an efficient [Party] worker. Having been deported under the War Precautions Act, I will be able to go to Brisbane (being a seaman by trade) and quickly begin work again with the aid of the local comrades.

Aleksandr Mikhailov [i.e. Mikhailovich] Zuzenko

Tiraspol Party Committee

Odessa region

14 April 1920,

Moscow

The Organizational Question

Establishing a Communist Party in Australia

1. It is essential to send an experienced communist organizer who is familiar with the workers' milieu and conditions of work in Australia, to organize districts and [Party] cells.
2. The districts and cells of each Australian state should be linked to form a single core, which will form the Central Committee of the Communist Party in Australia.
3. The Central Committee will be the leader of all organizational, agitational, cultural, educational and political work (to the extent that circumstances permit) in Australia.
4. Once it has joined the Third International, the Central Committee will carry out all orders and implement the decisions of the Third International and be accountable to it for its work.
5. From the ranks of the existing League of Communists and from among the Russian workers in Australia, who are mostly Bolsheviks, and from politically aware English workers, we should build cadres of propagandists and organizers, having trained them at courses in propaganda and the plans of the Russian Communist Party.

6. The cadres of propagandists and organizers, when trained for their work, should disperse throughout Australia (through all regions and states) and deepen and extend the communist movement, while reporting on their activities and work to the regions and the regions to the Central Committee.
7. The Australian Communist Party should establish close links with the CP of America, aiding the growth of communism in America by means of literature [i.e. agitprop publications—*Trans.*], since Australia offers opportunities unimaginable in America.
8. Since the proletariat in Australia is already organized into trade unions, it is essential that all Party work be directed towards reorganizing the old unions along industrial lines.
9. Every communist must take it upon himself to be a trade union member and work within the old organizations to promote the idea of rebuilding them on new principles, in order to prepare to take control of production from the very first steps of the revolution.
10. The political work of the Party in Australia is a matter of the broadest propagation of the ideas of anti-parliamentary preparation of the cadres of revolutionary minded workers in order to seize power by revolutionary means.

A.M. Zuzenko

Tiraspol Party Committee

Document 2

RGASPI 495–94–2. 30 April 1920, A.M. Zuzenko: To the Third Communist International, Report on the work of the Union of Russian Workers in Australia. In Russian, manuscript and typescript copies; overwritten by hand: 'to Com. Radek'. Trans. by KW.

In this letter to the Comintern, Zuzenko outlines his own work among émigré Russian workers in Brisbane as a revolutionary journalist and organizer, describes his hazardous journey back to Russia following his deportation, and makes another claim to be returned to Australia on Comintern business. As Zuzenko maintains: 'It is vital that an experienced organizer, familiar with working conditions in Australia, be sent to organize the Australian Communist Party and establish links between Australia and the Third International.'

A version of this document was published in *Kommunisticheskii international*, No. 11, 14 June 1920, signed 'R'.

A.M. Zuzenko

Moscow, 30 April 1920

To The Third Communist International

Report on the Work of the Union of Russian Workers in Australia and the Ideological Work of the League of Communists in Queensland

According to the Tsarist Consul-General d'Abaza, in May 1917 there were up to five thousand people in Australia [sic; i.e. 5,000 Russians]. Of that total, only about four or five hundred were political emigrants. The others were workers and peasants who had come to Australia with the aim of earning a couple of hundred pounds as quickly as possible so as to return home to begin a more comfortable life. The peasants and workers were mostly Siberians from the Ussuri region and settlers from Manchuria. The political emigrants formed groups of Russian workers in Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne. The number of members of all groups before the 1917 revolution barely reached a total of 100 to 150.

In Brisbane a newspaper was published with the title *Ekho Australii* [Australian Echo]. It enjoyed little success and closed about six weeks after being founded. In 1913 the Union of Russian Workers in Brisbane began to publish a paper called *Izvestiia Soiuzu Rossiiskikh Rabochikh* [News of the Union of Russian Workers], which appeared until 1916. After representations from the Tsarist government, this paper was closed down at the end of 1916 by decision of the Australian military authorities. A paper with the title *Rabochaia zhizn* [Worker's Life] then began to appear.

None of the afore-named newspapers were popular among the workers, owing to the marked Menshevik tendency of some articles by their correspondents, the unpopular manner of presentation of the articles, which were larded with foreign words, and an excess of battlefield reports. Only after the departure for Russia from Australia of several groups of political emigrants, with fares paid by the Provisional Government, in early 1917, when the Bolsheviks took over the leadership of the Union, did *Rabochaia zhizn* become the voice of the ideas of the Social Revolution and a true workers' paper.

In June 1917 Comrade Petr Simonov was elected Secretary of the Union of Russian Workers in Brisbane and editor of the newspaper. In December 1917, under the War Precautions Act, *Rabochaia zhizn* was closed down. In January 1918, by telegram from Comrade Litvinov in London, Comrade Simonov was appointed Consul General in Australia and surrendered the secretaryship of the Union of Russian Workers in Brisbane to travel to Melbourne, dreaming perhaps of becoming an official of Soviet Russia, who would sit in an office issuing passports to departing Russians ... and nothing more.

In July 1918 the Union of Russian Workers elected me as its secretary. Since 1912 I had been travelling all over Australia, from Port Pirie and Adelaide, to the Far North, organizing IWW groups, collecting aid for the English-language newspaper *Direct Action*, organizing a number of strikes, some of which, like the one in the Mossman sugar-growing district and the shearers' strike in the Townsville area, ended in complete success owing to the application of Russian fighting methods. My ideological work had been mostly among English workers. When elected secretary of the Union I left an organized cane-cutters' strike in northern Australia in full swing—a month later it was broken by the trade unions—and hastened to Brisbane, knowing that with the aid of the established organization of the Union of Russian Workers in Australia much could be done to propagate Bolshevik ideas among English workers.

By this time a rift had occurred in the Union of Russian Workers between the Bolshevik members (mostly workers) and the Mensheviks (intellectuals and profiteering shopkeepers). From my very first steps in this work I succeeded in uniting the Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane, Ipswich and Port Darwin unions into a federation of unions and groups of Russian workers in Australia. The number of members exceeded five hundred.

While lending material assistance to Comrade Simonov, who had been appointed the Bolshevik consul in Australia, we compelled him to address meetings in Sydney and Melbourne and explain to English workers the great significance of the Russian Social Revolution. Having received permission to publish a Russian-language newspaper *Znanie i edinenie* [Knowledge and Unity], we made it a communist paper which won favour with the Russian workers by its plain presentation, direct manner and truthful articles.⁴

In November Comrade P. Simonov and I were forbidden to play any part at all in propaganda work anywhere in Australia. I was denied the right to edit a newspaper. My wife, née Civa Rosenberg, then became the nominal editor of the paper and secretary of the Union of Russian Workers in Australia. I went on with my work and also insisted that Comrade P. Simonov continue to address meetings of workers, paying no attention to the bans. In early December 1918 the Russian-language *Znanie i edinenie* was closed down by decision of the Australian military authorities. We started publishing it as *Knowledge and Unity* in English and set up three illegal printing shops to print proclamations, while arranging a series of demonstration marches with red placards. A march through the streets of Brisbane to mark the anniversary of the October Revolution was particularly successful. The authorities closed Centennial Hall, which we had rented for the day, but we organized an evening march and meeting, which was very successful, in South Brisbane markets.

⁴ The last phrase is omitted in the typed copy.

In December 1918 publication began of an illegal Russian paper entitled *Deviatyi val* [The Ninth Wave], of which only four issues appeared. At about this time we set up the Queensland League of Communists, which functioned on an illegal basis. To arrange marches and coordinate ideological work (propaganda and aid to *Knowledge and Unity*) we established a group of organizations: the Industrial Council of Queensland,⁵ the Queensland Socialist League, the IWW ('Industrialists') and the Union of Russian Workers in Australia. *Knowledge and Unity* in English, which I edited, enjoyed immense and fully deserved success. It was nothing less than 'mental dynamite',⁶ as the delivery boys called it. We received no information or financial support from Russia, so had to rely on our own resources. We managed to obtain John Reed's journal *The Liberator*, smuggled from America, and the newspaper *The Socialist*, the organ of the British Independent Labour Party. Our paper carried the constitution of the RSFSR, speeches by Comrades Lenin and Trotsky, and short articles by [Arthur] Ransome, John Reed, Betsy-Betty and others.⁷

After a successful demonstration on 25 March 1919 with red banners (in protest against the intervention in Russia and the War Precautions Act),⁸ we were routed by armed troops. In the clash several people received minor or severe injuries. Three were killed.⁹

On 27 March 1919 I was arrested in Brisbane and compelled to make the journey from Australia to Constantinople in chains. From Brisbane prison I was sent to Sydney prison, then on board ship to Hobart prison (on the island of Tasmania), then the prisons of Colombo (Ceylon), Bombay (India), Suez, Port Tewfik,¹⁰ Cairo, Alexandria (Egypt) and Constantinople (Turkey), whence I was released after three and a half days at the insistence of my wife, who had followed me from Australia. Having departed from Australia a month after me, in late May 1919, she passed on to me some items of news from the month following my deportation. In early May 1919 a conference of trade union workers' representatives had taken place in Melbourne. A plan for 'One Big Union' had been adopted and a decision taken to launch the struggle for a six-hour working day and the nationalization of the means of production. Our paper *Knowledge and Unity*, which I had handed over shortly before my arrest to the Queensland Socialist League, was still appearing and enjoying well deserved success among the workers. Comrade Petr Simonov (the Bolshevik consul in Australia) was

⁵ Zuzenko may mean the Brisbane Industrial Council.

⁶ This phrase given in English, spelt 'dinamite'.

⁷ Betsy-Betty: probably a reference to Bessie Beatty, 1886–1947. Beatty was an American journalist who travelled in Russia in 1917 and met Lenin and Trotsky in the Smolny. She was there at the same time as John Reed. Back in the USA in 1918 she wrote a book, *The Red Heart of Russia*, and later in the 1920s visited the USSR. She remained a devoted supporter of the Bolshevik cause.

⁸ The actual date was Sunday, 23 March 1919.

⁹ Australian documents relating to these events report numerous injuries, but no deaths.

¹⁰ Now more commonly anglicized as Port Taufiq or Bur Taufiq..

arrested and held in Sydney's Long Bay Prison for six months for breaching an injunction not to address public meetings. After my arrest, Russians and Englishmen [i.e. Australians—*Trans.*] had been put on trial for taking part in the demonstrations with red flags on 25 May 1919. Of the Russians, Rezanov, Tolstobrov, Kreslin, Rosenberg and Kliushin were sentenced to six months each. Six prominent English orators and organizers of the IWW at their trial called themselves Australian Bolsheviks and were all sentenced to six months' imprisonment. My wife, who had travelled to Egypt as a free citizen of Australia, was arrested in Suez and sent to the [Gelova?] military prison (for female German colonists) and spent about two months there before being dispatched from Alexandria to Constantinople on the same ship as me.¹¹

It is my view, as one who has been at the centre of ideological work in Australia, that we can successfully reply to British intervention in Russia only by Russian Bolshevik intervention in British affairs. British workers pay close attention to events in 'the freest of democracies', Australia, and Bolshevik successes in Australia could have decisive influence on the course of events in England and speed the progress of revolution there. In Australia there are numerous opportunities for ideological work, such as are absent in Europe and America. The broadest material support for *Knowledge and Unity* is essential, if it has not yet withered and still exists, or, if it has died, another paper should be launched.

It is vital that an experienced organizer, familiar with working conditions in Australia, be sent to organize the Australian Communist Party and establish links between Australia and the Third International. It is essential to send literature and provide information to Australia about events in Russia. The shortest route, Siberia – Japan – Australia, can hardly be used at present. The safer route is Arkhangelsk – Norway – San Francisco – Sydney.

If the Third Communist International should need to send me to Australia, I shall be very glad to serve the cause of the Social Revolution in Australia once again. I enclose some documents concerning the ban preventing me from speaking, the warrant for my arrest, my wife's correspondence with the IWW representatives in the New South Wales Parliament, and others. I shall be able to supply several issues of *Knowledge and Unity* in English, some cuttings from the Australian press about my arrest and deportation, and some typical reactions from the capitalist Australian press to our ideological work and reports of the trials of some Australian Bolsheviks, as well as the addresses of some comrades and profiles of them as [Party] workers.

My address:

¹¹ 'Gelova': not positively identified; possibly Yi'allaq.

Aleksandr Zuzenko, Editor of *Izvestiia Tiraspol'skago Revkoma* [News of the Tiraspol Revolutionary Committee], Tiraspol, Kherson Region.

Document 3

RGASPI 495–94–2. 15 August 1920, A.M. Zuzenko: memorandum to the Secretary of the ECCI. In Russian, manuscript. Trans. by KW.

Zuzenko's entreaties to the Comintern to return to Australia on its behalf met with success, but he learned that he would be travelling with another deportee from Australia, Paul Freeman. This document is intended to besmirch Freeman's political reputation and ensure that he should not take part in this mission. The substance of Zuzenko's allegations is open to question, but this letter gives an indication of the personal rivalries at play in the early Comintern.

To: Comrade Secretary of the Comintern Executive Committee

From: **A. Zuzenko**

Delovoi dvor,¹² Room 190, Moscow

Date: 15 August 1920

MEMORANDUM

In early May this year, by a decision of the Comintern Executive Committee, I was instructed to travel to Australia to set up the Communist Party and establish links between the Comintern and the revolutionary element of the Australian proletariat. Having returned to Moscow from Tiraspol, where I had called to wind up my affairs, I learned that Comrade Freeman, whom I had tried to get to know better, was being sent with me so that we could work together in Australia. I knew Comrade Freeman in Australia as a proponent of the ideas of 'Industrialism' (the IWW), who had been arrested in Cloncurry (northern Australia) in January 1919 and deported from the country.

From the earliest days of my personal acquaintance with Comrade Freeman (in Australia we knew each other by repute) I gained the impression that he had a negative attitude to everything that was happening in Russia. In his words, Soviet power meant the oligarchy of a power-hungry few. The dictatorship of the proletariat in Russia was a dictatorship of politicians, ring-leaders of parties who were dishonestly exploiting the revolutionary impulses of the working masses for their own personal ends. The red terror, the persecution of the Mensheviks and anarchists, the struggle against the free market and profiteering all gave him cause to loudly decry 'the dishonest, careerist leaders of the RCP, whom the workers of the world would call to account.' The Comintern, as a 'Russian Muscovite machine for trapping the simple-minded', evoked only sarcastic remarks from him. 'Of all those who have been in Russia,' Comrade

¹² Delovoi Dvor (sometimes 'Dielovoy Dvor'): a hotel in central Moscow used by the Comintern to house visiting foreign delegates.

Freeman would say, 'I alone have learned the truth about what is going on there, the vile unvarnished truth!'¹³ From cautious questioning it emerged that Comrade Freeman and some of the syndicalists who had come to Russia had dealings with groups of Mensheviks, SRs and anarchists. The Moscow anarchist Pavlov and the SRs supplied him with a mandate and materials to be made public abroad. I did not manage to see what these materials were.

Before the opening of the Second Comintern Congress I gave Comrade K. Radek a brief warning of the suspicious behaviour of Comrade Freeman. In Petrograd, after the celebrations in honour of the Congress, returning to the station with Comrade Freeman, I asked him what impression Petrograd and the Petrograd workers had made on him. He replied maliciously, 'a blind flock led by blind shepherds!' His negative attitude to Soviet Russia did not prevent him declaring to Comrade Radek that he was a communist.

At first I thought that Comrade Freeman wanted to set off to Australia with the aid of the Comintern in order to engage in malicious agitation against the Soviet government, but subsequently I had to discard this supposition. A number of Comrade Freeman's projects, for example, buying a radio-station for Australia (for communication with Soviet Russia) using Comintern funds; immediately razing the 'hideous Kremlin walls' and monstrous cathedrals with that idiotic Tsar-cannon and Tsar-bell in order to build a splendid temple to Freedom; handing over the body of Augusta Aasen, a female delegate who had died, to be turned into soap—all this leads one to suppose that Comrade Freeman is suffering from a mental illness.¹⁴

On Sunday 8 August, at a gathering to fete the red commanders, Comrade Freeman in his address to the red commanders (quite a fine and cogent speech) stressed that having arrived in Russia as an 'Industrialist' [IWW supporter], he had become a communist under the influence of the Great Revolution. 'You, the vanguard of the world revolution, have made me a communist!' Comrade Freeman exclaimed with great passion. Comrade Bilan, with whom I shared my impressions of Comrade Freeman, added to the knowledge I had acquired of him.¹⁵ According to Comrade Bilan, Comrade Freeman had twice visited P. Krapotkin;¹⁶ more than once the ring-leaders of the SRs called on him in his room at Delovoi Dvor; and

¹³ Zuzenko's claims about Freeman's attitude to Soviet Russia are hard to square with Freeman's own enthusiastic descriptions of life under the Soviet regime, published in *The International Communist* 28/5/21, 4/6 and 11/6 under the headline 'Red Russia's Growth'.

¹⁴ Augusta Aasen ('Osen' in Russian documents): a Norwegian communist who died shortly after an accident which occurred on 2 August 1920, while she was inspecting the aircraft of the Soviet state's new air force at Khodynka field in Moscow. Her passing was mentioned by Angelika Balabanova during the proceedings of the Congress on 4 August, and mourned by the delegates.

¹⁵ Alexander Bilan, a leading American communist.

¹⁶ As given, meaning Prince Petr Kropotkin, the veteran anarchist revolutionary who in old age returned from exile after the February revolution and died in February 1921. His funeral was the occasion for anarchist demonstrations against the new regime.

on a journey to the Volga Comrade Freeman quarrelled and almost came to blows with Comrade Lozovsky, and so on. Comrade Bilan's view is that Freeman is a sick man and not normal.

Whether Comrade Freeman is sick or whether he is clumsily concealing his hostile attitude to Soviet Russia and its leaders is hard to say, but to send a man like him on a responsible and dangerous mission is risky in the highest degree. I beg you, Comrade Secretary, to bring my statement to the attention of the Comintern Executive Committee so that an enquiry may be conducted.

If the Comintern Executive Committee decides to remove Comrade Freeman from the mission to Australia, I am sure that I shall be able alone to carry out the task entrusted to me. In Brisbane there is the Communist League, which we have set up, a group of communist journalists who have managed the publication of *Knowledge and Unity* and helped to disseminate the ideas of Bolshevism through the workers' press in Queensland and New South Wales. There are firm links in place with the 'Industrialist' organizations (IWW) in Sydney, Brisbane and Melbourne, and with the body called One Big Union, operating independently of the IWW, a fairly strong organization (over 40,000 members) which has broken away from the trade unions. In carrying through our communist programme, we are assured a majority in the Queensland Socialist League and the ASP (Australian Socialist Party), where we shall probably succeed in taking control of the whole party once we have removed the opportunist minority.

In Brisbane and Sydney it will be vital to publish two communist newspapers and arrange the reproduction of pamphlets, the speeches of Comrades Lenin, Trotsky, Zinoviev and Bukharin, as well as fliers and proclamations. Secure and permanent lines of communication must be established between Australia and Soviet Russia. All this can be completed in a period of five or six months. I am convinced that by the time the Third Congress of Comintern is convened a strong cohesive Australian Communist Party, organized along the lines of the RCP will have representation, just as the Australian trade unions will have representation at the International Congress of Trade Unions next February in Moscow.

A. Zuzenko

Document 4

RGASPI 495-94-2. 16 August 1920, P. Freeman and A.M. Zuzenko: to ECCI. First part handwritten in English. Spelling and grammar as given; 'Addendum' handwritten in Russian. Trans. by KW.

This document is an estimate by Freeman and Zuzenko for expenses from the Comintern for their proposed Australian mission. The sum requested is, for the time, extremely high. The 'Addendum', signed by Zuzenko alone, distances him from the first estimate, and attempts to cast Freeman in a poor light as either a profiteer or as profligate.

To the Executive Committee of the Communist International, Moscow
August 16th, 1920
Dielovoy Dvor, Moscow

Comrades,

After careful consideration of Australian Revolutionary Movement needs and great difficulties under which we would be compelled to work, we have decided to submit, for your consideration, the following estimate of approximate expences. The estimate covers a period of six months.

Personal

- A. (for two men) A journey to Australia and back with possible unforeseen expences etc: £600
- B. (for two men) Full outfit of garments etc: £100
- C. (for two men) Traveling expences in Australia: £100
- D. (for two men) Board, lodging etc. at the rate of £4 per week: £208

Propaganda and Organizing

- 1. Communist paper in Sydney: £2000
- 2. Communist paper in Brisbane: £2000
- 3. Communist paper in Western Australia: £2000
- 4. Communist paper in New Zealand: £2000
- 5. Communist paper in Melbourne and assistance to *Ross Magazine* (Militant Socialist publication): £2000
- 6. Assistance to three IWW and one socialist papers with a view of controlling them or at least directing their activities: £4000
- 7. Assistance to *Barrier Daily Truth* Union paper in Broken Hill, NSW (Red Petrograd of Australia): £1000
- 8. Printing Office for printing Soviet books, pamphlets, speeches of Comrades Lenin, Trotsky, Radek etc: £3000
- 9. Possible expences during the formation of Communist Party: £1000
- 10. Organization of the underground chanel of communications from Australia to England and Scandinavia with a view of causing continuous flow of Australian and New Zealand newspapers etc. to the Executive Committee in Moscow: £500
- 11. Expences impossible to foresee or account for: £492

Total: £21,000

Considering carrying large sums of money on ourselves inadvisable we urgently request the Executive Committee, if possible, to arrange the matter in such a way as to enable us on arrival in Australia to receive money when needed, from some source outside of it, by cable.

Awaiting your orders and instructions, we are,

Our Unswerving Loyalty

Yours in the Cause of Communism,
Paul Freeman, A. Zuzenko

Addendum Estimate of funds needed for journey to Australia

Newspaper in Brisbane, print-run of 6000 copies at £30 per issue, 25 issues: £750

Newspaper in Sydney, print-run of 6000 copies at £30 per issue, 25 issues: £750

Reproduction of pamphlets and fliers: £1000

Establishment of two illegal printing shops: £700

Personal expenses for return journey and six months' residence there: £300

Total expenses: £3,500

The figure of £3,500 is a maximum amount. Expenditure on newspapers and the reproduction of pamphlets will soon bring a return on investment to cover the organizational expenses (involved in setting up the Communist Party, party congresses and the like) and items not listed in the estimate.

A. Zuzenko

Moscow,

16 August 1920

P.S. Please regard my signature beneath the estimate drawn up by Comrade Freeman as invalid.

A. Zuzenko

Document 5

RGASPI 495-94-127. no date [internal evidence indicates August 1920], letter: To the Small Bureau. Typescript. Excerpt.

Zuzenko seems to have enlisted influential support in his campaign to exclude Freeman from any Comintern-sponsored mission to Australia. In this letter the writer adds weight to the doubts already expressed by Zuzenko about Freeman's abilities.

The copy of the letter at this location is unsigned, but another copy, in Zuzenko's personal file, bears the signature 'John Reed'.

Sunday 22nd

To the Small Bureau –

I. The project of sending Comrade Paul Freeman, member of the Australian IWW to Australia in any capacity representing the Communist International, is, I think, not a good one.

Freeman is an IWW, he is very well known in Australia, and can do a lot of work—until he is arrested, for he has no idea of illegal work at all. He should be allowed perhaps to go to Australia, and some money should be sent there for

assisting the IWW but it is my opinion that this money should be sent through the Communists, as we don't know what the attitude of the Australian IWW is.

I think that Freeman is thoroughly sincere, but I believe that his many sufferings have a little unsettled his mind. For this reason I should not like to have him sent with any representative powers.

On the other hand, Comrade Zuzenko, the Russian Comrade who is going, seems to know the Australian movement well, and to be a good Communist and thoroughly trustworthy. He has objections to Freeman which seem to be well-founded. To Comrade Zuzenko I think all instructions and money should be given. In my opinion Comrade Zuzenko received a miserably insufficient amount of money—five hundred pounds—for the work which should immediately be done in Australia. It is a strategic colonial country, with a powerful, fighting mass of workers, who have had some experience of street fighting and are revolutionary in their instincts, with more Socialism perhaps than there is among American workers. And in Australia there is not the division between the Russian immigrants and the Anglo-Saxon workers which exists in America. I believe that even the amount of money asked for by Comrade Zuzenko is too little—although that demanded by Freeman is preposterous.

I wish that the Small Bureau would once more consider the Australian situation, if necessary calling before it Freeman or Zuzenko.

Document 6

RGASPI 495–94–2. 18 August 1920, Simonov: Letter from Australia. In Polish, from an unidentified newspaper. Trans. by KW.

Simonov wrote this letter from Sydney to the Polish Communist Party, which published it. It provides an indication of the range of socialist groups in Australia, and the political complexion of a number of European ethnic groups in Australia, before the founding conference of the CPA. There is no indication of source newspaper; presumably in Poland, judging by the total distortion of Australian and English names. This letter would later be used against him, as he complains in Document 9, below.

Dear Comrades,

I have just received your letter and the journal *wit*, for which I thank you very much. At the same time I am sending you five issues of our official organ, *Soviet Russia* (Sydney), and a book by R. Roll [as given; untraced], a follower of Bernstein, opposed to the communists, and other materials concerning the movement.

It grieves me that we suffer from a general shortage of communist press material. We rely mainly on European press material, which of course is in the spirit of our worthy *trudoviki*, that is, what is known here as the 'Labour Press'.¹⁷

In the editorial offices of some of these 'Labour papers' there are some bold spirits, who try to push through 'radical' material, but they are isolated cases. There is nothing socialist in it, of course, let alone anything 'radical'. Here in Sydney there is the 'Socialist Labour Party', consisting of female followers of De Leon, who however is only superficially known. In addition, in Melbourne there is the 'Victorian Socialist Party', led by R. Ross, the Plekhanov of Australia but intellectually greatly inferior.

In Sydney there is another socialist party, 'The Australian Socialist Party'. Its core is made up of five or six workers who have some political awareness and try to hold to a communist line as much as possible, openly asserting that they are following in the footsteps of the Third International.

They work hard and do everything they can, but the cause of their unpopularity lies in the fact that they are extremely weak. Their efforts amount to no more than the distribution of European and American revolutionary literature and organizing rallies at which the speakers loudly criticize their opponents. They do not even understand organizational work and one could hardly expect them to understand since they think organizational work is necessary only in countries like Russia. A few individuals are beginning to realize the need for active work, but they are afraid of it, and what is more, it is difficult to get them together. Last year, before I was arrested, I managed to set up some thirty groups in Sydney, each with ten members, but by the time I was released from prison I couldn't find them. My aim was to leave them the means of organization. But of course I couldn't make communists of them in so little time, especially because when I was not there the connecting element was missing, and the nascent organizations folded.

The trouble is that there is nobody here with the intellectual power to influence his milieu. But the workers here are nevertheless sympathetic to the communist movement.

In Melbourne I have managed to find a very promising young man, a former law student. His name is G. Barecki.¹⁸ During the war he took part in the campaign against conscription, for which he received a six-month jail sentence and was expelled from university. He took an interest in the socialist movement and learned Marx off by heart. He and I and another young man have worked together many times. At first they were drawn more to IWW ideas, but after we had had long conversations both of them adopted a communist viewpoint,

¹⁷ 'Labour Press': this phrase given in English.

¹⁸ G. Barecki: the writer almost certainly means Guido Baracchi.

and so far they have formed three groups with the aim of having lectures given on economics and sociology, so that when the audience has sufficient preparation it will be possible to form a communist party from them. At the moment *The Proletarian Review* is appearing (on my initiative) as a private paper, with the aim of making it the official organ of the party once the party is formed. Thus far however the Australian Socialist Party, which does splendid agitation work with its official organ *The International Socialist*, may be considered a party close to communism in Australia. The Party secretary is Arthur Reardon and the editor of the paper is Ray Everitt. My journal is printed in their printery. I enjoy very good friendly relations with them and work with them more than with any other organization, even though I am *persona grata* in all the workers' organizations and am in constant contact with the trade unionists. In other words, although there is no communist party in the full sense of the words here, the workers are sympathetic to communism. When it is formed, the communist party will immediately enjoy great influence, thanks to the mood of the broad masses.

The old political machine is breaking down. The capitalist political party (before the war it was called 'Liberal' and during the war 'Nationalist'), thanks to the leadership of William Morris Hughes, an able charlatan and renegade from the workers' movement, has discredited itself even in the eyes of the bourgeoisie. The capitalists themselves would like to break away from the so-called 'Nationalist Party' but cannot do this because, having no other party, they are afraid of ending up under the rule of the Labor Party. But the latter party stands in the same relation to the workers as the Nationalist Party to the capitalists.

Thanks to its squalid, ill-founded and charlatan tactics, the Labor Party has made itself hated by the workers just as much as the party of the bourgeoisie. But they still vote for the candidates of that party, above all because of tradition, but secondly because, except for the Socialist Party, which lacks the strength to stand in elections, there is no more radical party than the Labor Party.

Australians do not understand a refusal to vote. Even while abstaining from voting they still boast that they are 'free Britons', not realizing that 'free Britons' are firmly in the clutches of a group of pitiless killers and their various lackeys, and dregs of society from the Nationalist Party and the Labor Party. But lately that old British political machine, the Australian parliament, has been subjected to criticism by two of its members, Considine and Brookfield. Three years ago Brookfield was expelled from the Labor Party less than three weeks after being elected. But as the Labor Party realized that Brookfield had a huge number of miners on his side, they decided to keep him in the Party. This year he was again expelled just before an election was due, with the intention of depriving him of his seat. But he was elected by a huge majority of 'independent' votes, and a strange situation has arisen in parliament. It turns out that Brookfield stands in

the middle, between the Labor Party and the Nationalist Party. It was up to him whether Labor or the Nationalists formed a government. The Nationalist Party offered him £4000 in cash and a position for five years with an annual salary of £700. Brookfield agreed to give his vote to the Nationalists, but not for the money. He demanded only (1) the freeing from prison of twelve IWW members, (2) the introduction of a six-hour working day for miners, and (3) the reinstatement of all railwaymen sacked for the general strike in 1917. But the Nationalists replied that they would not do that. Brookfield then lent his vote to the Labor Party, which has now freed ten of the twelve IWW prisoners. A fortnight ago Considine was summoned to appear before the central committee of the Labor Party for a summary trial, accused of forming a party which would adhere to the Third International, as well as other crimes against the Labor Party.

In conclusion I will say a little about the Russians and Poles. In Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne there are organizations of workers of all the nationalities in Russia. Brisbane has the strongest of these. The organizations are formed not only from representatives of different ethnic groups but also, to a degree, from different tendencies. There are Bolsheviks, Mensheviks and anarchists (as well as Tolstoyans etc.). Before and during the war, until the time I took over as secretary of the Brisbane organization, the Menshevik tendency was dominant. At that time I was mostly in the country areas, where I organized the Russians into groups, into branches of the Brisbane organization, in whose organ I continued to work.

The revolution came while I was in the mines with Brookfield and Considine. I was secretary of a local branch when we learned that our Brisbane central committee was telegraphing good wishes to Kerensky. Our branch, under my leadership, protested and independently sent good wishes to the Petersburg Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Delegates. In April 1917 Brookfield was elected to State Parliament and in May Considine to Federal Parliament, while I was elected secretary of our central committee and editor of our paper *Rabochaia zhizn* / *Worker's Life*. The anarchists also played their part here, but their anarchism mostly took the form of taking an active part in the work of our organization—and secondly everybody followed and supported the 'Leninists', as we then called the Bolsheviks. Our paper was closed down and I was hauled through the hoops. The Russian Tsarist consul Abaza took a dislike to me, together with the renegade Abramovich, who had claimed on paper to be a revolutionary but in the end sold out to Abaza. They took out citizenship of the Kerensky government, and since I was waging all-out war with the representatives of that government they tried to present me as a German spy. This time I managed to avoid prison or a POW camp by chance, only because they were also accusing a rich Russian Jew of the same crimes as me. He of course hired the very best lawyer and made use of all his business connections, and the lawyer who defended him also defended me. I got out of it, but only to get

a year of hard labour later. The court case dragged on for five months, during which time I was appointed the Bolshevik consul. One court imposed a sentence of one year, another made it six months, which was then reduced to four. I spent this period in the most dreadful conditions you can possibly imagine. But thanks to the efforts of Brookfield and Considine I was set free and am back at work.

Here of course there are ethnic groups of Jews, Lithuanians, Estonians and Poles, but none of them are at all active. In fact I was very displeased when a Polish club of workers and bourgeois was formed under the guidance of Pilsudski's representative, the Polish consul, (who of course is English). They are trying to pin everything on me because I wrote that the current Polish government is made up of adventurers. But they will soon realize that I was right. It goes without saying that the more politically aware Poles are members of the Union of Russian Workers.

I think this should give you some idea of the political face of Australia.

I'm not sending much literature, as I haven't got much. Please send some printed material from Europe, I mean mostly English and Russian, as I am weak in other languages. I am not in a position to hire a secretary or assistant as my finances won't permit it.

With my greetings,
P. Simonov

Document 7

RGASPI 495–94–2. 2 November 1920, Simonov: Letter to Tolmachev. In Russian, manuscript and typescript copies. Written at top (in Ukrainian): 'Forward to Com[munist] Inter[national], Russia'. Trans. by KW.

Simonov wrote this letter to the Comintern to explain his activities and the character of the currents within the newly-formed CPA. The letter conveys the importance of Simonov's own contribution, and indicates that the clandestine communist groupings established by Simonov forced the ASP into calling the founding conference. Simonov's groups were able to dominate the proceedings.

Sydney,
2 November, 1920

Dear Comrade Tolmachev,¹⁹

In order that European communists should be aware of the state of affairs with regard to the communist movement here, I am now in a position to communicate some matters of interest. Of course we do not expect the revolution to take place here soon, but the idea of communism, the idea of social revolution according to the Third International is evidently nonetheless taking firm hold.

¹⁹ Also known as Piddubny. (See Document 9.)

It was very difficult to make the workers here understand the true perspective of the Third International. I spent much time trying to nurture the existing socialist organizations here before absolutely losing hope of achieving anything with them.²⁰ I then began selecting individual worker activists and bringing each of them individually to an understanding of communism. These individual workers began selecting others in their turn, and in this way I managed to form clandestine groups in Sydney and Melbourne. These groups rapidly became more and more active. In Sydney we gained a firm foothold in Trades Hall and even took control of their Labor College. I wrote their manifesto and a programme which was printed on behalf of 'the Communist Party of Australia' by the Central Committee, without of course indicating where this Central Committee was, and concluding by saying that in due course a conference of delegates of all groups established according to our programme would be convened. We issued some other leaflets too, but the main thing is that they have all started to work well in the unions. The active nature of the party has begun to be clearly apparent to all. The Australian Socialist Party was the first to take note. It realized that if our party declared itself openly it would wield great power and other parties would either have to die out or lead a miserable existence. It then called a conference of all leading worker activists and representatives of sections of the socialist parties, both its own and others. Of course, our party, which was not known openly to anybody, proved itself master of the conference. The conference was convened to establish general agreement for co-operation and collaboration between all existing parties and groups, while our party used it to found an openly communist party. Our name, the Communist Party of Australia, was adopted, as was our programme with very insignificant amendments, and our secretary was elected secretary. Of twelve places on the executive, our party won eight (including the secretaryship), the ASP three (one of them only just scraped in), and the twelfth, although not of our party, also adopted its ideas from the very first day that our programme was issued, so he was effectively ours. All our groups are of course joining at once, as are all the left wings of the other socialist and industrial parties and groups. The ASP is completely ceasing to exist and handing over all its assets to the Communist Party. The VSP and the SLP are howling at us for all they are worth but huge numbers of their members are also coming over to us. The secretary is Earsman. His address for the time being is: Mr Earsman, Trades Hall Labor College, Sydney, Australia. But in a week or two the party's organ *The Communist* will start to appear and I will send it to you. You will see its official address. Everitt, the editor of *The International Socialist*, the official organ of the ASP, wants to write something for Europe. He has asked me for an address and I gave him yours as well.

With comradely greetings,

²⁰ 'Absolutely' omitted in typed version.

P. Simonov

Document 8

RGASPI 495–94–7. no date [internal evidence indicates late 1920], W. Thomas: Letter to 'dear comrades'. Manuscript.

This letter appears to have been written early in 1921 by Bill Thomas,²¹ recently arrived in Sydney, to his colleagues in Brisbane, whence he hailed. It represents a personal angle on the manoeuvring in the newly-formed CPA, especially over the assets of the ASP, with whom Thomas clearly sympathizes. It casts a jaundiced eye over the activities of Simonov, and it reinforces the view that the early Australian communist movement was both small and rather inward-looking.

Bell Street
Watson's Bay

Dear Comrades,

I arrived in Sydney last Friday and, despite the fact that I promised myself a rest from propaganda, I am at it just as hard as ever. The movement here is in a very complicated condition—I will endeavour to explain it as clearly as possible. Some weeks ago the ASP called a conference for the purposes of forming a Communist Party: the conference did not represent any organisation and some were men with very bad political careers such as Denford, Charlesworth and others. The ASP delegates were out-numbered but thought that there would be some possibility of forming a united body. The just thing the conference members did was to declare themselves the provisional executives of the Party; no re-election to be held until next Easter because "we will be well known to the revolutionary movement by that time". This means that at the present time they are unknown and if a party vote was taken they would not be elected. The ASP offered the printing press and the whole of the party property to the newcomers. This offer they readily accepted and proceeded to elect an editor. Glynn, the IWW prisoner got the job; he is utterly incapable. Then the other jobs were given to other "friends"—in fact it was simply a job catching scheme for a gang of opportunists. The chief schemer is all of this dirty business was Simonoff! He was going to take the credit of forming the Communist Party and then leave for Central Russia via Italy. Last Monday morning I called on Garden and met Simonoff and Glynn. Garden told me the arrangements which had been made and I naturally thought that they had been passed by the executive but when I called at the ASP office I was informed that the executive had not even discussed the matter! You will understand that Garden, Glynn, Simonoff and Co. simply engineered anything they wanted because they had a majority of tools on the

²¹ Thomas, W.J. (Bill): founding member of the CPA, lecturer on problems of venereal disease and editor of the Brisbane *Communist* in the early 1920s. Thomas became a Party journalist and eventually in the 1930s the national organizer of the Friends of the Soviet Union.

executive. On Monday night the executive met, and spent half the time discussing myself! Simonoff said: "Thomas is in town and I suppose he will apply for membership to the party. I would like to hand these letters to you." He then read the blackmail letter which he sent to the ASP. A Russian named Zanders then moved that "The Communist Party has every confidence in Com. Simonoff and we take no notice of Thomas' childish nonsense." The ASP delegates opposed this and it was withdrawn in favour of this motion: "When Thomas applies for membership he is to be brought before the executive with Simonoff." Which means that Simonoff's executive would condemn me; a bunch of damn scoundrels whom I have been fighting for years, renegades and disappointed Labour politicians, job hunters and hooligans. When the ASP saw how things were going they called a special meeting and withdrew from the whole dirty business. When the Simonoff crowd received a letter to the effect I called on them as though I knew nothing and asked if I could join the new Party, they said "Certainly". I questioned the new secretary and he deliberately lied and told me there were no restrictions or objections to my membership—this was evidently a way of getting my support. Also: the new executive agreed that Simonoff will be allowed to attend all meetings. You will want to know what actions I have taken. I am again a member of the ASP which is now known as the Communist Party of Australia because "they definitely stand by the principles of the Third International and are recognised as the Australian section by Moscow." The ASP has now taken a definite stand against Simonoff and are getting into touch with Martens and Central Russia for his removal. In a matter like this it is impossible to remain neutral. One must take sides. The ASP has agreed to assist me with the sale of *The Communist*. In this matter I am having some trouble as the man I sent there 20 doz has gone over to the enemy and has not yet delivered them to me, however I will do my best with them. The Russian Assoc. in Brisbane sent a letter to the executive of the ASP asking about 12 questions, concerning myself including the £30 business. The answer was NO. If the Assoc. has not read the letter I will send you copies of the letter and answer. Jerry Cahill Secretary of the Trades Hall Council in Brisbane also wrote and asked if there was anything against me in the ASP and he received the same answer as the Assoc. I was almost certain that Simonoff told him something when he was in Brisbane. I want you to ask him for a copy of that letter and tell Com Kusmenkoff to go the Assoc. meeting and expose the lies of Simonoff and his gang. I am enclosing a bill which has been sent to me by *The Standard* the item for £1, should be 16/-²² don't pay any more! It was Anstey's lecture. At the beginning of the year *The International Socialist* will be called *The International Communist* and the Party is considering publishing a magazine. With regard to Simonoff I want you to send me every scrap of information you can get. He is

²² The symbol '/-' denotes shillings, a unit of money equal to one-twentieth of a pound (£).

running around like a sick child since his plot failed. I have not seen Jaginoff yet but tomorrow night I am going to the Assoc. meeting—Simonoff is sure to be there. Quinton has 10 doz, 5 doz No 1 and 5 doz No 2. It is all in the account book I left you. I have not had time to visit Com. Fine yet. Do not read all of this letter to the meeting, particularly the part where the ASP take a stand against Simonoff because we do not want him to know anything he is like a rat in a trap. I delivered a lecture last night on Bolshevism and the world war. I would be pleased if you would send me anything of interest to which comes through from Russia. Have you had any mail from Japan? In my room you will find some of No 1 magazines addressed ready for posting put No 2 and 3 with them and post; also to Martens. I will conclude as I have a big mail to attend to. For any information I am at your disposal.

W. Thomas

Document 9

RGASPI 495–94–6. 8 April 1921, Simonov: to ECCI concerning an ‘All-Australian Socialist Organization’. In Russian, manuscript and typescript copies. Trans. by KW.

Simonov’s letter was forwarded to the ECCI in June 1921 by a correspondent in Vienna, whose covering note appears first. The letter is a damning indictment of Paul Freeman, who had been sent by the Comintern to Australia to identify delegates for the next Congress in Russia, but who seems to have upset Simonov’s plans by his preference for ASP, or ‘Liverpool Street Communist Party’, members. The letter traces some of the history of the complicated relations between the two major currents within the early CPA. Freeman had left Australia for the Third Congress on 7 April 1921, the day before this letter was written. At this stage he was using the name ‘Miller’.

To the Comintern Executive Committee, Moscow

4 June, 1921

Vienna

Dear Comrades,

I received the enclosed letter from Petr Simonov after the departure of the delegation to the Third Comintern Congress, and it may arrive too late. At the same time I am sending three newspapers of the (new) CPA and one of the CPA (ASP): *The Australian Communist*, *The Proletarian*, *Knowledge and Unity* and *The International Communist*.

Petr Simonov, with whom the editor of *Nasha Pravda* is corresponding, has written previously about Miuler,²³ but we thought that Tom Barker (apparently the one who arrived from Australia and was in Argentina) lived in Berlin and

²³ ‘Miuler’ as given, meaning ‘Miller’.

was *au courant*. We are now forwarding this letter at the request of the Australian communists. Miuler has another name: Paul Freeman.²⁴

With communist greetings,
G. Piddubny²⁵
Algerstrasse 69
Vienna VIII

8 April, 1921

To the Third International Executive Committee, Moscow

Dear Comrades,

Many years have passed since I read the immortal Gogol's *Government Inspector* and saw it staged. Personally I had never previously come across anybody resembling the hero of the play, but suddenly, completely unexpectedly, I have now encountered one, and in utterly new circumstances. On Wednesday evening, 6 April, from 7.30 to 11.30, I had to listen to a Khlestakov of the revolution.²⁶ This was Comrade Miller, who claims to have been sent here by the Third International from Moscow. Whether they sent him or not, I do not know, but if they did I do not know what for or what he has done. All that he could demonstrate was his Khlestakovism. I am writing this letter and giving his name because his 'mission', to use his own words, is over and he has now spent a full day on a ship working his passage home, and this letter will not be posted until he is clear of the shores of this country and out of all personal danger. He personally thanked me for averting by my actions any danger to him, which was building up owing to the carelessness of others and above all his own. I learned that he was here from at least ten people at once, but not from him personally. And if he thanked me, it was for using all my influence to ensure, as far as possible, that there was absolutely no more talk of him, even though he personally placed me in the most foolish and idiotic position with regard to himself, as you will see from what follows and as will probably be explained to you personally.

The idiotic position is as follows. About three months ago a certain Jim Quinton from Queensland called on me in my office, bringing with him a Russian 'communist comrade', as Quinton introduced him. I had personally never met

²⁴ The typed copy has 'Peter Freeman'; the handwritten copy is correct.

²⁵ Typist has 'signature illegible'. It is indeed difficult to read, but the writer's name is written clearly, with his address, at top right, in Latin script. He is almost certainly Piddubny (i.e. Tolmachev). (See Document 7.)

²⁶ Khlestakov is the hero of Nikolai Gogol's famous play *The Government Inspector* (1836), a vain and empty poseur who is mistaken by the people of a provincial town for an important dignitary travelling incognito. Khlestakov relishes the attention and grows in self-importance as the situation develops. Curiously, one of Simonov's associates, W. P. Tuitene (V. Tiutin), described him (Simonov) as a Khlestakov, and as Mr Jingle. (Noel Butlin Archive Centre, James Normington Rawling Collection, 'Simonoff', N57/299)

this Russian 'comrade' before, although I know all the Russians who can be taken as communists (there are not that many, and I have personally visited almost every corner of Australia). Of course all kinds of people come to see me, even government sleuths, who for the past six years have been most concerned about my health and therefore watch my every step, though highly unsuccessfully, or not always successfully. So I received these two 'comrades' from Queensland the same way I receive all strangers. A few days later they came again. In the meantime Quinton had been mingling with some socialists, and I also learned that in Queensland he had long mingled with so called 'rebel circles'.²⁷ This of course does not mean that he is necessarily a true revolutionary. In those circles it is possible to be a splendid revolutionary comrade and the most unprincipled charlatan and scoundrel. In any case, I took Quinton to be one of those whom one should not put much trust in, but not one to be suspected of anything bad, except that persistent rumours circulate in Brisbane about his lack of caution, or even his lack of scruples. So he and this Russian 'comrade' again came calling, this time about an important matter. The Russian 'comrade' and apparently Quinton himself were going to Europe with the intention of getting into Soviet Russia. The Russian 'comrade' already had a passport and ticket to sail. What they wanted from me was a letter of recommendation for the Russian 'comrade', issued by me, to revolutionary circles in Europe, stating that he was an upstanding and reliable communist and that I personally knew him to be such a one. I asked his name and was shown his passport, in which I read the name of Alfons Frederik Erosh. By this time one of the Russians had warned me that this Russian 'comrade' was Erosh, and this name came back to me in connection with the name 'Alfons', and I knew of Alfons because of a connection with the name of Mendrin, a well-known Tsarist agent provocateur, acting in this capacity as recently as the current revolution. So as to be quite sure, I sent a telegram to the secretary of the Brisbane Union of Russian Communist Workers to ask whether Erosh was Alfons. In reply he said yes, and warned me that he was Mendrin's right-hand man. For this reason, when shown his passport I simply told them that the best thing they could do would be to go and get back the money they'd paid for their fares as this Russian 'comrade' would not get into Russia. I did not let slip that I knew anything about Erosh. Quinton tried to insist and begged me to give him a letter of introduction to help him get into Russia. He tried to shame me with reproaches, saying it was my duty to help a 'communist' comrade. In the end I simply stated flatly that I would not give him any letter at all. I knew that Quinton often visited the printery of the Australian Socialist Party, and later even learned that he lived with the editor of their newspaper. I therefore hastened to call on him there, to see him without the Russian 'comrade' being present. Quinton was there and I asked him at once if

²⁷ This phrase given in English.

he knew the Russian 'comrade' well. He said he did. I asked if he knew that rumours were circulating about this 'comrade'. He said he knew it was being said that he was a police agent provocateur, but this was untrue. Then I suggested that he tell his good friend that, in addition to the name of Peter Simonoff, I was also called Artur Simens. I mentioned this because this was the name I had used to sign many of my articles, including some about the antics of Mendrin and Alfons. The next day Quinton told me that he had found out everything and that his Russian 'comrade' had been deceiving him. His Russian 'comrade' then came to me straight after Quinton and declared that he really was the scoundrel, rogue and miscreant that he was alleged to be, but that he had been inveigled by Mendrin and had now turned over a new leaf and intended to be a good man if I would only give him the opportunity to make his way to Soviet Russia. When I refused to give him anything in response to his repeated promise, he offered me money for a letter of introduction and at this our conversation ended. I immediately wrote a letter to London and Stockholm to warn them that this character was on his way to Europe with the aim of entering Russia. After this Quinton asked me not to take his behaviour as deliberate deception. He had done this solely to help a Russian comrade, little knowing that the Russian was such a scoundrel. But I have just learned from an ASP member, whom you will probably soon see in person (B),²⁸ that Erosh brought Quinton down from Queensland and maintained him here at his own expense, and either offered to pay or actually paid his fare to Europe and Russia. Comrade Sergeev²⁹ in Russia can probably confirm that Quinton could not help knowing who Alfons Erosh was. I am not saying this to accuse Quinton of anything. This is not about Quinton, as you will shortly see. Soon after this Quinton applied to join two parties at the same time: the ASP and the Communist Party of Australia. The ASP accepted him and the CP of A did not, on the grounds that he evidently had a poor grasp of party discipline if he believed that he could be a member of two political parties at once. So he became a member of the ASP, or, since this party changed its name, the Australian Communist Party, when it came into existence.

One fine morning this Quinton brought along a new communist comrade to see me, this time not Russian and not from Queensland, but a German from Broken Hill. Quinton at once declared that this time he wasn't bringing an agent provocateur but a true communist. Would you believe him, comrades, the second time round? I don't know. Perhaps you would, but I could not. That this new comrade was from Broken Hill I learned later from others, first from Kilburn, through Comrade Garden. Comrade Kilburn found out from the ASP that Comrade Miller was not from Broken Hill at all, but was a delegate from Moscow!!! I

²⁸ The initial read by the typist as 'B' is almost certainly a Latin 'R', possibly standing for Alf Rees, one of the group of Australians then en route to Moscow.

²⁹ Fedor Andreevich Sergeev (Artem).

learned from the Melbourne newspapers that a delegate had arrived from Moscow. Soon people who had seen Comrade Miller in person started coming to see me one after another, and of course I knew his every move. All I did was ask every one of them to keep quiet and not spread the word, in order not to compromise his security. For this Comrade Miller thanked me the day before yesterday, saying that by doing this I had assured him that he could meet me openly, but when? The evening before he embarked, when, in his words, he had accomplished his mission, which he did not explain to me but which I learned of from others—and I also learned that he had not accomplished it, as might have been expected—he gave me a lecture which lasted from half past seven till half past eleven. I will not mention the matter of a certain person known to you. I shall write about that later, whenever possible. His lecture consisted of an explanation of the greatness of the ASP. He kept revealing more and more new things about that party. To me the main revelation was that the ASP had five hundred members. This came as news to me and this is why: over the past two and a half years I have visited that party's office and printery almost every day. I have attended many meetings of the central executive as well as general meetings of all its branches which ever existed even earlier than two and a half years ago. Two years ago I sat right through their annual congress. The delegates voted on behalf of 290 members from the whole of Australia. The party then had branches in Broken Hill, Melbourne, Newtown and, I believe, in Newcastle. Today this party has no branches at all except the Sydney one. All the others have died off one by one, just as the whole party has been gradually dying off, from the fairly solid base of an All-Australian Socialist Organization.³⁰ It has been dying little by little, without any sudden jolts, but particularly fast in the last five years. I have been following it constantly. I saw its Brisbane branch, which had its premises with our Russian Association, die because the centre showed absolutely no sign of doing anything to bind the party together. The centre was dying, and the branches were dying even faster. The IWW was smashed by the police, while the ASP was dying because of its greyness, vacuity and personal squabbles that had absolutely nothing in common with an ideological movement. But the main reason seemed to me a very odd thing. It was the acquisition of a printery. It was odd because acquiring such a valuable asset ought to be a tremendous incentive to energize a party, but this acquisition damped all energy. This party should not be viewed, of course, from the standpoint of the revolutionary movement in Russia. It should be seen more or less as a replica of British socialist organizations, that is, rather like a religious sect, worlds apart from the workers' movement as a whole. If you were to introduce to the British socialist party and to some British religious sect somebody with no understanding of English and no knowledge of the world socialist

³⁰ The ASP aspired to become an 'All-Australian Socialist Organization'; Simonov's point was that it had lost the opportunity.

movement, he would be unlikely to notice any substantial difference between them.

To return to the matter of the printery, before the war a so-called socialist club existed here, made up mainly of Germans. During the war it was closed down and the people in charge of its assets handed over the club's printery and some other assets to the ASP for its use, placing it in the hands of three trustees, of whom two are still alive, with the editor of the party's paper. In this way all power to influence the party fell to the printery and the people controlling it. I do not wish to suggest that these people are abusing their position. They themselves believe that they are doing their very best for the revolutionary movement. They may even be working completely honestly, although there are many who do not believe in their honesty. But all their energies have been directed above all towards retaining control over the printery and thus the party, while they fail to notice that for all other purposes their energies increasingly dissipate and evaporate.

Early last year I was in Melbourne and witnessed the closure of the last branch of the party outside Sydney. Soon after this I moved to Sydney and received some financial support from Comrade Martens and started working with this party. I saw at once that in its membership and its branches, as well as its finances, the party was going bankrupt. It owed about forty pounds to a bookshop (Andrade) and had five or six pounds' worth of books in its store. This apart, it owed one of its members, Everitt, sixty pounds odd for paper and other current expenses. The printery has two printing machines and a sufficient quantity of print. Printing work could have been done, but the printery stood idle. All the work was done by Everitt, who was at once editor, manager, typesetter and printer. (By trade, curiously, he is a cobbler.) He is a good, hard-working fellow, but such a task is far too much for one person. I insisted that they take on a qualified printer, so as to make full use of the facility, but they were afraid they would not be able to afford his wages. I then guaranteed them two pounds a week until the printery paid for itself. I paid them six pounds for three weeks, although the printer showed me that he made ends meet by private work over and above his work for the party. I insisted that they start printing pamphlets and even books of a kind that could easily be sold. In order to provide them with regular assistance I started publishing my official organ on the model of Soviet Russia, put out by Comrade Martens in America. They printed it and the publication and sales brought them at least five pounds a week, while I lost about twenty-five pounds a month on it. They printed this magazine for me for seven months, although a private printer offered to do it for a lower price. I tried everything I could to activate them. At the same time I set up independent groups in Melbourne, Brisbane, Newcastle and Sydney, so as to be able to draw them together later in a unified communist party. The ASP knew that I had formed these groups, and they had no objections. They

even had friendly relations with the Melbourne group. The ASP slowly improved its efforts, although these found expression only in purely local activity which had no effect whatever on the movement as a whole. At least they were able to pay off most of their debts and build up quite a respectable stock of literature, etc. But soon Everitt quarrelled with the printer and dismissed him, taking on a girl to help out. As it turned out later, the girl was not needed at all, as her work could be done on a casual basis by unemployed party members. What I could not manage to do was draw them closer to the workers' movement as a whole. They feared the trade unions and 'Trades Hall' like the plague. Instead of winning over the workers and recruiting new members, they only yapped and snarled at everybody, blindly mimicking communist criticism of reactionary European political organizations without understanding it and without knowing where or how to exploit this criticism. More than anything they resembled the lap-dog that yapped at an elephant in old Krylov's fable. The elephant needed to be led in a certain direction, not yapped at pointlessly. Nonetheless the Melbourne, Brisbane, Sydney and Newcastle groups realized that instead of yapping at the elephant it was better to try and lead it, and soon they achieved great success, especially in Sydney, where these groups operated in the strictest secrecy. Their success was so promising that they even ventured to declare themselves a communist party, while still remaining secret. They put out their manifesto and programme, printed in secret, and many other fliers. The manifesto and programme were written by me. I will not boast of their quality, but they met the requirements of the day in splendid fashion. I am enclosing the original, as first printed. Here I must say that these actions were in no way aimed at the ASP. On the contrary, it was my intention to rouse the ASP, to stimulate them to greater activity and show them that much could be done even without a printery and assets, that there was more to the party than its printery and assets.

However, I did not tell them, or course, that I personally ran those groups. My aim was to build a strong party and unite it with the ASP, but the ASP was seriously alarmed by the energetic activity of the new party. They raced round all the printeries to see who had printed the programme and other materials, and where, but without success. Then they hit on other tactics, or rather, on their old tactics. They reprinted the manifesto and programme in their newspaper, indicating that they fully accepted the policy in them, except for some insignificant amendments, but it showed that those who had issued them had apparently taken fright at their own boldness and not given their names or address. They then convened a conference to set up a communist party. They invited sixty people, including those selected from the ranks of their own party, the SLP. Their aim in calling this conference was insincere from the very start, because if those who issued the manifesto and programme had not taken part in the conference the ASP would have declared itself a communist party and thus demonstrated that it was right to call the others cowards undeserving of

any attention. And if some of them accepted the invitation and joined them, they counted on remaining in control by controlling the assets and the printery, and being thus able to squeeze out of the party all who did not submit to their absolute control.

The invited communist party members, including those from Melbourne, accepted the invitation and compelled them to accept a correct, broad-based structure for the communist party. The ASP delegates could not reject the proposal by the communist party delegates. A single, unified communist party was formed. Everything went well. The ASP delegates apparently agreed to everything. The party was functioning as a party, using the ASP premises and printery, or Trades Hall. The ASP delegates stated that they themselves and their central executive agreed to everything, but that to ensure full unification they had to conduct a poll of all members and obtain the full agreement of the membership of their party. In the end this was done.

They then set forth the terms under which the ASP would hand over its assets: the printery would not belong to the party but was private property entrusted for the party's use to two individuals, so that nobody other than those two individuals had any control over those assets. This was accepted. The assets of the ASP were turned over to the Communist Party, with the proviso that, if the current members of the ASP found within six months that the Communist Party was not a true communist party, they had the right to reclaim their assets and premises. The other delegates did not accept these terms, not wishing to see the continuance of a party within the party, viz. the ASP within the Communist Party. They preferred to appoint trustees with the right to claim the assets at any time within six months, but without having to give grounds. This was accepted by the ASP. It remained only to attend to the accounts and balance, and agree on the inventories and debits.

On Monday 13 December a meeting was held of the Communist Party's executive, attended by delegates from the ASP executive, and everything apparently passed off with the full agreement of all present. On Tuesday the ASP wrote a letter to Comrade Earsman, the secretary of the Communist Party, declaring that the ASP was withdrawing from the Communist Party and adopting the name of the Communist Party?!.³¹ The executive of the Communist Party comprised twelve people and only three ASP members withdrew. What was the executive to do? They decided to take no notice of the ASP and continue the work of the party. The ASP made haste to dispatch Everitt to Melbourne, where the Communist Party branch was well established on the basis of the workers' groups that I mentioned earlier. The Communist Party secretary also went. All the Melbourne membership, except for two members, remained a branch of the

³¹ Author's punctuation from handwritten version, not retained by typist.

Communist Party. The Newcastle membership provisionally declared their independence until the schism was fully clarified. They called a conference and invited delegates from groups in the coal-mining centres and representatives of the central executives of the Communist Party and the ASP. Having heard the ASP and Communist Party delegates, they unanimously elected to adhere to the Communist Party, including even the former ASP members, and declared the ASP a breakaway section. The same occurred in Brisbane, Adelaide, Perth and other centres.

As a result there are two communist parties. One of them, as you, comrades, will see from the latest issue of its newspaper, has branches in all major centres and three official organs: the weekly *Australian Communist*, the organ of the central executive; the fortnightly *Knowledge and Unity*, the organ of the Brisbane branch; and the monthly *Proletarian*, the organ of the Melbourne branch. This is the party that controls the Trades Hall Labor College in Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane, the secretaries of which are members of the Communist Party. This party exerts great influence on the trade unions through its members on the executive of the big unions and the Trades and Labor Council. Its members include the very best Marxists in Australia and the most energetic and boldest party staff. And this, as you will see from the enclosed press samples, is no isolated case, but an example of systematic and determined application.

On the other hand the ASP, or the Communist Party of Australia, as it now styles itself, is restricted to the functions of its Sydney group, whose meetings I have often attended and never seen more than twenty people present. This is the party Comrade Miller wanted me to see through his eyes, as a party with five hundred members and the best revolutionary forces. Of course, I can quite understand Comrade Miller's blindness. From the very first day, thanks to his personal friend Paddy Lamb, he succumbed completely to the control and guardianship of the ASP, and from 7.30 to 11.30 he repeated to me exactly what the ASP had fed him. He did not even notice that whenever something was done for him, it was members of the Communist Party who did it. This even includes his departure from Australia. Five hundred influential communist ASP members could not so much as get him on board a ship. He had to resort to the services of the Communist Party, whom he wanted nothing to do with until he was forced to.

To show that I am not dreaming this up, although the enclosed magazines illustrate quite well what I am saying, I am also attaching some cuttings from the newspaper of the Polish Communist Party, which printed a letter which I wrote nine or ten months ago, when no communist party yet existed and only the first steps had been taken towards creating one.³² This letter was held up

³² See Document 6, above.

against me by my opponents here. They translated it into English and threatened to publish it in English. But they soon realized that it could only serve them as an instrument of provocation, not as an accusation against me in front of the revolutionaries. For this reason the threat remained no more than a threat. They went to Baracchi,³³ whom I have mentioned, and he confirmed that the letter was genuine, that is, that it fully accorded with the facts.

You will probably also soon receive the opinion of Professor Goode about the parties here,³⁴ and I fear his opinion will not concur with that of Comrade Miller. I do not mean to suggest that the Communist Party of Australia is exactly as I would like to see it. I am writing this only because Comrade Miller painted such a fantastic picture of the ASP for me that I had to either laugh or keep silent. I chose the latter.

He wanted me to express my opinion of his view of the parties here, my opinion after he had taken me severely to task for not collaborating with the ASP against the Communist Party, express my opinion when he felt it necessary to conduct even this last conversation in the presence of ASP members in the ASP printery, my opinion after he had, in his words, accomplished his mission and was set to embark the next morning. What his mission was, I do not know, except that he played the part of Khlestakov to perfection. The Australian trade union delegates had been elected before he appeared, according to a letter from Tom Barker in Berlin,³⁵ and Comrade Miller had seen none of the people whom he should have seen by that time. The delegates representing the three biggest centres of workers' organizations will have something to say about this. He explained the fact that he had not met me openly earlier by saying that after his arrival in Australia he had received such an impression of me that he doubted whether he should trust me. But he was perfectly well aware all the time that I was fully informed about his every movement and he knew that everybody he had seen outside the ASP immediately relayed to me not only this fact, but also everything he said. So if I was a person not to be trusted, in view of his dangerous situation, I was perfectly placed to betray him without even having set eyes on him. Yet as it turned out he learned that I had actually helped secure his position, even though he had behaved towards me entirely in the manner of Khlestakov.

He insisted that the ASP had been recognized by the Third International. Perhaps it has. I know that it was represented at the first congress, when the Third International was formed. I even know how it was represented, because the mandate for Comrade Sergeev was sent on behalf of the ASP by me to the address of his sister or relative (Sergeeva's hardware shop). And this was not

³³ i.e. Guido Baracchi, misread by typist as 'Velassy'.

³⁴ i.e. Professor William T. Goode.

³⁵ Clearly Tom Barker in the handwritten version; misread by typist as 'Gon Velkech' (in Cyrillic).

even done on the initiative of the Central Committee of the party, but by the Brisbane branch together with me (this branch no longer exists, of course).

I knew then that such representation was very important for the formation of the Third International. I also know that if Comrade Sergeev were here he would act exactly as I have acted towards the ASP and the Communist Party, because although I argued a lot with Comrade Sergeev about Comrade Cook (the Social Patriot), I was in full agreement with him about everything else. I will go so far as to say that if the Third International officially declares that only the ASP is recognized as a communist party in Australia I shall hold to my view of the two parties, if they continue to work in the way they work now. This is because it is plain to me that the ASP is simply a religious sect, while the Communist Party is a living, vibrant revolutionary body. My view is of them as they are now. What they may become in the future, I cannot tell. I am not a prophet.

With comradely greetings,
Petr Simonov

Post Scriptum: As I have not yet posted this letter today (9 April), I have read and am enclosing a newspaper dispatch from London which shows clearly that the matter of sending delegates was being discussed here long before the arrival of Comrade Miller. By his tactless behaviour he has done only harm here, as the journey of the other delegates came close to being sabotaged, as you can see from the other cutting. This interview was given by Comrade Garden (a member of the Communist Party), because in Melbourne the people whom Comrade Miller saw operated openly, not having properly seen through him, and discussed the matter of sending delegates openly, even debating the matter of subsidies for the fare, while the delegates, as you see, embarked as working members of the ship's complement.

After the Melbourne incident, which was reported in the Melbourne papers, the local press attacked Garden and Bazova. Badelei did something fairly silly,³⁶ forcing Garden to give the enclosed interview the next day,³⁷ since the names of the two who had departed were known, of course, but up to this point nobody had paid any attention to them. If Comrade Miller's mission was to ensure that delegates were sent from here, he would have done much better to remain in Europe and write a letter, like Comrade Tom Barker and Comrade Ziuzenko [sic; for Zuzenko], who sent me the manifesto in Russian. It was immediately translated, as you can see from the enclosed, and printed.

³⁶ 'Bazova', 'Badelei'—as read by the typist. In handwriting these appear to be the same name, in one case partly latinized, and most likely [Jack] Beasley, a known associate of Garden's. The miners' leader and Labor member of parliament J.M. Baddeley cannot, however, be excluded.

³⁷ 'Enclosed interview' not traced.

You can see that we here have not been idle. But it has not been easy to prod the local unions into action, of course. From all the enclosed material you will see clearly that, to my great chagrin, Comrade Miller, as I said earlier, has merely acted out a Khlestakov role. I am not blaming him. He was not familiar with the workers' movement in Australia in the way that he thought he was, as until he was deported he spent some time in the wilds of Queensland and then was arrested and transported to and fro between Australia and Canada. He was held on a steamer here, and then deported. All his popularity derived from the argument about his deportation. Many of those who protested energetically against it had never known him or had the slightest idea about him. Many took him to be a wealthy mine-owner, not a worker, so the well-to-do among the Irish Catholics assisted in the propaganda against his deportation.

P.S.

Document 10

RGASPI 495–94–128. no date [1920 or early 1921], Paul Freeman: A Glimpse into the Working Class Movement in Australia. Manuscript and typescript versions. The typescript is inaccurate at several points.

This document seems to be a report to the Comintern, but may well have been intended for publication (infelicities of style notwithstanding). It reinforces two themes important to radical workers at this time: the importance of the recent World War in demonstrating the bankruptcy of the capitalist system; and the inability of politics and politicians to change the capitalist system for the better.

A Glimpse into the Working Class Movement in Australia

To understand the correct Industrial as well as Parliamentary positions in Australia it is necessary to somewhat review both from the time 'The International Pirate Crew' inaugurated 'The Human Slaughter House of Europe', where many millions of men, women and children with all the pomp peculiar to the capitalist society were sacrificed on the altar of greedy God Mammon.

It is well to remember that in Australia [the] Labor Party under the leadership of Andrew Fisher was in full possession of the Federal and State Parliament for many years prior to the declaration of war in 1914 and continued in power under the leadership of William Morris Hughes long after the war was declared.³⁸

³⁸ At the beginning of the First World War, the ALP won back government at the federal level and formed governments in most of the state parliaments in Australia. Andrew Fisher was the moderate Labor leader at federal level, who was replaced in October 1915, when William Morris ('Billy') Hughes became prime minister. Early in 1917, Hughes and a minority of members of the Parliamentary Labor Party made a pact with conservative Members of Parliament and formed a new party, the Nationalists. In May 1917, the Nationalists won the federal election. By the end of the war, conservative governments had been elected in most jurisdictions in Australia, some of them supported by Hughes' state counterparts who had followed him out of the Labor Party. Hughes' prime ministership survived his change of

Working men and women being in vast majority in the Labor Party and knowing that they nominated and elected every member of Parliament believed that the Cabinet consisting wholly of members of [the] Labor Party would try and settle every industrial dispute in their favor. A vast majority of them also believed that the Labor Party, while in power, that is in the possession of Parliament would eventually legislate out of existence the abominable 'Wage Slavery'. Of course politicians and would-be politicians had done all in their power to mentally chloroform the wage slaves into believing in the exclusive power of Parliamentary Action.

Just prior to the declaration of war in 1914 in Australia unemployment was so great that it would not be an exaggeration to say that scores of thousands of young, healthy, vigorous men and many women were all over the country, looking for an opportunity to sell their 'Labour Power'. In spite of the wage slaves' anxiety to be exploited, capitalists instead of employing numerous out of work toilers, took advantage of the large army of unemployed and actively engaged in reducing their already more than meagre standard of living.

Immense majority of workers were organised in Craft Unions and with the exception of the 'Industrial Workers of the World' who knew better, believed in the efficacy of the Parliamentary Action and the ability of Parliament to adjust all the industrial disputes favorably to the wage slaves and to eventually bring in the millennium. But, not being organised industrially, hopelessly split into small or fairly large loosely amalgamated craft unions bound up by their contracts for a certain number of years expiring on widely different dates, workers found themselves absolutely helpless against the onslaughts of the internationally organised capitalists, backed up by the very parliaments that the workers looked upon as the bulwarks of their own strength.

The wage slaves in general excepting the IWW and a small but very militant group called 'the Australian Socialist Party' did not recognise the economic fact that the parliamentary action was merely a reflex of the industrial action, that is direct action taken principally at the point of production of the commodities and their distribution. They did not recognise the fact that Parliaments reflected only those who control the direction of production and distribution of the good things of life. Since the Australian capitalists had the fate of Industries in the hollow of their hands their clumsily acting, wasteful blundering putrid and ruthlessly pitiless Parliament reflected anything but the workers' desires.

The war broke out and the Labor Party being in power immediately declared themselves of the side of the International Pirate Crew, ready to do their bidding, ready and even anxious to force into the European Slaughter House the great

political party, and the fact that his referendum to introduce conscription for the armed forces was twice defeated.

starving armies of unemployed, armies which were already beginning to threaten the very existence of capitalism. At the outbreak of the war the prime minister and leader of the Labor Party Andrew Fisher said that he would give (for slaughter of course) the last man in Australia and would spend the last shilling. True, the capitalists in Australia spared no effort in trying to force the last workingman into their armies, but as to spending the last shilling—well they simply gathered the last shillings workmen and women possessed for the capitalist's benefit. They called it a good business.

Recruiting was conducted in all its brutal hideousness and was helped by the master class throughout the country who refused to give employment to able bodied men.

The IWW seeing the favorable conditions redoubled their propaganda in Industries and steadily gained in strength. As time went on influence of the IWW propaganda was felt throughout the country which expressed itself in Direct Action indulged in by the working man almost everywhere. Wage slaves in Australia had good tutors and were slowly learning their lesson—for in general they have commenced to show an unmistakable desire to organise on better lines than heretofore. Then the anti-conscription campaign came which offered so favorable a field for the IWW propaganda that the IWW took a part in it and by successfully conducting a vigorous Industrial revolutionary propaganda impressed its popularity and influence to an extent so great that the master class genuinely alarmed started a systematic campaign against it. Thanking the IWW for infusing much militancy³⁹ into the action of the wage slaves the Anti-conscription campaign was successful. William Morris Hughes the prime minister announced his intention of attacking the IWW with a ferocity of the Bengal tiger. He started by causing the arrest of the 12 IWW men on false charges and a specially appointed judge sentenced them to from 5 to 15 years' imprisonment with hard labour. Shortly after wholesale arrest of the IWW men the IWW organisation was declared illegal. Finding that the IWW men when arrested and tried were doing a very telling industrial propaganda through the capitalistic courts, the government changed their tactics and started to secretly deport without an open trial or even a shadow of an enquiry all the IWW men they considered dangerous. Thus over 200 working men of all nationalities were secretly deported. It would do no harm for the working class to remember and to draw a lesson from the fact that although Australia is an English colony, [the] Australian government did not hesitate to deport Englishmen, Scotsmen, Irishmen and even Australians when it suited their purpose. [The] Great majority of them instead of being deported to the places of their birth were deported to South America and dumped there.

³⁹ The typist incorrectly put 'military' at this point; the handwritten original has 'militancy'.

Persecution and oppression forced the IWW men to scatter all over the country, give up the open methods and resort to purely underground tactics. As a matter of fact, the period of persecution of the IWW marked the sure awakening of the class consciousness in Australian Unions which manifested itself in many interesting ways. It also marked very important changes within the Parliamentary Labor Party which in Parliament and out of it was compelled to reflect the purely industrial activities and aspirations of the workers.

[The] Labor Party on account of the big groups of workers of different shades of opinion taking very militant stand right in Industries even way back in 1915 brought about a split in its ranks and consequently new elections. Reactionary section of the Labor Party and so-called Liberal (Tory Party) in order to defeat the section of the Labor Party which reflected more or less militant section of the working class combined, called themselves the 'Nationalist' or 'Win the war Party' and by most unscrupulous means carried the elections with William Morris Hughes remaining Prime Minister of the Commonwealth.

The Nationalist or Win the War (for the international capitalists against the World Proletariat) Party was purely a military party. Shortly after the elections, when the sinister significance of the War Party activities commenced dawning upon the workers' minds and the oppression became almost unbearable, Win the War Party became thoroughly disliked and discredited by the great majority of the working class. Win the War Party clung to the reigns [sic] of government with bulldog's pertinacity [sic] for over a year after the supposed conclusion of the World's War. In the end, even the master class, seeing the inability of their flunkies in Parliament to cope with the advancing militancy of the Union men were getting uneasy and were talking of the necessity of the change of Government. That of course coming from the capitalistic press foreshadowed an early general election.

In [a] great many cases complete disregard of the craft union official mandates, deliberate breaking of the contracts, men striking on their own initiative and talking about the advisability of organising on purely industrial lines prove beyond doubt the great influence of the IWW men's propaganda accomplished under the cloak of craft unionism. IWW tactics were adopted and used with varying success almost everywhere. Capitalist press howled against the IWW and the Government continued to persecute them. If a man was arrested and the IWW card was found upon him, he was sentenced to six months' imprisonment with hard labour without the option of a fine. However the spirit of IWW-ism so permeated the craft union organisations that some of the aspiring politicians have deliberately and shamelessly taken the IWW preamble in almost its entirety [and] added to it the clause recognising the Parliamentary Action and started organising what they pleased to term 'The One Big Union'. All that was done with a view of preventing the possibility of the working class

developing a healthy desire of acting on their own initiative instead of depending on so-called labour leaders which would have prevented the mental prostitutes betraying the workers while trying hard to safeguard the capitalist's right to exploit the toiler by successfully running, for a princely remuneration, their administrative machine called Parliament.

At the time of the writer's deportation from Australia to Germany October 10th 1919 it became apparent that the new psychology of the wage slaves forced the politicians in general to very much review their opinions and change their parliamentary attitude—for the reason that diverse opinions entertained by different electorates of the same party ranged politicians in the party into definite groups; the groups having opposite opinions rendered the formation of generally acceptable policy not only very difficult but almost impossible. The psychology of the wage slaves in general became so changed that at the Interstate Conference of the Labor Party at 1919 in order to get the workers' support politicians and would-be politicians passed most sweeping resolutions promising slaves practically everything under the sun. During the sitting differences of opinion became so great that the so-called extreme section withdrew and held their own conference where they however have eventually decided to do everything possible to prevent a split. Of course it is easy to understand that the only way for the Labor Party to again get into power was to avoid a split. Withdrawal of the extremist section brought about a great danger of the second split in the ranks of the Labor Party. The executive of the Labor Party consisting of the conservative section demanded the expulsion of some of the extreme members of the party but were not supported by their electors in their demands.

The Win the War Party at that time appeared to be quite helpless as to what course to take and impatiently awaited the return of the Prime Minister William Morris Hughes from England who, as their leader, was expected to formulate a sufficiently palatable new policy for the people to carry the party through. On his arrival in Australia, Hughes, hoping to gain the support of about 400,000 returned soldiers, promised them all sorts of impossible things, thundered against the agitators and threatened to hang them and [the] profiteer[s] and that in spite of the fact that Hughes himself is a heavy shareholder in some of the rich companies. He draws big profits from Dalgety and Co. alone. After [a] great deal of bombast and hot air, he without announcing his policy intimated that the election in all probability would take place on Dec 13th 1919. Politics! Oh! Dirty, rotten politics!

It is true that some politicians honestly believe that they could and have sincere intention to do, if in power, everything possible to take the yoke off the workers' necks. What an impossible dream. What a delusion. Politicians have got to run the Parliament for the master class with the express purpose of keeping the yoke firmly fastened upon the workers' necks—for they themselves draw

their fat salaries from the surplus value extracted from the very life's blood of the working class. As a rule, [a] politician is an animal which very, very often disregards his own views and opinions for the sake of adopting the shade of opinion entertained by his electorate at the time of elections, but as soon as he ensures his seat in Parliament for a number of years and finds himself in a different atmosphere and environment—the atmosphere and environment of parasitism—he immediately hears his master's voice and performs the tricks of a well-trained docile dog. Truly [the] politician is a human chameleon.

My personal experience and a long careful study of the capitalistic parliamentary activities prove conclusively the fact that [the] capitalist is a man who would do everything for the working man but to get off his back and his [sic] politician is a man who would do everything but to help the working man to throw the capitalist off his back. Also that the only hope for the working class of gaining the 'Industrial Freedom' is to organise industries on purely revolutionary Industrial lines for by virtue of their economic position in society as a whole that is their natural tower of strength.

I am

Yours for the Proletarian World Revolution

Paul Freeman.

Document 11

RGASPI 495–94–128. no date [internal evidence indicates April–May 1921], unsigned, but believed to be by Paul Freeman: *The Birth of the Communist Movement in Australia*. Present only in a Russian version, typescript. Document apparently incomplete. Trans. by KW.

Freeman sailed from Australia (Sydney) on 7 April 1921. This letter indicates that the Australian delegates to the Third Comintern Congress (to be held in June) had departed for Moscow. Quinton's arrest in Britain is not mentioned, so presumably it had not yet occurred. Freeman and Artem were killed in an accident in Russia on 24 July 1921. Freeman's close relations with Jim Quinton and Paddy Lamb are mentioned in Simonov's letter, Document 9, above. The letter is significant because it shows that Freeman, like Zuzenko and others who attempted to engage the attention of the Comintern in Australian affairs at this time, believed that revolution in Australia was imminent.

The Birth of the Communist Movement in Australia

1. Australia as a Colony

The unusually rapid growth of the revolutionary movement in Australia in the last few years, like the political and economic situation as a whole in that country, has received very poor coverage in the Russian and foreign press alike. The remoteness of Australia, and above all its complete isolation from the outside world, most strictly maintained thanks to the British government's complete control over all Australia's contacts with other countries, have all created a

screen over events in Australia, events which have frequently caused the British imperialists to tremble in fear for their power over this colony. Before proceeding to a survey of the stage which has now begun in the working class's struggle in Australia, it is necessary to provide a cursory overview of the objective conditions in which the Australian proletariat was and is now compelled to enter the lists with its exploiters.

The conditions of the struggle in Australia are different from those in England or the United States, although Australia is often considered to be America in miniature. Both politically and economically, Australia is a true vassal of Britain, a colony in the strictest sense of the word. The 'autonomy' of the colonies, on which the capitalist press is so fond of expatiating, exists for Australia, as for the other British colonies, only on paper. In reality, not a single law can be enacted by the local or federal parliaments without the blessing of the governors appointed from London. In this way the political life of each of the six states, as well as the federal government, is dictated. These British bureaucrats, who occupy the highest administrative positions in the land, not only exercise their prerogatives, they effectively dictate the entire political line of the government of 'autonomous' Australia.

The burden of economic dependence on the British capitalists, although in more concealed form, weighs even more significantly upon Australia. Although Australia's financial and industrial capital, now highly concentrated, appears on the markets as Australian capital, even the official figures demonstrate the signal fact that approximately 75% of Australia's industrial and financial capital is of British origin. A fairly substantial proportion belongs to French financiers, and during the war the participation of American capital in the industrial life of the country began to appear and then increased. The place of truly Australian capital in the development of industry and in Australia's current trade turnover is absolutely insignificant. If we add to this the fact that all the most important industries in Australia and all tonnage, like all shipbuilding, is exclusively in the hands of British capitalists, who as a result totally control all Australia's foreign trade, the full extent of dependence and of exploitation of Australia's working class by the predatory British imperialists will be apparent.

The power of British capital over the Australian proletariat manifested itself not only in the vast profits received, but also in direct support for British imperialist plans. When heated debates were still in full swing in the British press about the desirability or otherwise of large battle cruisers for future imperialist wars, the news that the British government had decided to build four huge cruisers, each with twelve 21-inch guns, to help Britain maintain its naval supremacy, sped round the world. This put an end to all arguments about disarmament.

Tottering British capital, despite the blows it had received from its own rebellious proletariat, recognizing that it stood on shaky foundations, nevertheless decided not to fall behind its younger and fitter competitors—America and Japan—and resolved to continue its frenzied maritime programme. But the economic contradictions which had become so acute in Britain after the world war, and which threatened the very existence of British capitalism, compelled it to seek direct assistance from its colonial ‘children’. In Australia a capitalist press fully subservient to the dictates of the London bankers was unleashed, along with all other propaganda media, to persuade the broad masses that Australia needed to have a great navy of its very own. Nothing was said, however, about the fact that the very organization of the navy handed all control over its operations to the British government, leaving in the hands of the federal government only the mechanisms for training the required personnel.

The present campaign for a ‘close alliance’ of all parts of the British Empire is being waged with the same aim, of seizing influence in Australia’s political life. An attempt is being made to bribe the Australian masses and those of other British possessions by granting places to representatives of these countries in the British cabinet, thus creating the illusion that Australia is playing a part in deciding the destiny of the whole British empire, while in reality an Australian representative in the British government would be no more than a conduit for absolute control over his country, a reliable instrument for even greater enslavement of the Australian proletariat. However, as the leftist press has shown, the working masses have not risen to this bait and have come out openly against these new machinations of cunning British imperialism.

2. The Economic Situation and the Workers’ Movement

The end of the world war meant terrible unemployment for Australia, as it did for all the capitalist countries. In Australia, as a colonial country, though one with highly developed industry, the crisis assumed more acute form. The government did not possess large economic resources, as in western Europe or Japan, to offer assistance to industries that were in dire straits or by various measures artificially cushion the blows of a painful crisis. The consequences of terrible material disaster soon had an effect on the psychology of the Australian working class, which in an extraordinarily short time became so revolutionary as to be unrecognizable. In all major centres unemployment committees were formed to see to the takeover of public and municipal buildings to provide refuge for hungry and homeless workers cast adrift by the cruel hand of capitalism. Such was the pitch of fury of the unemployed against their enslavers that an utterly reactionary Australian government never once dared oppose the actions of the unemployed, who in broad daylight violated the sacred bourgeois principles of the sanctity of private property. The government was even forced

to begin regular distribution of rations to the unemployed, in order to avert open insurgency in major industrial centres.

The most recent crisis, as well as previous defeats in the struggle against capital, has shown the Australian workers, who had been organized on a narrow workshop basis, how utterly wrong the structure of their labour organizations had been and impelled them onto the path of a broad industrial association. The previously dominant, and still existing workers' unions, organized on the same lines as the American Federation of Labor, although not quite so reactionary, were not capable of leading the Australian working class in a united struggle against its exploiters, and reality itself demonstrated that such conservative organizations of workers were not viable. The lessons of defeat in strikes have dictated the need for industrial workers' organizations to defend their interests, and the very first propaganda by the American Industrial Workers of the World, who arrived in Australia in 1910, produced brilliant results. They were the element that brought ferment into the conservative labour unions and did much to bring about their collapse. However, the Industrial Workers of the World, for all the services they undoubtedly rendered to the workers' movement in Australia, in rousing it from the hibernation its reactionary leaders had kept it in, remained unable to bind the workers tightly together in even one major industry, owing to an absence of organizing skills. They attained the summit of their influence in 1916, when they began to implement a plan for the tight-knit organization of industrial unions, but this same period was a difficult time for them as all their organizations were disbanded by a reactionary Australian government and they were driven underground. It was precisely the ruthless repressive measures against the Industrial Workers of the World that served as the spur for more fruitful work by them, as the tactics—rejected outright by the Industrial Workers of the World—of penetrating the conservative labour unions in order to destroy them, had to be accepted, like it or not, in recent years of harsh reaction rampant in Australia, when membership of any such conservative union was often a necessary precondition to receiving a wage. It is understandable that the presence of more revolutionary elements, which had entered every labour organization from a few major centres in which they had been concentrated, very soon made itself felt and did much to prepare the ground for the inculcation of communist ideas in the masses.

3. The Communist Movement

The Communist Party was formed from the Australian Socialist Party, which had existed in the country for more than twenty years. After the Second Congress of the Third International the Australian Socialist Party, in accordance with the resolution of Congress, changed its name to the Communist Party and immediately joined the Third International. Almost the entire membership of the former Socialist Party remained in the Communist Party. The most progressive and

politically aware members of the IWW also joined the Communist Party. Thus the membership of the Australian Communist Party consists exclusively of good Marxists and of experienced older fighters, who have given proof of their loyalty to the ideas of communism in determined struggle with the reactionary Australian government. The members of the party are almost exclusively workers, and the leaders of the movement have made admission fairly difficult for new members in order to protect the young party against an influx of wavering elements and *agents provocateurs*, whom the Australian government tries in vain to plant in all Communist Party organizations.

The extraordinary unanimity and singleness of purpose of the members of the Australian Communist Party stood out with particular clarity in the political struggle which the communists were obliged to wage with certain right-wing groupings, although these called themselves 'revolutionary'. Under the leadership of Ross and [George?], these Australian Mensheviks, being a small splinter group of the right wing of the former Australian Socialist Party, resorted to various means to try to shatter the young and growing Communist Party, going so far as to have no qualms about accepting funding from the capitalists to print anti-communist brochures. The firm theoretical foundation on which the Australian Communist Party rests enabled it to crush these right-wing groups without difficulty and to completely divide and effectively terminate the existence of the IWW group, which had been about to launch a determined campaign against the communists.

Besides fighting these insignificant and fast-melting forces of the 'socialists', the Australian Communist Party also has to wage a struggle against the old reactionary leaders of the labour unions, who still control almost all the apparatus of these unions in spite of repeated rifts and the tendency of the Australian proletariat towards freeing itself once and for all from the woeful leadership of these indirect agents of capitalism. The communists in Australia are pursuing tactics of general penetration into all labour unions and gaining influence through them over the toiling masses so as to totally refashion the unions along new industrial lines. This work is made considerably easier by the shortsightedness of the old, conservative labour leaders, who take no account of the necessity for minimal change, at least, to allay growing dissatisfaction.

A more serious and bitter foe of the Australian communists in their ideological and practical work is the extremely reactionary government, which deploys all measures used by the former Russian tsarist regime to try and crush the communist movement in Australia. The capitalist government maintains strict surveillance of all arrivals and departures, and despite all protests by the broad masses has established clandestine censorship. The most outstanding leaders of the communist movement are subjected to arrest without trial or investigation, with deportation to other countries following prolonged detention. Australia's

damp, cramped dungeons have been the cause of [*word illegible*] of more than one staunch fighter for communism. Word of arrest and exile to other countries, as of frequent hunger strikes declared by imprisoned communists, rarely reaches the pages of the capitalist press but reaches the masses mainly through the labour unions and protest meetings organized by the communists and broadly attended by the toiling masses. These persecutions have tempered the fighters for communism in Australia and made bold, selfless revolutionaries of them.

In their struggle the Australian communists have recently been receiving broader and broader support from the working masses. Many workers' organizations are, in practice, led by communists [*and are? – words lost on torn corner of page*] thoroughly revolutionary in their nature. The silver and lead miners of Broken Hill are particularly close to communism. The unshakeable determination [*with which?*] they waged their eighteen-month strike, ending in complete victory for them at the end of last year, has become known to the whole world of labour. These miners not only waged an economic struggle against their oppressors, but also organized their own Red Guard, which experienced several armed clashes with the capitalist hirelings. In this region, which the Australian comrades call 'the Petrograd of Australia', where anyone who speaks out openly against Soviet rule in Russia or against the Bolsheviks risks being beaten to death by an indignant crowd of workers, a truly revolutionary workers' self-perception is being forged. Courses in communism operate, and there are even communist schools for children.

Demobilized soldiers who have experienced the trenches in Europe and know all the horrors of the imperialist war from their own bitter experience constitute the most receptive element for the dissemination of the ideas of communism. They number up to 300,000 and have their own organization, led, however, by officers. But the fact that ex-soldiers are clearly sympathetic to communism has received frequent confirmation in their reluctance to take part on the side of the capitalists in armed clashes between the police and the unemployed, and by their outright refusal to guard a military hospital in Sydney when the workers held demonstrations to demand the release of a well-known communist prisoner held there,⁴⁰ as well as by many other demonstrations of their solidarity with the revolutionary part of the Australian proletariat.

In its tactics the Australian Communist Party recognizes the necessity for Soviet rule as a historically inevitable form of dictatorship by the proletariat and wages its struggle on this fundamental principle, taking account of all factors of the Australian way of life and the psychology of the masses. Australia's

⁴⁰ This most likely refers to Freeman himself and the demonstrations provoked by the attempts to deport him to the USA in 1919. After the failure of two such attempts (the US authorities would not accept him), he went on hunger strike and was held on shore from June 1919. He was eventually deported (successfully) on 10 October 1919, to Germany.

communists clearly realize that the overthrow of capitalism in their country will come about against the bitterest opposition of the bourgeoisie, which is actively preparing to resist the pressure of the revolutionary proletariat, making good use of the lessons of the revolution in Russia and Germany. Given all the repressive measures being taken by the government against the Australian communists, the party will have to function partly on a legal basis and partly on an illegal one. The latter is essential in view of the fact that at every moment the Australian communists must expect new persecution, and the method of organization adopted has shown itself in practice the most expedient. Work is also proceeding through the factory workshop committees, which are at present a revolutionary element in Australian working life.

At the forthcoming Third Congress in Moscow, the Australian Communist Party will be represented by four comrades: Paul F., Patrick L., James K., and Reed [sic], A.⁴¹ Australian labour unions have sent ten delegates from various unions to the International Congress of Red Trade Unions [RILU]. Lack of time precluded calling a conference of all the country's trade unions in order to elect delegates, and in any case this would not have been successful as the government would have taken all steps to prevent the delegates leaving the country. All the delegates departing for Moscow would have had to leave [illegally?...] [*Document breaks off here*].

Document 12

RGASPI 495–94–6. 8 April 1921, Correspondence between C.W. Baker and Miller and A.S. Reardon concerning unity of the Communist party. Typescript.

This set of letters and drafts, from April 1921, represent a part of the manoeuvres between the 'Sussex Street' communist party and the 'Liverpool Street' communist party to join together on a mutually acceptable basis. They indicate not just the hostility and formality that characterized the relations, but also that Miller (i.e. Paul Freeman) as representative of the Comintern was attempting to urge unity and that 'Sussex Street' (Rawson Chambers) was showing Miller himself—by writing directly to him—how compliant they were attempting to be.

110 Rawson Chambers
Rawson Place
5.4.21

Comrades

The Executive of the Communist Party of Australia, after the report and advice of the General Secretary W.P. Earsman, decided to agree to meet your executive on the question of Communist Unity.

⁴¹ Names as given in Cyrillic script: i.e. Paul Freeman, Patrick Lamb, James Quinton and Alfred Rees. See Macintyre, *The Reds*, p. 59 ff.

Our Unswerving Loyalty

Yours for Communism
(signed) C.W. Baker

Comrade Miller advised altering this to read as [below].

110 Rawson Chambers
Rawson Place
Sydney

A.S. Reardon
General Secretary
Communist Party of Australia
(Late ASP) 115 Goulburn Street
Sydney

Dear Comrade

The Executive of the Communist Party of Australia after the report and advice of the General Secretary, decided to act on the suggestion of Comrade Miller, and agree to comply with the request to meet your Executive on the question of Communist Unity.

Yours for Communism
(signed) C.W. Baker Acting General Secretary

Letter to Com. Miller
110 Rawson Chambers
Rawson Place

Dear Comrade

This party having complied with the request re Unity Conference, informed Comrade Everitt to that effect, and that we were prepared to meet his executive on Wednesday evening.

We were informed by Comrade Everitt that no answer could be given until the matter had been placed before his Executive on Thursday. He agreed to inform us of the decision of his Executive on Friday morning.

Therefore we suggest that we meet his executive on Saturday evening.

Yours for Communism
(signed) C.W. Baker
Acting General Secretary

Letter from 115 Goulburn Street
April 8th 1921
Mr C.W. Baker

Dear Comrade

Your undated letter referring to suggestions of Comrade Miller on the subject of Unity, to hand. Having placed same before our executive I am instructed to reply as follows:-

In anything that transpired between Comrade Miller and your General Secretary, Comrade Miller was in no wise acting officially for our party, nor was he acting at our request, as we have observed no development that would induce us to retract from the position we took up in December last, in fact the case is rather to the contrary.

The essential points of the basis for unity suggested by Comrade Miller were—the recognition of our Party as the Communist Party of Australia: your organisation to be granted a minority representation of three of our Executive, and our Executive representatives to have the right to review your membership for twelve months and if necessary expel those who could by no means be considered as Communists.

As however, we have noticed no attempt on the part of your Party to purge itself on its non-Communist elements, we are of the opinion that a meeting with your executive would at present, be futile and a waste of time.

We understand from Comrade Miller that he made it quite clear to your General Secretary that he was acting on his own initiative, and that he made it still clearer that in organizing against the Australian Section of the Third International, your Party was doing counter-revolutionary work.

When your organisation shall have proved itself to be honest and sincere, and worthy of the claim to be a Communist group we shall be glad to discuss with you the question of Unity.

Until that time, we extend to all individuals who accept the principles laid down by the Third International and who are prepared to work for the realisation of Communism, a hearty invitation to the ranks of our Party.

Yours for the Proletarian Dictatorship
(signed) A.S. Reardon
Hon. Gen. Sec.

Document 13

RGASPI 495–94–7. 1 July 1921, Union of Russian Communist Workers: Minutes of the Unity Conference, Trade Hall Brisbane. Present in English (type) and Russian versions (print).

This document is an account of the attempt to fuse three communist organisations in the Brisbane area in June 1921: the Union of Russian Communist Workers, the Ipswich Communist Party, and the Brisbane Communist Party. It demonstrates not just the

diversity within Brisbane, but the importance of Russian communists in that area. In many countries diverse groups either claimed, or tried to unite to claim, the status of a 'communist party'; in Australia the Russian communists in Queensland were ultimately rebuffed in their attempts to unite with others, but continued their revolutionary work in relative isolation until the mid-1920s.

Minutes of the Unity Conference Trade Hall Brisbane

The First Session of the Conference was held on June 12, 1921. The following were elected as delegates to the conference: from Ipswich Communist Party Organisation—comrades Lubimov and Kilimov, from the Brisbane Communist Party Organisation—comrades Hochstand, Lefand and Pikunov: from the Union of Russian Communist Workers, Brisbane—comrades Galchenko, Shakhnovsky, Khrutsky and Gorsky. Comrade Shakhnovsky was elected chairman and comrades Lubimov and Pikunov secretaries. Members of the organisations in question were presented at the Sessions in a consultative capacity.

As laid down by the conference rules, the reporters were delegates of the Ipswich Communist Party Organisation. In their opening speeches they pointed out the necessity and importance for Russian workers of the establishment of one general organisation in Australia. Without presenting a definite plan, they proposed on behalf of their organisation the following conditions for unification.

CONDITIONS: No. 1. To reorganise all the existing organisations and to establish a central organisation. 2) To establish a centre of the fused organisation by means of a conference or a referendum. 3) They agreed to recognise as the centre organisation—the organisation of longest standing and with a preponderating number of members. 4) The statutes to be elaborated and adopted jointly. 5) After fusion to submit the lists of members of the fused organisations to joint investigation. Comrades expressing sympathy for Soviet Russia and for ideas of Communism to be considered members of the fused organisations. Those who can be proved to be an uncommunistic and undesirable element to be considered as having left the Party. 6) To audit the funds and property of all fused organisations. 7) In the interests of the development of organisational capacities, to elaborate plans and methods for future self-determination. 8) Immediately on the organisation of the centre to take in hand the liquidation of conflicts in the existing branches and to begin work among the unorganised. 9) Comrades who, in accord with point 5, will be left outside the organisation and will not alter their attitude to the organisation's aims and tasks previous to the adoptions of the statutes, must not be received as members either in the centre or in the branches, 10) The branches of the fused organisations refusing to adhere to the fused organisation to be declared reactionary—not with us—but against us! 11) To guard common funds and property and to prosecute offenders of the past as well as in future. 12) To proclaim adherence to the Third International.

After the Ipswich delegates, the delegates of the Union of Russian Communist Workers addressed the conference. They pointed out that a party constitution would lead to isolation from the wide masses of Russian workers among whom there is a great awakening and desire to take part in the organisation, but who nevertheless cannot abide by party rules and regulations in view of their lack of political and economic knowledge and revolutionary experience. They welcomed the idea of fusion, but as before insisted on the impossibility of adopting a party constitution. In this respect they referred to their own resolution adopted between the first and the second (the present) conferences and published in their paper on April 26, 1921. They brought it forward as a basis for fusion which was adopted. This resolution is as follows:

RESOLUTION: Re question of fusion of the groups of Russian workers in Australia on a Communist Party basis as proposed by the Ipswich Communist Party Organisation, the Union of Russian Communist Workers, while expressing its views on the wrong attitude taken up by other groups and on the way in which this question has been brought forward, has come to the following deductions and conclusions:

On principle the URCW considers it opportune, in view of dissensions, to reconsider the question of fusion on the basis of communist policy. The experience of the First Conference on this question has shown us the following state of things.

The existing Australian organisations of Russian workers are out of touch with the real conditions of the Russian revolution and also with the conditions of the local labour movement in view of the special character of their aims. Their exceptional position and their lack of experience compel them to be guided in both cases only by ordinary communist aspirations, and not by definite conditions and tasks such as confront the Russian proletariat. Therefore, the idea of the fusion of groups of Russian workers here in Australia on the basis of the program of the Russian Communist Party is fallacious and politically unsound. Apart from the special character of the aims of Russian workers in Australia, such a serious political step would also be impossible because it is not the Russian Communist Party which will be the guide of the Australian proletarian movement, but the Australian Communist Party, not to mention the fact that such a step would be tantamount to establishing here a Soviet Government and the dictatorship of the proletariat. Their national position, their isolation from the Russian revolution and their lack of contact with local life forbid them to consider such a step.

The Union of Russian Communist Workers is of the opinion that a neutral non-party organisation among the wide un-organised masses of sympathisers with communism and the communist party and control of their aims and tasks is the only acceptable organisational basis for fusion. If other groups agree with

the above mentioned view point, the question of fusion can be decided without convening the conference, for such a form of organisation already exists—the URCW. Since 1918 this organisation has been, on the basis of the declaration re attitude to the November revolution, such a neutral non-party organisation animated by communist ideas. The Russian workers in Australia, in view of the peculiarity of their position, are in favour of such neutral organisation between communist party and dictatorship of the proletariat. The URCW is of the opinion that such a politico-organisational base with preponderating communist influences will enable us to prepare ourselves for work in any capacity for the Soviet power. The claim of other groups to uniformity of aims will be a significant guarantee for the tendency of the organisation. Therefore to meet the desire for common organisation, the URCW, while refusing to take part in the conference, offers to all those in favour of the communist policy of unification its organisational structure as a field for unification, and opens its ranks for membership.

NOTE TO THE RESOLUTION. In the interval between the First and the Second Conferences the Brisbane Branch of the Australian Communist Party received an instruction from the CEC of the Party to make an attempt to link up into one organisation the Russian workers of Brisbane. In the URCW it was resolved to entrust the Brisbane Branch of the Australian Communist Party with this work. But the decision contained the reservation that in the event of the conference being convened without Brisbane Branch of the ACP the URCW will participate in it directly.⁴²

The next speakers were the delegates of the Brisbane Communist Party Organisation who also welcome the idea of fusion. Having expressed their viewpoint, they proposed, as a basis for the realisation of this idea, to establish one non-party workers organisation with a communist nucleus, the latter to exercise its influence in the activity and development of the members of the future unified organisation. Their reason for the establishment of such a non-party organisation was—the diversity of elements among the Russian workers in Australia as far as their general development and their political convictions are concerned. They argued that for this reason the appellation “Communist” was not suitable.

After prolonged discussion it was decided to adjourn the Session of the Conference to the following Sunday, June 26. Before closing the Session, the following resolution was carried: “The present Session of the Conference having taken cognisance of all the proposals (bases) for fusion, is leaving the question open in view of the contradictory nature of these proposals, until the latter will have been independently discussed at the next meetings of each organisation.”

⁴² Manuscript obliterated at the bottom of this page. Last line reconstructed from the Russian version.

The Second Session of the Conference took place on Sunday June 26. After a brief exchange of opinion it was proposed to deal immediately with the elucidation of one or other of the proposed bases for the fusion of the existing organisations.

First to be discussed were: “the conditions of agreement adopted by the URCW for fusion into one organisation”—as an addendum to the adopted resolution. These conditions are as follows: being convinced that the existence of separate homogenous organisations is conducive to splitting up the forces of the Russian workers in Australia, thus frustrating the plans for the establishment of one united working class organisation, (which militates against the aims and tasks of communism) the URCW, being the largest workers’ organisation professing communist ideas, proposes through its delegates to the conference to the other organisations to amalgamate with it into one big whole. In the event of the above conditions being recognised as correct by the respective organisations, it is proposed to all the three organisations to either place before the conference (before the final decision) through the delegates the following conditions and principles, or to adopt the contents of the resolution given below as a final decision: 1) The URCW, in the interests of union based on communist ideas and the demands of the Third (communist) International, considers that all reasons for splits are a thing of the past and must not stand in the way of amalgamation and common systematic work based on self education, on the principles of the November Revolution and of International Communism, as well as on a class conscious attitude towards the organisation, which will guarantee proletarian solidarity. With this object in view and as a further guarantee for the achievement of the above mentioned aims, the URCW offers to everyone an opportunity to point out and prove the undesirability of any one member of the organisation and of his continued stay within the organisation. 2) The Ipswich and Brisbane communist Party organisations to cease to exist as such in the interests of the establishment of one united organisation imbued with the aims and ideas of the Communist Party. All existing property such as: libraries, inventory and cash, as well as all⁴³ uncompleted ventures in connection with printing, finding financial and other means etc. are to be handed over to the administration of the URCW. As an amalgamated organisation, all the Executive organs of the Union [are] to be re-elected immediately after the fusion of the above mentioned organisations. 3). To ensure mutual confidence [sic]⁴⁴ all the interested parties to render an unbiased account (before final fusion) through their delegates to the conference of their political activity during the period of group dissensions. To prevent similar misunderstandings and unnecessary disputes in future everything com[ing] to light in this fashion [is] to be considered

⁴³ The following lines struck through by hand: ‘illegal ventures such as secret printing works and underground channels for financing the movement etc., to be handed’.

⁴⁴ ‘confidence’.

as done away with and settled for ever. 4) In the interests of solidarity and comradeship all questions re membership obligations, general relations, elaboration of methods, procuring financial means, questions of self-education and political self-determination, and also opposition to the will of the majority—to be subject to strict public criticism which is to be conducted on general organisational and not on personal grounds. Only such impersonal criticism to be tolerated in the event of any frictions.

The basis (organisational regulations) and the conditions of the URCW were adopted.

After the closing speeches a declaration of the Brisbane Communist Party Organisation was read. Its contents are as follows:

Having taken cognisance of the letter of the Ipswich Party Organisation containing an invitation to send delegates to the Conference for the fusion of the Russian proletariat in Australia, we arrive at the following conclusion:

1) In view of national peculiarities, our organisation, apart from participation in the revolutionary movement among Australian workers in general, must concentrate on the propagation of communist ideas among Russian workers and on familiarising them with the practical application of these ideas in Soviet Russia. 2) The existence here of various organisations of Russian workers (regardless of the reasons for their establishment) is splitting their already weak forces ideally as well as materially.⁴⁵ It has a bad effect on their educational activities and consequently impedes the development of their class consciousness.

Basing itself on the above mentioned considerations, the Brisbane Communist Party Organisation welcomes the initiative of the Ipswich Communist Party Organisation and sent three delegates to the conference held on June 12th, 1921 in the Brisbane Trade Hall. On behalf of our organisation the delegates placed before the Conference the following organisational basis for the fusion of the three organisations: 1) formation from the existing organisations of one non-party workers' organisation with branches throughout Australia, capable of receiving in their ranks the class conscious as well as the non-class conscious elements of Russian workers in Australia. 2) Formation of a communist (Party) nucleus within the organisation, the latter to endeavour to conduct the activity of the entire organisation according to communist principles. The delegates of the URCW proposed as a basis the resolution adopted at their general meeting and published in their paper on April 26, 1921 (See minutes of the First Session of the Conference).

Our delegates pointed out that the present title of the union—URCW was not applicable to their basis for the following reasons.

⁴⁵ meaning 'undermining their morale': Russ. *kak v dukhovnom tak i materialnom otnosheniakh*.

In the first instance, the Russian workers in Australia consist of class conscious as well as more backward elements, the former holding different political opinions. This being so, the organisation cannot very well bear the title “communist”. Secondly, every organisation assuming the title “communist” cannot consider itself non-party and must therefore bear full party responsibility. If it does not do so, such an organisation is only likely to discredit communism.

The delegates of the URCW declared that their organisation will certainly not give up its title.

At the general meeting of our organisation held on June 12, it was decided after a prolonged discussion that: 1) The objections of our delegation to the conference to the title “communist” were correct. 2) Owing to our separate existence we could not, with the best intentions, carry out our tasks as defined in paragraph 1 of our declaration. 3) The existence of different organisations among Russian workers in Australia creates unfriendly relations between them, thus paralysing every kind of fruitful activity.

In the interests of the tasks which our organisation set itself, it resolved to deviate from its basic principles and to agree to the conditions of the URCW for the sake of fusion. It trusts the joint work will eradicate the existing mutual distrust and that it will assist in the training of steadfast and class conscious communists among the Russian workers in Australia.

The delegation of the Ipswich Community Party Organisation, while fully endorsing the conditions of the URCW and welcoming the declaration of the Brisbane Communist Party Organisation and the accomplished fusion, voiced in their speeches the principle—“Unity is Strength!”.

After a general expression of satisfaction it was resolved to convene the first meeting of the amalgamated organisations on Sunday June 3rd at 10 a.m. with the object of re-electing all the Executive organs of the Union and of rendering account. The concluding remarks of the chairman, welcoming the just accomplished fusion, were greeted with loud applause. Thus ended the conference.

Chairman: comrade Shakhnovsky, Secretaries: comrades Pikunov and Lubimov. Delegates: comrades Galchenko, Khrutsky, Gorsky, Kilimov, Hochstand and Lefand.

NOTE: To prevent wrong interpretations in the sense of assuming that the said organisation occupies a neutral position in view of its vague political ideology, we assert that such a conclusion would be incorrect. Basing itself on the principles and demands of the communist platform the said organisation occupies a position in conformity with the existing standard of development of its members, but has nothing in common with political opportunism which misleads the masses by its slogan “Keep outside Parties”. Such is not the desire

of this organisation. The neutral position between the organised sympathisers with communism and the Communist Party is an outcome of the peculiar national position of the Russian workers and also of the fact that the establishment of a Communist Party is a political act which cannot be undertaken by persons who are only guided by their sympathies with Communism and not by fundamental politico-economic knowledge of the tenets of the Party.

The Russian working masses here want to be organised, but in view of their educational level and prevailing conditions, we find that by forming ourselves into a communist party we would expose the organisation to two extremes: "Leftism" and Isolation from the masses. Russian workers in Australia who are anxious to take part in the revolutionary work without endeavouring to adapt their organisations to the conditions of the local movement, are involuntarily adapting them to the conditions prevailing in revolutionary Russia, and thus create mental confusion [sic].⁴⁶ The movement of the Russian worker here is on narrow national lines. It does not spring from general ideas, but has been called forth and dominated by the Russian revolution and its ideas. Nevertheless they are already beyond being told: "Be communists", for they say themselves that: "We want to, but show us how to do it". But to endeavour to establish a Communist Party without sufficient politico-educational courses within the masses who stand in need of knowledge and not of education would not be rational, for by organising a certain number of workers into a Party we should alienate the masses who are not on the same level of development and class consciousness as the said party. To subject our organisational methods and means to party regulations would be tantamount to erecting a barrier between these methods and the masses. In Soviet Russia this barrier has a *raison d'être*, as the party there is the executor of proletarian dictatorship. Moreover there was civil war and other revolutionary conditions in Soviet Russia which do not exist here. But in spite of their false position here, the Russian workers' great desire is to organise themselves in order to prepare themselves for service in Soviet Russia. But, as already stated, they cannot take upon themselves the responsibilities of a communist party. Under these circumstances, what shall be our organisational basis here? We are of the opinion that it should be that of a semi-educational, semi-political organisation.

Such, and no other, are the considerations which have induced our organised [sic]⁴⁷ to adopt its neutral position. Nevertheless, the URCW is aware that its organisational basis is, in principle, far from perfect, and as before our organisation will pursue the aim of raising the standard of development of its members to communist party level. In connection with this immediate question

⁴⁶ 'confusion'.

⁴⁷ 'organisation'.

occupying the attention of the Union is the question of the formation of a Russian Section of the Australian Communist Party. But this is a question of the future.

In conclusion and to sum up the work of the conference, it should be stated that, as far as this was possible a number of misunderstandings disuniting the Russian workers in Australia have been cleared up. The fusion of the three organisations has been accomplished, which gives wider possibilities for further work. It is essential that such a good beginning should not be allowed to drop in localities where there are Russian workers capable of organising themselves. To them we say: comrades, many appeals have been addressed to you to join the common work, but hitherto prejudices and dissensions were stronger than the principles of solidarity. At the present juncture we should like to set an example to every class conscious worker. In enjoining you to educate yourselves and others and thus become class conscious participators in the constructive work of Soviet Russia, we want to set an example by this Conference whose motives are free of any personal bias.

UNION OF RUSSIAN COMMUNIST WORKERS, BRISBANE
July 1, 1921

Document 14

RGASPI 495–94–6. 29 September 1921, Jim Quinton: on the Economic, Political and General Plan of Australia from a Communist viewpoint. Manuscript.

Jim Quinton was an accredited delegate from the 'Liverpool Street' Communist Party who was arrested in England on his way to the Third Comintern Congress and imprisoned. This letter contains a draft of the report that Quinton had intended to present to the Congress. The report is optimistic about prospects for the growth of the communist movement in Australia, does not mention the divisions between the Australian communist organizations, and is notable for linking communism into Australian (settler) traditions.

29.7.21

Foreign Information Dept
Comintern, Moscow

Comrades,

The enclosed is intended as a brief and rough summary of the Economic, Political, and general PLAN of Australia, from a Communist viewpoint.

I have to express regret, that when I was taken from a ship in Hull, England, and imprisoned for 3 months for illegal travelling, a much more complete and infinitely better draft, was lost, together with my Communist Party credentials. These were endorsed by our much lamented late Comrade Paul Freeman. My credentials from the Federated Seamans' Union of Australia, were brought to Moscow, by Paul Freeman.

The enclosed names and addresses are perfectly reliable for use by your Dept.

It was intended by the Communist Party in Australia that your Dept should be asked to consider our situation and give us any necessary advice.

Unfortunately for the movement, Australia is largely isolated at present. This difficulty stands to be quickly remedied in the near future. Already Australian Imperialism has established its economic and political emissaries in China. With the rapid development of the latter Country by Capitalist Agencies and the permeation of the Pacific by World Imperialism, Australia will become a greater factor for Communism, than at present seems likely by the casual observer.

Internally Australia presents one great difficulty to the Communist movement. Although two thirds of her small population of something more than five million people are centred in Cities and Industrial Centers, these arteries of the population are removed one from the other to great distances. As a Communist and Industrial Labour Organiser who has travelled over great distances in Australia, I can truthfully state that the worker is rapidly advancing in class consciousness. Australia's brief industrial and political history is a constant repetition of this fact. From 1854 when the Ballarat Gold Diggers, Victoria, fought with arms, the Crown government military at the Eureka stockade, until the quite recent movement in Townsville when the meat workers during their strike rushed to Arms against the Armed Police of the Queensland Labour Party Government. We then have the recent inspiring example of an 18 months strike by the metalliferous miners of Broken Hill. These miners are protected in Australia by the well known [labour] volunteer army, which developed out of War Coercion. These miners faced starvation, and by solidarity finally won their industrial fight and overturned the Nationalist Government. Two members of Parliament representing Broken Hill gladly attempt to claim the title of Communist. The one big obstacle, as I have stated, is the great distance between the main centres of population, which precludes effective working and cohesion, on a national social basis. This matter in particular your Dept is asked to consider, and give advice. I wish to point out now, that the sugar and meat workers of Queensland in particular are worthy of careful consideration.

These workers are mainly cosmopolitan, having come from all parts of the world. They include Russian, Italian, Greek, English, American and other nationalities including natives from our neighbouring islands.

Quite recently when doing Communist Party organising work in the sugar industry of Queensland, in one district alone "Babinda", it would have been possible for me to have collected 500 names of men who had expressed their desire to join the Communist Party. Such wholesale recruiting the Party Executive rejected. Your Dept is requested to give practical advice for such a situation.

It would be impossible to recount all such details of our movement in a report of this kind, so that, together with the rough diagram I am hoping that your Department will get the gist of our situation.

I am now at your disposal to get the advice of which we are in need, and to act according to instructions from you.

We wish to suggest that our own situation in a country like Australia, makes as a practical possibility, guerrilla military organisation.

Apart from this Communist Party report, it is necessary that I shall forward to Australia the latest situation of the Red Trade Union International, for attention by the Australian Executive of the Federated Seamans' Union of Australia.

Thanking you in anticipation of your expedition in this matter.

Yours fraternally

Jim Quinton

Delegate

Communist Party of Australia and Federated Seaman's Union of Australia.

Document 15

RGASPI 495–94–6. no date [but internal evidence indicates late February 1922]. Report to the Comintern on the Unity Conference of 18 February 1922 and the correspondence preceding it. Typescript.

After its unexpected good fortune and success at the Third Comintern Congress in 1921, the 'Sussex Street' communist party pressed home its advantage in an exchange of letters with the 'Liverpool Street' communist party, inviting the latter to a Unity Conference as the Comintern had requested. The Liverpool Street comrades did not attend, and 'Sussex Street' declared itself the 'United CPA'. It submitted the correspondence to the Comintern within the report below to prove its virtue; as it argued, the Liverpool Street party 'shows utter contempt for your decisions re Unity'. This document gives ample proof of the manoeuvres engaged in by the parties, and especially of the tedious legalism employed by both in an attempt to gain the moral high ground and, more importantly, Moscow's endorsement.

THE UNITED COMMUNIST PARTY OF AUSTRALIA

Headquarters
Communist Hall
Sussex Street
SYDNEY
New South Wales, Australia

The Executive Committee,
The Third (Communist) International

Dear Comrades,

I have been instructed by the Central Executive of the United Communist Party of Australia in which is merged the Communist Party of Australia (whose representative and General Secretary attended the Third Congress of the Third International in June 1921, and who also represented the Party in discussion

with the Small Bureau of the Third International on the question of Communist Unity in Australia), to submit to you for your earnest and immediate consideration the following statement of the Unity discussions and proceedings which have taken place in Australia since the Decisions of the Small Bureau were received in Australia. At this stage of the statement, I desire you to note that in all references to the other Party concerned in the Unity Discussions it will be called throughout this statement by its original name the Australian Socialist Party. The reason for this is to make it easier to distinguish one from the other.

The official instructions of the Small Bureau were received in Australia in the early part of December 1921. They were published immediately in the Communist Party's Press "The Communist" issue Vol 1. No ...⁴⁸ but nothing to this date has appeared in the Australian Socialist Party's Press. On receiving Instructions of the Small Bureau the Communist Party of Australia immediately sent to the Australian Socialist Party the following letter.

Communist Party of Australia
28 Station House
Dec. 13th 1921

A.S. Reardon
Gen. Sec.
Communist Party of Australia.

Dear Comrade,

I am instructed by my executive to inform you that the report of our delegate to the Third Congress of the Communist International, Comrade Earsman, has been endorsed.

My Executive is willing to carry out the demands of the World Congress on Unity, and proposes that the two councils of action, as called for in demands, meet as soon as possible. The Council of Action elected by my executive consists of Comrades Garden, Denford, and myself.

Please inform me soon as possible as to the decision of your executive on this matter.

Yours for Communist Unity,
C.W. Baker
Acting General Secretary

The Australian Socialist Party replied with the following letter:

The Communist Party of Australia
115 Goulburn St, Sydney
Dec. 21st, 1921

⁴⁸ A word or number is missing here.

Mr C.W. Baker

In reply to yours of the 13th inst. I have now to inform you that our Central Executive has already appealed against the decisions of the Small Bureau of the Comintern.

The appeal is based upon the fact that we were duly affiliated as the Australian Section of the Third International and that the action of the Small Bureau therefore in suspending said affiliation on the question of unity was out of order.

Further, we refuse to recognise a decision arrived at upon the representation of an opportunist who was not a member of the Communist movement in the person of W. Smith of Melbourne who was credentialed in Moscow by W.P. Earsman, and of the said W.P. Earsman who stands bracketed with Smith on account of such despicable anti-communist conduct.

You will understand therefore, that no delegate will be appointed to meet your representatives.

On behalf of the Central Executive
(signed) A.S. Reardon, Hon. Gen. Secretary

On receiving that reply the Communist Party replied with the following letter:

Communist Party of Australia
28 Station House
Dec. 27th 1921

Mr A.S. Reardon
Hon. Gen. Secretary
Communist Party of Australia.
(late ASP)

Dear Comrade,

Yours of the 21st of December to hand. I am directed by my CE to state that they have noted the contents, but at the same time desire to draw your attention to several points which should be brought under your notice.

First, you state that you have appealed against the decision of the Small Bureau of the Comintern because your party was already affiliated to that body. In reply to this we think the time has arrived when some evidence of this statement should be furnished to this party and to the workers as a whole. While the delegates of this party were in Moscow they made full inquiries about your party and whether it was affiliated, and they were informed that your party was not and never had been affiliated to the Third International.

The next statement which requires your attention is that Comrade Smith was not a member of the "Communist movement". We do not know what this means

unless you desire to say that he was not a member of your party, which is correct, but Comrade Smith is a member of this party. Because of this fact our General Secretary, W.P. Earsman, had full power from his Executive to act as he did in issuing credentials to Comrade Smith. The Executive has endorsed Comrade Earsman's actions.

In conclusion we desire to point out the fact that the conditions of unity drawn up in Moscow were unanimously agreed to by the Australian delegates, and signed by both delegates from your organisation in conjunction with ours. The fact that your executive has rejected these demands for unity, as they have rejected all previous proposals, is a clear demonstration that it is your party that is "anti-communist", and in continuing the disruption of the Communist movement it is your actions which are "despicable".

Yours for Communist Party
W.P. Earsman, General Secretary

Our comments to you on the letter received from the Australian Socialist Party are as follows:-

1. We hold the opinion in keeping with the discipline demanded by the Third International that both Parties were bound by that discipline to accept the decisions of the Small Bureau on Unity in Australia. Therefore we hold that no appeal to sidetrack or delay in settlement of the question can be tolerated by the Third International if Unity is to be achieved and the Communist movement in Australia put upon a sound foundation, and if discipline of the Third International is to mean something more than words.
2. Comrade W.H. Smith, General Secretary of the Australian Railways Union was a member of the Party when he left Australia for Moscow. Prior to his departure the Central Executive had not received any word from his Branch to the contrary and therefore the Party's credentialed Delegate and General Secretary, Comrade W.P. Earsman, acted within his rights in issuing credentials to Comrade W.H. Smith whom he knew to be a member when he left Australia.
3. Even if on that Point Comrade Earsman exceeded his rights he could have still used the full number of votes allotted to him as the official delegate from the Communist Party of Australia and the decision of the Small Bureau would not have been altered in any way.
4. The United Communist Party of Australia holds that the Australian Socialist Party never was affiliated as a Socialist Party or as a Communist Party to the Third International and was therefore never recognised as its Australian section. Therefore we claim that the appeal of the Australian Socialist Party against the decision of the Small Bureau on such grounds is but to say the least pure camouflage and hypocrisy.

Since receiving the letter of reply from the Australian Socialist Party both Parties have held their Annual Conferences between the dates of December 26th and December 31st 1921. It was unanimously agreed by the Communist Party's Conference on December 27th to make a further attempt to solve the Unity Question by approaching by Delegation the Australian Socialist Party's Conference. With [this] end in view the Communist Party's Conference dispatched by messenger to the Socialist Party's Conference the following letter:-

Communist Party of Australia,
28 Station House, Sydney.
Dec. 27th, 1921.

Chairman,
Annual Conference of The Communist Party of Australia,
Late (ASP)

Comrade,

I have been directed by the annual Conference of the above party to request your Annual Conference to receive a delegation of three delegates from our Conference to place proposals before you on the question of the unity of the two parties.

Please inform bearers whether and when your Conference will be ready to receive our delegates.

Yours in Communism,
W.P. Earsman,
General Secretary.

The Socialist Party's Conference replied with the following letter:-

Communist Party of Australia,
115 Goulburn St.,
Sydney. Dec. 27. 1921.

Chairman
Annual Conference,
CP of A
Station House.

Comrade,

In answer to your request for the reception for three delegates I have been instructed to inform you that without deviating from our communication of last week, we are prepared to receive your delegation at 3 P.M. today.

Yours for Communism,
Marcia Reardon, Acting General Secretary.

As a result of that reply three delegates from the Communist Party's Conference attended its conference and were allowed two hours to outline the case for Unity.

The delegates placed before the Socialist Party's Conference definite proposals unanimously agreed to by the Communist Party's Conference as a Basis for Unity. The proposals were as follows:-

1. That the membership of both parties be taken over into full membership of the United Party.
2. That each party have equal representation on the Executive of the United Party.
3. That a Provisional Acting General Secretary be elected by the Executive.
4. That each party have equal representation on the Management Committee which shall have control over press and literature.
5. That if there should be any dispute over the printing press at 115 Goulburn Street, it shall be controlled by those who are present trustees of it, as a private concern.

These proposals were made not as rigid conditions but as a basis for discussion.

At the termination of the discussion at the Socialist Party's Conference the Delegates of the Communist Party invited the Conference to elect three delegates to attend the Communist Party's Conference and place their position before the full conference of delegates.

The Socialist Party's Conference refused to give a decision in the presence of the Communist Party's Delegates and on the following day, the Communist Party's Conference was forced to write and ask for a reply to the invitation issued of its delegates and to the proposals of Unity submitted by the Party.

The letter sent by the Communist Party is as follows:-

Communist Party of Australia
28 Station House.
28th December, 1921.

Chairman,
Conference,
CP of A (ASP)

Comrade,

Failing to receive a reply from your party by 3 p.m. today to the concrete proposals for Communist Unity set forth by the delegates from this party which addressed your conference yesterday, I am directed to inform you that the conference of my party will consider the absence of any reply as a further and

final refusal of the proposals advanced by this party for unity on the basis of the recommendations of the Small Bureau of the Third International.

Yours for Communist Unity,
W.P. Earsman.
General Secretary

The Socialist Party's Conference replied to same as follows:-

Communist Party of Australia,
115 Goulburn Street,
Sydney, Dec. 28th, 1921.

Chairman,
Conference,
CP of A,
(Station House.)

Comrade,

In reply to your communication to hand. I have been instructed to inform you that Conference has decided no good purpose will be served by sending delegates to address your Conference, also that it has endorsed the attitude of the CE on the unity question, and the reply sent to your General Secretary, last week.

A lengthy statement containing full reasons for this decision will be drawn up and forwarded to you.

Yours for Communism,
Marcia Reardon.
Acting General Secretary.

The above letter was received just on the close of the Communist Party's Conference and on January 4, 1922. Five days after both Conferences had ended, the Communist Party received from the Socialist Party the following letter:-

Communist Party of Australia
115 Goulburn St.,
Sydney. Jan 4, 1922.

Mr W.P. Earsman
General Secretary, CP of A,
(Station House.)

As you are already aware, Conference has endorsed the policy of the CE re unity, and the reply sent to your acting General Secretary on December 21st, 1921. I was instructed to supply the following reasons for this decision:

After hearing your delegates, Conference was more than ever convinced that the attitude taken up by this Executive was correct. Replies to questions admitted the existence of undesirables in your party, also that no attempt had been made to deal with same. Charges of blabbing, treachery, and opportunism were not denied. Two of your delegates were convicted as they stood of contradictory and lying statements.

Our party was urged to unite in order to assist in expelling an admittedly base element, and finally threatened re our standing in Moscow if we refused. Conference instructed me to state that at all times this party, as the ASP and now as the CP of A, has never failed to deal with any individual within its ranks who has violated principles or party discipline. They leave you to do your own cleaning up in this respect.

If your rank and file is not prepared to take action against individuals which through its delegates it admits are corrupt, then their claim to be a Communist falls to the ground.

The CP of A is acting on principle and in an endeavour to build up a clean solid party in Australia, therefore, threats as to what action Moscow might be induced to take on our questioning its behests would have no effect beyond confirming our previous opinion of your party as being non Communist.

Re your communication of 27/12/21, in it you state that your delegates were officially informed in Russia that our party was not affiliated to the Third International. Against this we have the word of our three delegates, Lamb, Rees, and the late Paul Freeman, who were all definite on the point that our party was affiliated with, and recognised by the Third International.

Also in a pamphlet entitled *The Third International* written by Boris Souvarine, we are listed as the only party in Australia recognised by that body. This evidence we are assured would stand against the statement of such men as Earsman and Smith; the former is included among those whom your rank and file, as represented by your delegates, acknowledge to be totally unworthy of a place in the Communist movement, and the latter who was repudiated by the Branch to which he claimed membership. Regarding this W. Smith you claim in your letter that he was a member of your party.

I am instructed to call your attention to the fact, that at our Conference Comrade Maruschak admitted that he was not, and added to this we have the written statement of the late Secretary of your Melbourne Branch which reads:

... With regard to your second request, no delegate left Australia for Moscow or anywhere else from Melbourne Branch. Will Smith, Secretary of the Australian Railways Union, went to Russia as a result of a visit to Melbourne of the delegate of the R.T.U.I. He was invited to the first Conference in Melbourne called by your representatives, Baker and Baracchi, but did not attend, sending a message

approving of the formation of a Communist Party of Australia, but like a lot more he never paid any subscriptions, and like a lot more was eager to get a trip to Russia.

If he has represented himself as a delegate from Melbourne of the Communist Party, it is in keeping with the actions of a trades union opportunist. He went to Russia, strange as it may seem, as a representative of the Second International yellow crowd of the Trades Hall Council ...

Signed Charles H. France.

The above Comrade was fully conversant with the Melbourne Branch's books since its inception.

We have likewise an admission from Mr. Earsman at our Conference that he (Earsman) was aware before he left Australia that Smith was practically convicted of blabbing to the press regarding Freeman's visit to Australia.

If under these circumstances Mr. Earsman admittedly credentialed Smith, and Executive endorsed his action as stated in your letter; we say definitely and unhesitatingly that it brands every member upon it as traitors to the Third International and to the Communist movement of the world.

The conditions re unity were NOT unanimously agreed to by our delegates but were drawn up by the Small Bureau of the Comintern after Comrade Lamb had put in his minority report.

In conclusion I am instructed to state that so far as we are concerned, the Communists of AUSTRALIA are UNITED, unfortunately we have no power to prevent individuals from calling themselves what they please; but actions speak louder than words, and while the rank and file of your party endorses by its silence the actions of its officials which members admit are against the best interest of the Communist movement, they must not only forfeit all claim to the title of Communists, but definitely range themselves on the side of the counter-revolutionaries. It is for them to manifest their worthiness by action—not by continued adherence to those whom they condemn.

On behalf of the Communist Party of Australia.

Marcia Reardon,
Acting General Secretary.

After making these attempts to get a reasonable solution to the question of Unity, and being turned down and insulted in every way, the Conference of the Communist Party instructed the Central Executive of the Party—before sending the results to you—to make another effort to obtain Unity by calling an All Communist Conference of unattached Communist Groups, Communist Groups in Trade Unions, Branches of the Communist Party and, any other organisation that in any way claimed to stand by the principles of the Third International.

The purpose of the Conference to be the forming of a United Communist Party in keeping with the 21 points of the Third International.

The Central Executive of the Communist Party issued the call for that Conference and invited all the organisations mentioned.

The letters of invitation and the reply of the Communist Party to the Socialist Party's letter of January 4, 1922, were as follows:-

Communist Party of Australia,
28 Station House,
January 30, 1922.

Mrs A.S. Reardon,
Secretary. CP of A (ASP)

Dear Comrade,

I have been directed by my General Executive to inform your organisation that we are calling an All-Australian Congress of all revolutionary parties and groups in the Commonwealth, with the object of bringing about a united revolutionary party in this country.

You are therefore invited to send three delegates from your Central Executive, two from your Sydney Branch, and one each from your other Branches.

The basis of unity will be the principles and tactics laid down by the Third, Communist International, and the Red Trade Union International.

It is unnecessary for me to point out the necessity for a united front at the present time and we trust you fully realise the importance of the situation and that you will accept the invitation.

Yours for Communist Unity,
W.P. Earsman.
Hon. General Secretary.

Communist Party of Australia,
28 Station House,
February 9th 1922.

Mr A.S. Reardon,
Gen. Secretary CP of A (ASP)

Dear Comrade,

I have been directed by my Executive to reply to your letter of the 4th of January. The reason for the delay has been the necessity for us to make full inquiries into your statements. They have now directed me to say that they entirely repudiate your statements.

With reference to the letter you have received from Comrade France of the Melbourne Branch, I have received a communication from that Branch and they deny that France was ever instructed to write to your party on the matter of Smith. Further they also deny having ever stated to you that Smith was not a member of this party. This being so we are now quite satisfied that there is nothing left but to hope that time will show you the errors of your ways and that you will send delegates to the Unity Conference of February 18th.

Yours for Communist Unity,

W.P. Earsman,
General Secretary.

To the invitation of the Communist Party, the Socialist Party replies as follows:-

Communist Party of Australia,
115 Goulburn Street,
Sydney. February 11th, 1922.

Mr W.P. Earsman,

Yours of the 30th ult., and of the 9th instant., to hand. In the matter of the first one I have to inform you that our Executive is really not interested in what you may be doing on February the 18th—or any other particular date.

The second letter will be presented to the Central Executive on the occasion of its next meeting, when I feel sure, the delegates will be all duly impressed.

A.S. Reardon.
Hon. General Secretary

I might here say as a comment on the Socialist Party's reply that it should prove conclusively their insincerity to Communist Unity and their total lack of respect for the decision of your Small Bureau. In fact it shows utter contempt for your decisions re Unity.

However the Conference was held without them and met in Sydney, the principal City of Australia, on Saturday, February 18th 1922.

The minutes of the Conference are as follows:-

Comrade Denford, General Secretary, declared the Conference open. The following delegates were present: C.W. Baker, E.R. Voight (C.E.); Denford and Jeffery (Sydney Branch); Rawstrong and Sinclair (Newcastle); Wolstenholm (Engineers); King (Saddlers Union); Blanc (Painters); Ryrie (Baking Trades); Buchingham and Foley (Communist Group, and Russian Association, Nth Queensland); Arbuthnot (OBU Propaganda League⁴⁹); and Comrade Howie

⁴⁹ A successor to the IWW.

Australian representative of the RTUI in Australia. (The delegates from the unions were from Communist groups within their union).

Preliminary business: Comrade Sinclair elected to the chair. Com. Jeffery to minute Secretary.

Correspondence: The General Secretary read letters from the following organisations; ASP, the WIU (Melbourne and Adelaide), the Industrial Union Propaganda Group, Russian Association, Melbourne. All the letters excepting the one from the ASP (which, of course was nasty) expressed a willingness to stand behind any United Communist Party, but that owing to financial reasons it was impossible to send a delegate to Sydney. (Correspondence received).

After some discussion in which the delegates stated their position in relation to Communist unity, it was moved that "The Agenda paper drawn up by the CE of the CP of A be adopted for the Conference". Carried.

Moved "that the General Secretary outline the efforts made by the CP of A since its formation for unity". Agreed.

Comrade Denford then briefly outlined the negotiations which had taken place between the two parties since the split in December 1920. In the discussion which followed Comrade Howie in reply to Comrade Blanc explained the negotiations for unity which took place in Moscow. Comrade Howie said that as he was not a member of either party he saw both sides and was satisfied that the party was the only party prepared to act on the demands of the Communist International. He stated that he had interviewed the ASP since his return but had failed to get them to agree to unity. He had called a conference of delegates from this party and the Industrial Union Propaganda League and that conference had arrived at a working basis for the two organisations proving again that this party was prepared to work for unity. He was satisfied that unity between the two parties was impossible and recommended all delegates to support the party in its efforts to form a United Communist Party of Australia. (Report of General Secretary, received).

Moved by Comrade Baker and seconded by Comrade Voight.

"That realising the impossibility of uniting the two existing Communist Parties owing to one of them refusing to act upon the instructions of the Communist International, and further realising the immediate necessity of a United Communist Party to inspire and direct the revolutionary activities of the working class in Australia, the delegates assembled in this All-Australian Unity Conference now constitute themselves and the Communist groups which they represent the United Communist Party of Australia, and thus comply as far as possible with the demands of the Third World Congress of the Communist International on Communist Unity in Australia, and that each delegate pledge themselves to create a definite Branch of the United Party in their respective

districts, and strive to get all Communist groups under their influence to link up with the United Communist Party of Australia as the only revolutionary party worthy of support." AGREED.

Constitution: "Moved that the Constitution of the CP of A to be adopted subject to ratification of delegates present." Agreed.

Amendments: To Section E. clause 12; "A special unemployed stamp be affixed to the dues card of all unemployed and sick members." To Section G. clause 20; "That branches be empowered to issue leaflets for propaganda when necessary provided a copy is sent to the CE." Constitution adopted as amended.

Election of officers: Moved "That the number of the CE be seven including the General Secretary." Agreed.

Officers elected: General Secretary, H.L. Denford; Trustee, J.S. Garden; Editor, C.W. Baker; N. Jeffery, H. Ross, W. Wolstenholm and D. Healy.

Program: Outline of Communist Theory adopted with amendment to clause 7 by the insertion of clause 14 from "Program of Action" on workers control.

Moved: "That agreement reached between the CP and the IUPL be ratified by the United Party." Agreed.

Moved: "That matter of Industrial Unionism be referred to the CE and that branch secretaries contribute towards a party statement of the question of Industrial Unionism". Agreed.

Moved: "That assets and liabilities of the CP of A be taken over by the new party." Agreed.

Moved: "That the proposal of issuing a propaganda ticket for non-party members at 10/- be referred to Comrade Howie." Agreed.

Moved: "That all correspondence on the matter of unity between the ASP and CP of A together with a statement of the position of the Communist Community in Australia, with the minutes of this conference be forwarded to the Small Bureau of the Communist International with the request that affiliation be granted to this party as the only party prepared to act on official instructions of the Communist International." Agreed.

Moved: "That the Conference now adjourn." Agreed.

The Conference assembled at 2.30 P.M. on Saturday, February 18th in the Communist Party Hall, Sussex Street, Sydney, and adjourned, Sunday, February 19th.

(Signed.) E. Sinclair, Chairman of Conference.

N. Jeffery, Minute Secretary of Conference.

H.L. Denford, General Secretary, United Communist Party of Australia.

You can see by the minutes of the conference that the Conference though not large was representative enough to give birth to the United Communist Party of Australia.

The decisions of that Conference have now been endorsed by the organisations represented and the United Communist Party formed, and in its name and for the advancement of the cause of Communism in this country, I appeal to you to grant us affiliation and full recognition as the Australian Section. It must be apparent to you that your endorsement at this juncture will materially help us to build a strong Communist Party and end once and for all the ridiculous Unity proceedings which I assure you are dragging the name of a Communist Party down to the level as low as it can possibly go, and further making it a buttress [sic] of the jokes of all Counter-Revolutionary elements in this country.

The United Communist Party's claim, comrades, for affiliation and full recognition as the Australian Section is based upon the very fundamentals of the Communist International, upon its world discipline and its tactics for winning the working class of Australia for Communism and it can be summed up as follows:-

1. The Communist Party of Australia previous to merging with the United Communist Party of Australia made every effort that was possible to achieve Unity with the Australian Socialist Party; whilst on the other hand the Australian Socialist Party proved by the correspondence contained in this statement, have done all that was possible to prevent it [sic].

The Communist Party was fooled, humiliated, and sabotaged by the Australian Socialist Party to a degree unheard of in any Unity proceedings. Yet, the Communist Party have let the lies and slander to go by without notice for the purpose of keeping the question of Unity in the forefront and when after being turned down have again and again made other attempts to achieve Unity in spite of the insults hurled at the Party.

2. Because the United Communist Party is the only party in Australia trying to carry out the 21 points of the Third International and using intelligently the tactics of the Communist International in winning the Trade Union movement for Communism.
3. Because with full recognition from the Third International the United Communist Party is the only party capable of organising the mass of the workers within the Trade Union movement to follow the lead of a Communist Party. Without that recognition of course no party can win the Trade Union movement over to Communism.

The above statement (No 3) can be backed up by resolutions taken from a statement issued by the Sydney Labor Council carried by a two to one majority at its meeting of Thursday, March 16th, 1922.

The statement was framed and carried through Council by the Delegates who are members of the United Communist Party. The resolutions are as follows:-

1. This Council declares that, as a part of the Red Trade Union International, it stands for united action with all revolutionary organisations and the Communist Party of the country in all defensive and offensive activities against the capitalist class. As no Communist Party is now recognised in Australia owing to the existence of two Communist Parties, this Council withholds its recognition until one party or another is recognised by the Communist International.
2. This Council, while fighting in the every-day struggle for an improvement in the standard of living for the working class, realises that it is impossible to obtain economic security for the workers under Capitalism. Therefore this Council attempts to direct this every-day struggle of the workers into a struggle for the abolition of Capitalism and the establishment of a working class political State. Such a struggle can only be adequately organised and carried through in the interest of the workers as a whole, when the Trade Unions will act in perfect unity with the revolutionary political party of the working class.

To further clinch our argument for full recognition I give the following outline of our activities within the Trade Union Movement and the important positions occupied by our members.

At the All-Australian Trade Union Conference held in Melbourne in the month of June 1921 our members formed 15% of the Conference. The Conference represented about 500,000 Trade Unionists. The next Conference which will be held in the same place on June 26th 1922, we expect to have at least 30% of the voting strength and we hope with such a bloc to determine the decisions of that Conference.

On the Sydney Labor Council, the largest Industrial Council in the Southern Hemisphere, we have 30 members sitting as delegates of affiliated Unions, and on its Executive we have a majority, including the President and Secretary.

The decisions of the Sydney Labor Council have a great influence of the Trade Union movement of Australia, and in times of trouble, political and industrial, the Trade Union movement approaches the Council for its advice and recommendations. And during the last six months the Communist elements have always maintained a majority vote on all Council meetings. The Council meets weekly, and consists of delegates representing 94 Trade Unions with an aggregate membership of 138,000 members.

Within the Trade Unions we have Communist Groups whose principal members occupy prominent official positions, such as Presidents, Secretaries, and Executive Officers.

On the Newcastle Industrial Council, whose headquarters are at Newcastle, New South Wales, the second largest city in the State and the largest steel producing and coal mining centre in Australia, we have a group of members as delegates from affiliated Unions and its Secretary is a member of the Party.

The Newcastle Industrial Council represents about 30,000 Trade Unionists. In Brisbane, the capital city in the state of Queensland we have a group of members on the Industrial Council of Trade Unions and the Secretary is a member of the Party. The Industrial Council of Brisbane represents about 50,000 Trade Unionists.

In Melbourne, capital city of the state of Victoria, and Adelaide, capital city of the state of South Australia, we have members of the Party representing Trade Unions on the Labor Councils. On these two Councils none of our members occupy official positions but they receive a fairly good support from a minority of delegates. And on other Councils throughout Australia, members of the Party sit as delegates of their Union.

The Party itself has branches in all of the capital cities of Australia and two in other large centres, with members at large scattered all over Australia.

Our influence on the main Council, the Sydney Labor Council can best be judged by the following:-

The Party members moved and carried through the Council, in all stages, motions for the endorsement of the Program of Action of the Red Trade Union International, and the Council's affiliation to that body. These motions were opposed by other elements who claim to be revolutionary but in each case they were carried by overwhelming majorities.

The above statement of our Trade Union activities gives a brief outline of the Party's work and we challenge contradiction from any person or groups in Australia or elsewhere.

In conclusion, Comrades, we appeal to you to end the Unity question in this country. Our task to win the working class is made no lighter by a continuation of the question. Our enemies outside the revolutionary movement are strongly entrenched in most of the Trade Unions and on the political field, a Labor Party, a purely reform party, and hostile to all revolutionary tendencies of the working class, leads the great mass of the working class. To win over that mass unity of the Communist movement is the first move that must be made. The revolutionary movement of the working class in the past, in Australia, never developed any further than mere groups and sects, whose ideas were narrow and dogmatic and as a result never had any influence with the working class. Today as in all countries a revolutionary ideology is fast appearing in the great mass of the working class and perhaps in the midst of some great industrial crisis a revolutionary working class will look for guidance and a lead from the Communist

movement of this country, and if, when that time comes, it is still discussing its own Unity and tearing itself asunder with dissensions, the working class will be betrayed and failure stamped upon the Communist movement.

To you Comrades, we look for the solution. If you are not prepared to grant the United Communist Party affiliation and recognition as the Australian Section, we suggest that you settle the Unity Question and send to Australia immediately, a representative armed with the authority of the Third International to call the parties together and from that meeting form a United Communist Party. We suggest that the delegate to carry full power to grant affiliation and full recognition to the party formed.

In the event of you accepting this method to settle Unity Question I am instructed to say that the United Communist Party is prepared to accept without question the decision of your delegate and to carry out his instructions to the letter.

Please accept the fraternal greetings of Comrades here and convey to the rank and file of the Russian Communist movement, the appreciation of our members for their splendid example of Communist solidarity against the armed forces of our common enemies.

I remain,
Yours for the Communist
World Revolution

Document 16

RGASPI 495–94–12. April 1922, Jock Garden: unity conference held. Typescript.

The 'Sussex Street' Communist Party, since 18 February 1922 calling itself the 'United CPA', sent this telegram to the ECCI to make absolutely certain that it knew that the February unity conference had been held and that 'Reardon's party' (the former ASP, and now the 'Liverpool Street' Communist Party) had not co-operated with the Comintern's instructions.

Telegram, 19 April 1922 (or 10 or 18 April?)

unity conference held reardons party repudiated cominterns

instructions all other groups united = garden

Document 17

RGASPI 495–94–8. June 1922, Presidium ECCI: Dear comrades. Typescript.

In June 1922, before the crucial unity meeting of Australian communists in July attended by Zuzenko and perhaps prompted by this letter, the ECCI used the letter below to express its continued exasperation at the continuing disunity. The letter ends with the threat that if unity is not achieved the Comintern reserves the right to make a decision about who will be its Australian section.

Moscow, June⁵⁰

To the Communist Party of Australia Goulbourn St.
and to the Communist Party Australia Station House.

Dear Comrades,

It is now nine months since the Executive Committee of the Comintern called upon the Communist Parties to unite, but so far unity has not yet been achieved.

The Presidium of the E.C. cannot but express its extreme disapproval at the failure of the Australian comrades to sink their minor differences and unite the Communist forces in Australia. Since both Parties have accepted the conditions of affiliation laid down by the II. Congress of the Comintern, there can obviously be no differences of principle that keeps them divided. We must assume therefore that the lack of unity is due entirely to personal differences, or to minor disagreements in the estimation of local conditions.

The objective conditions in Australia to-day: the capitalist offensive, unemployment, and the steady deterioration of the standard of living of the working class—are such as to incline the mass of workers towards communism. All the evidence goes to show that the masses of the Australian workers are abandoning their former outlook, and that there is already an increasing mass of opinion in the working class in favour of our point of view. It is only the absence of a united, organised and compact Communist Party that prevents this opinion from being shaped into a definite communist mass movement, destined to decide the political and economic future of Australia.

Those who for any reason do anything to prevent unity, and so prevent the consummation of this purpose, bear a heavy responsibility not only before the Communist International, to which they claim affiliation, but also before the mass of the working class.

The existence of two small groups, *amidst a seething current of world shaking events*, engaged almost entirely in airing their petty differences, instead of unitedly plunging into the current and mastering it, is not only a ridiculous and

⁵⁰ No day given.

shameful spectacle, but also a crime committed against the working class movement.

Experience has shown that immediate numerical weakness is no bar to the Communist Party commanding an influence in the labour movement, and the support of the labour masses. It is disunity in the ranks of the communists that kills the effectiveness of the Party and dooms the labour movement, ripe for a communist lead, to suffer defeat and demoralisation at the hands of capitalist class.

The quality of a Communist Party is not determined by the select character of its members and the glibness with which each of them can repeat the shibboleths of Marxian doctrine, but is determined by the extent to which it can rally the broad masses around itself in conducting the revolutionary class struggle.

The Presidium of the Executive of the Comintern is of the opinion therefore that the continued disunity and isolation from the broad mass movement of the Communist Parties in Australia must not be tolerated, and imperatively calls upon those who are loyal to communism and to the labour movement immediately to take steps to bring about unity in the communist ranks.

There appears to be some misapprehension as to the status of the Parties in Australia in relation to the Comintern which seems to give further grounds for *disunity*. The Presidium therefore declares that no Party in Australia has been affiliated to the Comintern. In the first place the Comintern does not accept affiliation from countries where more than one Communist Party exists, until all possibilities of bringing about unity have been exhausted. It is precisely for this reason that the question of accepting the affiliation of an Australian Party was postponed, pending the achievement of unity. Secondly, the attendance of representatives of Parties at meetings of the Executive of the Comintern does not imply the recognition of the respective Party as an affiliated body. The EC of the Comintern permits representatives of Parties, pending their affiliation to the Comintern, to attend its meetings in order that it may become acquainted with the position of, and the point of view in the respective countries, and in order that the representatives may become acquainted with the world situation and obtain a closer knowledge of the workings of the General Staff of the international revolutionary movement. The EC of the Comintern has not cancelled the affiliation of any Australian Party because no Australian Party has been affiliated.

The international working class movement at the present moment is faced with a combined and concerted offensive of the international capitalist class. In countries which hitherto, have been considered the strongest from the point of view of labour organisation, the workers are staggering under the heavy blows showered upon them by the enemy; and due entirely to the treachery of the

opportunist leaders of the labour movement there is a *grave* danger of the army of the working class becoming demoralised.

In order to save the situation the Comintern issued the slogan of "The United Labour Front". This was not meant to be a mere political catch-word, but a practical measure to stop the retreat and rally the world labour forces for a counter-offensive. In its desire to achieve this the Comintern was prepared to come to an understanding with the IInd and the 2 1/2 Internationals. True to their character, the latter have sabotaged the United Front, and now the onus of bringing it about is thrown entirely upon the Communist International.

The Comintern therefore issues a rallying cry to all loyal communists to take up their positions in the fight. But before the communists can rally the ranks of the hardest pressed workers, they must themselves be united. They must throw themselves into the thick of the fight and not wrap themselves in the mantle of political purity and stand on the fringe of the fray.

In this respect the Presidium commends the fine example of our comrades in England who, under similar circumstances as now prevail in the Australian movement, loyally responded to the call of the Comintern, dropped their differences and formed a United Communist Party, with splendid results for the movement in England and for International Communism.

The present situation is so serious that those who can find nothing better to do than engage in barren doctrinaire controversy, and petty squabbles over personal dignity, must be regarded as traitors to the movement.

The Presidium of the Comintern therefore declares that no representative of Australian Communist Parties will be admitted to the forthcoming Fourth Congress of the Comintern in November, unless they are the representatives of a United Communist Party.

The Presidium, reaffirming the decision of the Small Bureau of August 20th, 1921, resolves that:

1. In view of the fact that there is no difference in principle, program or tactics, excepting differences arising out of local trouble, the Presidium calls for immediate unity between the two Australian Parties before September the 1st. 1922, this unity to take place at a general conference representing both Parties.
2. That a Committee of Action be set up composed of three delegates from each organisation, whose work shall be to prepare the agenda for the Unity Conference.
3. That the basis for representation at the Conference be one delegate for every 50 members of the Party.
4. All representation at Moscow to be suspended until unity is achieved and one United Communist Party for Australia is formed.

The Presidium hopes that the Australian Communist Parties will loyally respond to this appeal for unity at this critical juncture in the world labour movement. The Comintern reserves for itself the right, in the event of unity not being achieved, after investigating all the circumstances, to fix the responsibility for the failure, and those responsible will forfeit all right of recognition by the Communist International.

With fraternal greetings,

Document 18

RGASPI 495–94–13. 21 July 1922, Zuzenko: letter addressed to wife and daughter but intended for the ECCI. In Russian, manuscript and typescript. Trans. by KW.

After a trip from Russia that lasted more than a year and took him through England, the United States and Canada, Zuzenko arrived in Australia in July 1922 and took part in unity discussions between the communist groups on 15–16 July. This letter puts Zuzenko's own view of his role in what seemed—after such a lengthy division—to be a triumph. Zuzenko is somewhat contemptuous of the Anglo-Saxon approach to discipline as inferior to the Russian, and he is already sceptical of the value of the (former) 'Liverpool Street' comrades, especially Reardon and Everitt.

21 July 1922

Sydney

My dear wife and daughter Ksiuncha!⁵¹

My loving greetings. I arrived safely. I had to do by myself the things that kept holding me up, but as you see I have overcome all obstacles quite successfully.⁵² My comrades were overjoyed. Everybody knows me, if not personally (as many do), then by repute. A conference was in preparation to unite the two groups. The conference began rather drily. The adversaries came together after a good deal of bickering. In a two-hour conversation I tried to explain to them what proletarian discipline in the class struggle means (party discipline is something new to Anglo-Saxons). I gave them a full account of my activities throughout the period and my report was accepted unanimously. Everything that was left over I passed to the secretary. At the conclusion of my report, on behalf of the Executive Committee I demanded unification. A resolution on unification was passed unanimously. The atmosphere became more relaxed and the subsequent proceedings were conducted not between ideological foes, but between comrades. The same day (Saturday 15 July) at 2.00 p.m. I spoke at a meeting of the Everitt and Reardon group.⁵³ A time was set for me to give my report the following day, 16 July, Sunday, at 2.00 p.m. I talked to them until

⁵¹ Salutation not given in typed copy. 'Ksiuncha' is an affectionate form of 'Ksenia'.

⁵² Note a discrepancy between the handwritten and typed texts. The typist misreads Russ. *prepony* (obstacles) as *pritony* (dens [of vice]).

⁵³ Zuzenko has 'Everet' and 'Riordan' (in Cyrillic transcription).

five p.m. They keep stalling. They give no justification for operating separately because they have none. They are surprised that there is any other work to be done besides studying Marxism and they are opposed to reaching out to the masses. Reardon's view is, 'We are not obliged to follow Soviet Russia. We have different conditions here and the course of events will be different from that in Soviet Russia.' He does not indicate the kind of course of events he expects to see.

In view of rumours about my supposed anarchism, rumours that I have given all the funds to the anarchists (the sources of all these lies are in America), and also because I did not show them any letterhead paper with Ilich's signature and wax seal,⁵⁴ although they do not consider me legally competent, they nevertheless promise to give me in writing, in black and white, all the facts which prevent them from uniting. In the end I spelled out for them that they had only two courses open to them: they could either recognize Uncle Komin's twenty-one conditions and the resolutions of the congresses as binding for all and join the ranks of the organization,⁵⁵ or they could plainly state their refusal and remain the same little group of 'sectarian Marxist grasshoppers' as they were before and which abound in Canada. Their obtuseness and unconcealed careerism infuriated me. 'Shame on you! In Soviet Russia the path to Soc.[ial] Revolution is being strewn with mountains of bodies; hundreds of thousands of glorious valiant fighters are perishing with honour at their glorious posts for the great ideals of social restructuring, for communism. There they are making world history, while you here are feeding the gloating bourgeois press with your grubby little intrigues.' But how can you shame such low-grade politicians with mere words? They promised to give me all the material, and I've been waiting for a week now. A conference of both parties has elected me as delegate to the Fourth Congress of the Comintern and a permanent member of the Executive Committee. I have energetically set about putting the newspaper *The Communist* in order, while acquiring my own workers' press. Twelve people have returned here from Russia and are heaping on it all the muck they can. (Why do they let this scum out?) I have been giving lectures and have managed to clear away some of the fog that shrouds events in Soviet Russia. I have launched a fund-raising campaign to pay for agitation and propaganda, which is going quite well. I'm being sent to Melbourne in a few days. I shall also be doing some work in Brisbane, and then at the end of August or the beginning of September I'll be starting back. My view is this: the party has brought together the best and most revolutionary part of the proletarian elite. The bond with the grass roots remains weak as yet. I have proposed working tirelessly to set up party cells and direct the best forces in short order for campaign work and to

⁵⁴ 'Ilich's signature': signature of Vladimir Ilich Lenin.

⁵⁵ Uncle Komin: jocular name for the Comintern.

establish firm links with the grass roots. The paper [i.e. presumably *The Communist*] is sometimes dry and thin in content. It is essential to enlarge it and give it wider appeal. Work is only just beginning but it is already clear that it will be one of the purest organizations in the Anglo-Saxon countries. It is now free from the dirt of America and I hope it will remain so in the future. Ask for moral support to be provided for me. The success of the whole enterprise depends on it. I shall return not as the accused, but as the accuser of the vile-minded brethren who live by falsehoods alone. No decisions should be taken before I have reported. They are flinging mud from New York in advance, so as to appear pure white, but they will not succeed.

The Reardon/Everitt group, which is no more than about twenty strong, ought to be asked to withdraw. No good will come of them. Reardon has openly started campaigning against the red Labor Council in Sydney and is joining forces with the conservatives in his work.

Do write.

My address is: Mr A. Nargen, 432/5 Rawson Chambers, Sydney, NSW, Australia.⁵⁶

Document 19

RGASPI 495–94–12. 21 July 1922, Jock Garden: July unity conference held. Typescript (but there is a manuscript German translation of its contents on the telegram itself).

The United CPA lets the Comintern know in this telegram that the unity conference of 15–16 July has taken place with a successful outcome, and that Zuzenko is in Sydney ('nargin here'). Garden goes on to ask whether the Comintern wants the CPA to call a unity conference of 'all communist sections in Australia during September', as it had previously ordered—Garden here says 'requested'—in a cable from Kuusinen on 15 July 1922 (RGASPI 495–94–8).

Telegram, 21 July 1922

forward moscow nargin here unity conference held fifteenth july
majority reardon party unite twentyone member
including reardon refuse united party going well should we call
another conference september now as requested = garden

Document 20

RGASPI 495–94–11. no date [late July or early August 1922], Earsman: to ECCI. Typescript.

⁵⁶ Only the handwritten copy bears the author's name (alias) and address, written in the margin. Rawson Chambers were the CPA premises.

Earsman reports here to ECCI on the progress towards unity between the Australian communist groups in the first half of 1922. Continuing, at the Comintern's behest, to pursue unity, the 'Sussex Street' Communist Party (after the one-sided 'unity' meeting of 18 February 1922 calling itself the 'United CPA') has made a breakthrough in the July meeting. It consequently calls here on the Comintern to recognise the CPA as its Australian section. The ECCI did so on 9 August.

AUSTRALIAN UNITY QUESTION

The Executive of the Committee of Comintern.

Dear Comrades,

In this report I wish only to supplement the report you have already received. After the Conference held on February 18th, 1922, my Executive decided to carry the question of Unity to the membership of the Australian Socialist Party. Our members were instructed to get into close contact with as many of the members of the other organisation as possible, and urge [them] to take up the Unity question.

From this [time] on, a few events hastened our activities which were the means of bringing Unity to the fore again. The first of these was the opposing by comrade Reardon, General Secretary of the Socialist Party, by instruction of his Executive, the affiliation of the Sydney Labor Council to the RILU. The second was the tactics adopted by the Executive of the Socialist Party on the Famine Relief Committee, in which they charged the Labor Council of not assisting the Famine Committee to the fullest extent. This when the Secretary of this Council was also Secretary to the Famine Committee. It was the influence of the Labor Council that secured the vital aid of the Federal, Queensland and New South Wales Governments. The result of this was that Reardon was expelled from the Council of NSW.

At the end of March the activity of our members amongst the membership of the Socialist Party bore fruit, in the fact that the members of the Socialist Party demanded a special conference of their party. The Conference was held and agreed to the Unity conditions of the Comintern. They also removed Reardon as General Secretary and elected another comrade who had been acting in conjunction with myself. The conference also called for the resignation of Everitt, the Managing Editor of their press. The reply of Everitt was, that he took out a "Bill of Sale" over the property, thereby preventing the party from taking full possession. The amount he claimed was £500 which was reduced to £111. On behalf of my Party I agreed, should it be necessary to pay this price to get rid of Everitt, that we would make ourselves responsible for half of the amount.

The Council of Action composed of the two parties then held unofficial meetings because the Reardon faction refused to accept the decision of their conference until it was ratified by their membership.

At this time my Executive were of the opinion that I should leave and place the whole position before you.

Since then you have received cable advice of the result of the conference I have spoken of, which was on July 15th.⁵⁷ This we claim is further evidence of the impossibility of an unanimous decision on the question of unity with the Socialist Party.

Therefore, on behalf of my Party and in the interests of the International Movement and the working class of Australia, we demand that our application for affiliation as the Australian Section of the Comintern should be accepted immediately.

Appended is a report of the party's activities since my return to Australia and up to the time I left.

W.P. Earsman.

Document 21

RGASPI 495–94–8. 12 August 1922, Secretariat ECCI: to Cde Garden. Typescript.

In this letter the Comintern finally gives the United CPA what it has worked and lobbied for: recognition as the Australian section of the Communist International.

To the United Communist Party of Australia, for Comrade Garden.

Dear Comrade!

We received your letter of April 18 and well as a more considerable assortment of your correspondence with Reardon's group, and your telegramme which reported the Conference of the middle of July and the going over of a majority of the Reardon group. Furthermore, Comrade Earsman has arrived. The Presidium took up the Australian question once more on August 9, on the ground of these letters, telegrammes and reports and has formed the following decision:

After the report of Comrade Rakosi it is decided that only the United Communist Party will be recognised as a section of the CI in Australia.

A new unification-conference is no longer necessary.

We have sent you this decision by telegraph on August 10.

We request you to acknowledge the receipt, and we request you further to send the necessary credentials for Comrade Earsman, in case you wish to entrust him as the delegate of your Party, at the IVth Congress. You have the right to send two delegates to the IVth World Congress.

⁵⁷ See Document 19, above.

We would be very glad, if you would send us the plan of your prospective activity in all spheres of the movement and a description of the organisation of your Party.

With Communist greetings,
Secretariat of the ECCI

Document 22

RGASPI 495-95-9. 26 August 1922, Soviet chargé d'affaires in Sweden: to Ipswich communist party. In Russian, typescript. Trans. by KW.

At the same time as the Australian communists were working for unity and Comintern recognition, there remained a number of Russian communists in Australia who wished to return to Russia to assist in building socialism. This letter is a response to a request by such a group of Russian communists in Ipswich, Queensland, to establish a co-operative enterprise in Russia. It is neither encouraging nor discouraging, but rather seeks further information. By the mid-1920s, the Comintern indicated to its parties that it would accept communists from elsewhere (Russian or not) to live in the USSR only under exceptional circumstances (CALC 515-1-770), and by the mid-1930s, with war threatening and fear in Soviet Russia growing, immigrants to the Soviet Union were under intense suspicion. In a March 1936 'strictly confidential' report to the Comintern, I. Mingulin estimated that there were more than 10,000 political refugees from the USA in the Soviet Union, and added: 'There are suspicious people among political refugees from the USA' (CALC 515-1-3965).

RSFSR Chargé d'Affaires in Sweden
Svrvavägen 31, Stockholm
26 August, 1922

No. 02816

To: The Council [Soviet] of the Ipswich Communist Party, Ipswich

Dear Comrade,

I have just received your letter of 5th July. Before replying to your enquiries, I must seek further responses from you to the following questions:

1. What kind of co-operative [*artel*] have you in mind: an agricultural or land-tilling co-operative, a co-operative to rent and set up a metal-working or dress-making workshop, or other?
2. What is the approximate number of individuals wishing to travel? What are their qualifications, age, nationality (citizenship), areas of specialization, marital status, etc.?
3. Does the planned co-operative possess any assets, in the form of its own equipment, accumulated capital, etc.?
4. To which region would the co-operative like to travel and does it wish to set up an independent workshop or independent agricultural co-operative,

or does it wish to take up the rent or a concession on some existing factory or estate, etc.?

5. Do the members plan to travel as a single co-operative or as several co-operatives or separate groups?

Upon receipt of your reply to these questions and other information, I shall be able to obtain detailed information from the commissariats in question, so as to provide you with all the details you require.

With communist greetings,
*Kertints*⁵⁸

Document 23

RGASPI 495–94–128. December 1922, Earsman: report: Australia: Past and Present. Typescript.

This document is Bill Earsman's report to the Fourth Comintern Congress on Australia, the CPA, and the CPA's prospects. While it emphasizes the CPA's influence in the trade unions, it is quite unlike Jock Garden's extravagant (but well-received) claims to the same Congress that the CPA could 'direct just close on 400,000 workers'. Both Earsman in this report and Garden in his speech declared—contrary to the facts—that One Big Union had been created in Australia.

AUSTRALIA PAST AND PRESENT

The island continent in the past has attained some fame because of its political adventures in social legislation. That was in the days when the political world was being disturbed by the awakening working class forces; when they were struggling to a full consciousness of their method and that they had left childhood days behind.

This social legislation was recognised everywhere as something beyond all previous conceptions of political measures, and those experiences gave fresh hope to the social reformers and new life to many of the so-called working class leaders. Capitalists themselves began to take cheer and believe that they could well afford to accept the social legislation without giving up any of their power or their wealth. In fact, they saw this social reformation was going to be of great value to them in assisting them to hide the real truth from those who they were exploiting. It was "gilding the pill" of capitalism. We have now arrived at the stage when the poisonous effect of this pill is being felt, and social revulsions are taking place.

For the past twenty years Australia has enjoyed the reputation of being the land of political experiments, but it is over now. The dream of a happy contented

⁵⁸ Not fully legible.

race of people under capitalism has faded away, and once more we have the people brought face to face with reality and the seriousness of their position.

Again we have experienced the benefit of a Labour Party holding the reins of government; a party which was supposed to represent the workers. A working class party which was supposed to hold everything belonging to their class as holy. Once more the stern reality has forced itself upon the workers of Australia that the Labour Party is not a class party, but a petty bourgeois party. This has only been found after many years' experience, and perhaps it is as well to know what that experience is.

The Labour Party of Australia was organised in 1890 after very bitter industrial strikes, in which the power of the State was used against the workers. After those defeats the workers turned their attention to Parliament, and through their trade unions established the Labour Party. Ten years passed and they found themselves with the reins of the State machinery in their hands. Many times since, they have held those same State reins, till today they find them of little use; that is, the reins do not guide the "State horse". It has taken twenty years to realise, that though the Labour Party held the reins they did not manipulate them.

The roads which have been traversed by the "State coach" with the Labour Party as the drivers, have been named, nationalisation of industry, old age pensions, maternity bonus, compensation for accidents in industry, development of Australian industries, basic wage act under which no person shall be paid, the legalising of the eight-hour day, arbitration courts for settlement of all industrial disputes; these, along with other minor laws, complete the journey which the Labour Party set out on twenty years ago. Each and every one of those roads have been followed to the end, and today the Labour Party and also many of the workers see that they have reached a "dead end". In other words, the workers are beginning to realise that they have gone along the wrong road, and that all those roads within capitalism lead to a "dead end", that the only way out of their misery is by blowing up one of those dead ends. The Labour Party with all their social reforms stand today helplessly surrounded with misery and unemployment with no solution to their problem in their program.

Since the war this has become very clear, and in 1921 we find evidence of it. On every hand the working class were suffering unemployment of previous unknown dimensions, factories closing each day with no outlook of any betterment. The workers' demands for bread becoming louder and more insistent, and the only reply from the capitalists is less wages and a longer working week. The Labour Party were forced to act. So in this year they called an All-Australian Congress of Trade Unions.

This was the first attempt in the history of the country to bring about an organised effort to deal with the economic and political situation from the

working class standpoint. The first work of this Congress, was, after examination, to decide that the trade unions must be reorganised on an industrial basis if they were going to be effective in meeting the capitalist offensive. So they agreed to the formation of One Industrial Union for all workers.

Turning to the political organisations we find a similar state of things, and this Congress also decided that the Labour Party program must in future be changed. The Congress examined the political program and decided to draft another one. This has been done and now the objective of the Australian Labour Party is the Socialisation of Industry with workers' control. How this has to be achieved is the burning question. The revolutionaries have no doubt on the subject, but the petty bourgeois politicians insist that only "peaceful" means can be employed. For the time being these people have had a victory, but it won't be for long.

Again this year 1922, the All-Australian Trade Union Congress met and again endorsed the resolutions of the previous year, and further demanded putting into practice the United Front by insisting that the Labour Party accept the affiliation of all revolutionary working class parties, including the Communist Party, with the right of freedom to organise and carry out propaganda work. This will mean the strengthening of the whole working class position and also that of the Communist Party.

The Trade Unions.

As I have already said the trade unions have made great progress in the fact that they recognised their weaknesses, and are taking steps to remedy those weaknesses. This has mainly been in the form of organisation. The organising of the One Big Union has become an accomplished fact. This was carried out in February of this year by the joining together of the agricultural workers (150,000), coal-miners (35,000), railwaymen (48,000), dockers (8,000). The unions in the building industry have agreed to form one union and they too will form a department in the One Big Union. The metal trade unions are doing likewise, and are voting on the formation of organising one union in that industry. So by the end of this year we expect that more than 60% of the organised workers will be in an industrial union. This will be a great achievement, particularly when we remember that 70% of the workers are organised, the total being 700,000.

The Capitalist Offensive.

This was commenced in 1920, and is still being carried on. There was little difference in the capitalist tactics from those carried out in other countries. They opened their offensive by closing of factories and the working of half time. This was followed by a wide newspaper campaign, that the workers must accept less wages and return to the forty-eight hour week in place of forty-four hours. The

unions said no and prepared for the fight by binding themselves together to resist any attempt at lowering the standard of living. A big fight looked inevitable, when suddenly the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth called an Economic Conference composed of workers' and employers' representatives. At first the unions refused to have anything to do with this Conference because they said, "We refuse to discuss the lowering of wages or the working of more hours, and this Conference is only a trick to compromise us." The Communist Party had discussed the whole situation, and had issued instructions to all members that they must struggle for the unions going to the conference. In a few days this was accomplished and the workers decided to send representatives. There were 16 delegates on each side, with the Prime Minister in the chair. The conference lasted 10 days, when the employers broke it up by refusing to go any further. Whether the workers had a victory or not can be best seen from the opinion of "The Round Table" of June 1922.

None the less, the employers made a distinct error in tactics which, under different leadership, might have been avoided. They did not exhaust the possibilities of the situation. The workers had discussed the practical proposals of the *employers*, but the employers acted as if the workers had put forward no immediately practical proposals. Quite possibly discussion might have resulted in no agreement, but to refrain from it on the ground that the workers were BOLSHEVIKS merely gave opportunity to the workers for effective propaganda, of which they have not been slow to avail themselves.

Thus it will be seen that the workers of Australia have benefited from the experience of their comrades in other countries. So far the capitalists have not been successful in obtaining their objectives of less "wages and more hours". At the present moment the attack is concentrated on the coal miners and reports point to a general strike in the near future.

The Communist Party.

The Party was formed in October 1920 by the Socialist Party, who later broke away from it. Their reasons were chiefly because they saw in the formation of a mass party that they would be swallowed up, and all traces of their former existence would be obliterated. In spite of this the Party grew slowly and is now established in every State of the Commonwealth. The year 1921 was taken up chiefly in internal struggles and the exposing of the Socialist Party. This year the Party has had success in the fact that a large majority of the members of the Socialist Party seceded and joined the CP.

The work of the Party has been directed chiefly in the trade unions where they have obtained very great influence. This influence is seen in all struggles of the workers and particularly was this so in the recent economic Conference.

In fact the Prime Minister openly declared that the workers' delegates were entirely in the hands of the CP and that he knew every one of us.

Again in the struggle *on behalf of* the unemployed we were chiefly *the* directing force, and many of our members found themselves in jail. The Party headquarters was the headquarters for the unemployed, where they held their meetings, and had always the assistance of party members or anything else we had at our disposal.

At our indoor meetings we can always rely on large numbers of the workers being present and giving us support in our work. In fact the Party headquarters is a real workers' rendezvous. Today in all questions the trade unions turn to the CP for a lead and as each day goes by the influence of the party increases.

In the trade union work it was mainly the influence of the Party members who carried the affiliation of the Sydney Labour Council to the Red Labour Union International. This, in spite of the opposition of the social reformers and the socialists. This body represents 500,000 trade unionists, and has affiliated to it a majority of the trade unions. It is the real leader of the trade unions of the whole country. The Party influence is great here, having no less than 40 delegates with the official positions under control.

The future is very promising. The Party along with the trade unions realise the acuteness of the capitalist struggle in the Far East, and this is of great importance to Australia. Australia stands at the southern end of the Pacific, Japan at the northern end, America and several groups of islands in between. The Far East is Australia's future market and with her "White Australia Policy" makes her economically and politically very interested in the Far East.

At the last All-Australian Trade Union Congress the workers' representatives decided, that it was imperative a closer relationship should be established between all workers' organisations in all countries in the Pacific. Towards the end they agreed to call a Pan-Pacific Congress to be held in 1925. Thus it will be seen that the workers of Australia are preparing for the future. This gives the Communist Party the opportunity to take the leadership of the masses. With the active support of the Communist International the future of the Communist Party is a bright one, and in the coming struggles will attain that leadership necessary for the social revolution.

W.P. EARSMAN

Document 24

RGASPI 495–94–12. 7 December 1922, S. Stettler: Letter to ECCI. Typescript.

While the Fourth Comintern Congress was in session, the Sydney branch of the CPA met on 4 December 1922, criticized the Central Executive of the Party, and declared itself

the Communist Party of Australia, Australian section of the Third International. Many of the members of this group were former ASP members, who had united with the CPA in July 1922. This letter requests recognition from Moscow, declares that some delegates to the Comintern Congress are now a 'breakaway' group who should not be paid, and requests an ECCI member to come to Australia to adjudicate. Moscow, however, had made its decision; it effectively stood by the Garden-Earsman party (see Document 29, below).

December 7th. 1922.

To/ The Secretary,
Executive Committee,
Communist International,
MOSCOW.

Dear Comrade,

Following on my Cable to you, this letter is an explanation of actually what has taken place as regards the split within the Party.

Let me first of all point out that the Party is run on the lines of the old Socialist Parties, also that the Party is very very weak. The majority of the members are not conversant with the [Twenty One] Theses, nor are they with the Rules and Constitution of the Party. In fact the members on the Central Committee of the Party cannot discuss the Theses with you. The membership of the Party for the whole of Australia is only in the vicinity of 500, out of which the majority are members of Sydney Branch. The personnel of the Central Committee is made up of Sydney Branch members.

I am enclosing copy of the Rules and Constitution of the Party, copy of the Leader published in the Paper, and copy of a letter sent by me and endorsed by the Branch, to any member outside the Branch that we could get in touch with.

You will perceive the perfidy of those on the Central Committee in Resolutions F. and G. should Sydney Branch want to appeal to Conference. You will further note the deliberate misquoting of the Theses.

Sydney Branch, realising the absolute necessity for a well disciplined and organised Party, set about to organise groups and nuclei on the lines laid down by the Third Congress of the Communist International, for the different activities of the Branch. At a SPECIAL MEETING of the Branch called for the purpose of bringing about discipline, it was decided that members must attend their Branch meetings, and that should a Comrade miss three consecutive meetings his name be struck off the books; a roll book was procured and members were required to sign at each meeting night; members must pay their dues; an organising committee was elected to start organising the groups etc. It was at this meeting that opposition came from members of the Central Executive on practically all these motions. Re the roll book they started moving amendments that we get a roll book for Sunday night lectures and resolutions just as stupid. On the election

of the organising Committee, members of the Central Executive refused nomination and sabotaged it to the best of their ability.

It is the same comrades who talk about enforcing discipline on the rank and file of the Party, while they themselves divorce themselves from the daily work of the Party.

The ASP section before uniting got rid of those officials who were cogs as it were in the further progress of Communism, and most of us were determined to carry out the instructions of the Communist International in helping the rank and file of the United Communist Party in ridding them of the opportunists and Centrists who were officials of the Party. This would have been accomplished at Conference, but the Provisional Central Executive has saved us the trouble; they have broken away from the Party by the methods illustrated in the leader to the paper, and the letter I forwarded to branches.

At a Special Meeting held on Monday December 4th. 1922. Sydney Branch declared itself the Communist Party of Australia, (The Australian Section of the Communist International) and herewith apply for recognition. We have started good and have already started a group in the Breakaway section that is doing good work in exposing the CE members to the rank and file that have followed them.

The Party in the past has only accepted a Communist Programme on paper, their actions have been the actions of Centrists, both in the Party and the Trades and Labor Council. With regard to the Trades and Labor Council, members of the Party have been supporting and formulating go slow policies, scientific strikes, sectional strikes, etc., and the Central Executive of the Party have not only endorsed their actions but have through the official organ of the Party declared them the Policy of the Party.

Comrade Howie signed the resolutions re the expulsion of the Branch as published in the *Leader*, when he was not present at the meeting. He was approached by me to take the chair at Branch meetings, and he replied that he could not as it would not be the thing the acting Secretary of the Trades and Labor Council acting as Chairman of the Communist Party. Com. Voight (director of the Labor Research Bureau) had to lecture in the hall when the trouble began, but refused at the last minute and gave as an excuse "Fancy the Director of the Labor Research Bureau lecturing from the Communist platform when this trouble is on."

This is the brand of Communists that is at the present time supporting the CE members in the breakaway Party.

These individuals are going round boasting words to this effect: "anyway we are going to get the money from Russia and so on." It was on this account that I forwarded the Cable as follows to you:—"Stop payment draft Denford

Australia Denford Baker Howie forming Breakaway Party Explanation following Signed- Stettler, 395 Sussex Street, Sydney." We stopped the letter addressed to Denford advising him of money.

At the time we thought it strange that these individuals should walk out as they did, and start to form another branch.

If the Communist International decides that we readmit them into the Party or that we unite with them again so as to propagate the Communist position and the discussion of the theses, this party is prepared to do so but we would suggest that a member of the Executive Committee be sent out to make enquiries, before acting in regards to the Press etc. We do so actuated by the best of reasons, and in the best interests of Communism. Long live the Communist International.

With fraternal greetings from the Comrades in Australia.

Stettler

We have carried out the instructions of the Comintern as issued to Com. P. Lamb re unity in Australia & hereby apply for affiliation - Stettler

Document 25

RGASPI 495-94-11. December 1922, Jock Garden and Bill Earsman: The Communist Party of Australia [and the United Front]. Present only in the Russian version, typescript. Trans. by KW.

This document seems to be a contribution to the lengthy debate at the Fourth Comintern Congress in November-December 1922 on the 'united front' policy. It is an account of the formation of the CPA by Australian delegates to the Fourth Congress. In particular, it attempts to explain the various currents that formed the CPA, and why the Comintern's 'united front' policy was not well received by all of them. It is interesting, in part, because its two authors (who incidentally detested each other) had divergent views on the application of the 'united front' tactic in Australia, Garden wishing to re-enter the Labor Party (which the tactic seemed to sanction), while Earsman was sceptical. Like many grand formulae, the 'united front' gave rise to a range of practical applications around the world. The final point in the document, about 'a serious breach of discipline', seems to refer to the split in the Sydney branch of the CPA which occurred in early December 1922 (see Document 24), and about which Garden and Earsman would have only recently heard.

[Added in handwriting, in Russian: To Presidium, Comrades Kuusinen, Wallenius, Kiliarov [i.e. V. Kolarov] [word illegible] Kuusinen. [Word illegible] resolution. 22/XII/22, (possibly 22/XI/1922).]

The Communist Party of Australia

The party was formed in 1920 from earlier syndicalist elements and from other elements expelled from the Labor Party on account of their revolutionary nature.

In order to understand the full significance of this, it is necessary to pay close attention to the development of the workers' movement.

The workers' movement arose in 1890 after determined strikes spread throughout the country and the government used armed force against the workers. Following these strikes the working class decided to use the trade unions to form its own class's political party, which would seize state power from the employers through the ballot box and use this power in the interests of the working class. This should be done by the nationalization of industry, and in this way the working class would also be liberated. How nationalization would be conducted—by compensation or confiscation—was a matter that at first no thought was given to.

The Labor Party soon acquired influence and support among the workers, and also among many small farmers. In 1904 the Labor Party came to power and the workers thought their time had come. The Labor Party began by implementing its nationalization plan and carried it through within a matter of years, paying compensation to the capitalists. Since that time, Labor has held office in all states except Victoria, and also, several times since 1904, at the federal level.

Gradually, however, the workers came to realize that something was wrong, and in 1912 a strong syndicalist movement arose and gained great influence among the workers. It continued until 1917, when a general strike broke out as a spontaneous uprising by the masses against exploitation in the name of patriotism by the employer class. For eight weeks the workers stayed out and their leaders, try as they might, did not know what to do except return to work for improved conditions. These leaders were Labor Party members and ambitious members of parliament. The strike ended with the workers returning to their factories on the terms offered by the employers.

From this conflict the syndicalists arrived at the conclusion that the trade unions should be turned into industrial unions. A determined campaign began within the unions and the Labor Party. Many leading functions in the trade unions passed into the hands of the proponents of the industrial principle. In 1919 they gained control of the union movement and also tried to take over the Labor Party. At the 1919 Labor Party congress, the adherents of the industrial principle (the Industrialists) waged a determined struggle aimed at changing the party programme, but were defeated, owing to a majority (albeit a tiny one) on the side of their opponents. As a result of this defeat, the Industrialists quit the congress and set about organizing another political party. The Labor Party, for its part, was forced to expel them, and launched a forceful campaign against the industrial unions. The new party soon folded, leaving many union leaders outside the political movement.

Since 1916 there has also been an Australian Socialist Party in existence, and before that a Socialist Labour Party had arisen. But neither of these were based on mass support, and enjoyed no influence, being insignificant sects of orthodox Marxists, dedicated primarily to putting forward candidates to run for parliament against Labor and taking no part in the workers' struggle in the factories, mines and farms.

Thus we had in Australia in 1920 a certain number of trade union leaders bent on political action, and many syndicalists who realized how very feeble their movement was compared with the Russian revolution. For this reason, in late 1920 an attempt was made to found a communist party. The attempt was only partly successful, as it failed to attract the socialists and some other groups. Success was achieved only in July of this year.

This explains why we see in the present Communist Party of Australia one faction expelled from the Labor Party and another consisting of erstwhile parliamentary socialists, and yet a third with strong syndicalist tendencies. Until recently there were no particular theoretical differences between these factions and they all worked harmoniously in a single direction, but the policy of the United Front led to some differences. All members of the party recognized the need for a united front against the capitalist onslaught and (in my opinion), in the political area, if the Labor Party was prepared to carry it through. According to reports, the Labor Party has not turned down the CP request to join, but is conducting a wavering policy, ignoring the whole matter. This led to deep dissatisfaction with the Labor Party among the communists. Then federal elections were held, leading to a crisis in the party. Two schools of thought arose, one of which felt it essential to support Labor, whatever the Labor Party's attitude to the CP request for admission, and the other refusing to support Labor until Labor agreed to consider CP admission and denying its members the right to back Labor. Another faction, regardless of all this, carried on its work and perhaps with this aim set up a provisional party. We believe that following the federal elections this breach will be healed.

In spite of this, at present there exists a serious breach of discipline which demands stern resolution.

GARDEN
EARSMAN

Document 26

RGASPI 495-94-8. December 1922, ECCI: to United CPA. Typescript.

The Fourth Comintern Congress was the first at which Australia appeared as an official section, the CPA, recognition having been given three months earlier, on 9 August 1922. After the Congress, the ECCI wrote to the CPA advising it especially on application of

the ‘united front’ policy which had been reaffirmed by Congress: ‘a consistent and determined but not too rigid application’. It meant, however, that Australian communists had to join and work within the ALP. The Comintern also had some astringent advice for the CPA, pointing out the weakness of its press, and declaring: ‘Your Party is still weak, your experience of the class struggle as a Party is still inadequate, your preparedness for taking the lead in the future intensified class fights is still deficient’. By following the lead of the experienced Bolsheviks, it implied, the CPA would be able to overcome these weaknesses.

To the United Communist Party of Australia

Comrades,

The Fourth Congress of the Comintern has concluded its work. The present letter is written to you for the purpose of imparting to you some of the decisions of the Fourth Congress which contain concrete proposals for the practical carrying out of the Congress decisions in Australia.

You have accepted the 21 conditions which form the basis of the present and future tactics of the Communist International, as well as the theses and resolutions of the Third World Congress, primarily those which relate to our organisation and our tactics, and you have presumably studied them carefully. As you know, the pivotal point of these theses was substantially contained in the slogan: “To the masses”! The Fourth Congress has again endorsed the correctness of this demand.

The capitalist offensive is carried on today in all countries with the open blessings of the opportunists, of the reformists, of the social-patriots of the 2 and 2 1/2 Internationals, or at best, under the hypocritical protests of the latter, such as the making of pacifist reform motions in Parliament which carefully respect the privileges of the exploiting class and which are intended to hoodwink the proletariat to the real cause of its terrible situation. Turn your glance to England, to France, to Germany, to Italy—everywhere you behold the same picture: reduction of wages, extension of the working day, lock-outs, and brutal suppression of every attempt of the masses at self-action, of every comprehensive new movement of the proletarian masses in the economic as well as the political domain. A period of economic and moral decline continues the infernal work of the five years of butchery.

This can only be met by a Workers’ United Front. It requires above all a consistent and determined but not too rigid application of the tactics of the United Front.

In this respect there is a tremendous task before you, our Australian comrades. The Australian Communist Party must now concentrate all its energy and all its ability to win a decisive majority in the trade unions; in every industrial center it should not only take the lead in the larger and smaller economic fights, but it should also really lead the masses in all their political movements as well as

in the struggle to raise their cultural standard. During the capitalist offensive the Communist Party as the most revolutionary and best disciplined party must lead the entire proletariat in the struggle, with revolutionary slogans that will be understood by every worker. No matter whether the struggle be for small or great demands, the party must be a leader. Every single strike that is won, every victory in the struggle for daily interests, even if very slight, already signifies the winning of a strong position against the bourgeoisie, and what is even more important, it signifies a strengthening of the influence of the Communist Party among the masses. The younger Communist Parties of the Communist International frequently showed the tendency of isolating themselves from the mass of the proletariat, of applying the principles of Marxism in doctrinaire and sectarian fashion, merely as a means of preserving the purity of their principles. This hampers the development of the Communist Party, which means also hampering the fight of the working class for freedom, and at the present moment it hampers particularly the successful defence against the capitalist offensive. It is for this reason that we draw your special attention to the necessity of expanding and intensifying the Communist activity within the trade unions, in every state, by means of firmly disciplined communist nuclei that should gather round them the the larger masses of sympathising workers. The trade unions are the organisations that offer the best prospects for the practical application of the slogan: "To the masses"! The trade unions provide the best opportunity for communists to show how far they are really connected with the masses, how they feel for the masses, and their ability to overcome the treachery of the reformist trade union leaders.

It must always be remembered that the Communist Party is not a party only of watchwords and slogans, but a real fighting proletarian party, always leading the class struggle. We must never tolerate such a situation in which the workers look upon the party as an accepted fact, but do not feel the need of entering it. Our tactics should be the tactics of struggle, and not the repetition of the same ideas, marking time on the same spot.

It is for this very purpose of strengthening the Communist Party and of accelerating its growth, that the Executive of the Comintern has been recommending tactics of the United Front for more than a year.

In countries like Great Britain and Australia, owing to the existence of a peculiar type of political mass organisation known as the Labour Party, this tactic has a specific form of application.

The Australian Labour Party is even more outspokenly a trade union party than its British counterpart, with an equally petty bourgeois, reformist set of leaders.

Nevertheless, the masses in their bulk continue to cling to the Labour Party. Does this mean to say that if the working masses are to be won for Communism,

we should work within this mass party? The Communist International answers this question in the affirmative. The joining of the Labour Party opens wide perspectives for the development of the Communist Party, and provides a possibility for Communist sympathisers in the Labour Party to find practical application for their revolutionary desires. It further gives the Communist Party the possibility to unmask the opportunist leaders of the Labour Party before the masses of their followers in the best and most direct way, demonstrating to the rank and file of the Labour Party, that such leaders will never fight for the serious demands of the proletariat. On the other hand the masses will at the same time have the opportunity to convince themselves that the Communist Party is not only the forward-driving element of the class struggle, but that it is also the only Party that takes a hand in all the fights of the masses, shares unreservedly all their sufferings and misery. Only in this manner it will be possible to win the confidence of the workers, to isolate the opportunist leaders and to separate them from the masses. We have reason no longer to content ourselves with unmasking the treacherous nature and role of the leaders of the Labour Party merely by propaganda, while otherwise letting them have their free play. We should rather fight within the Labour Party and capture it by waging the fight against the social-traitors in the mass party which has been monopolised by them.

Nevertheless we deem it necessary to warn you against the illusion of assuming that a victory over the reformists and opportunists within the Labour Party would make the class struggle any milder, that the mere possession of a majority of the masses in the Labour Party would give you something like “democratic government”, a gradual transition to the proletarian rule by the sole application of democratic measures of compulsion against the bourgeoisie. Such a view would be dangerous opportunism. On the contrary, you must be perfectly aware of the fact, and leave no doubt in the minds of the wide masses of the proletariat, that the winning of the majority in the Labour Party will tremendously increase the struggle against the bourgeoisie, accentuating the class antagonism and compelling capitalism to resort to the most savage measures of violence. Such is the logic of all revolutionary class struggles. He who fears the consequences of this logic should cease to call himself a Marxian, a revolutionary and a Communist. The bourgeoisie will become increasingly restless, provocative, brutal, and ruthless in the precise measure that its reformist agents, the leaders of the Labour Party, will lose that influence over the masses. This is a fact of which you should never lose sight. The winning of the majority of the workers by the Communists does not mean any softening of the intensity of the class struggles, but its aggravation; no slackening of the revolutionary propaganda, but rather the increasing consciousness of the proletarian masses that the bourgeoisie will not shrink from civil war in the defence of its rights.

Emphasise this fact day by day in your big and little actions, in your victories as well as in your defeats and your joining the Labour Party and the consequent stubborn adherence to the United Front tactics will in no way contain the menace of damping your revolutionary watchwords, in a word, of converting you into opportunists.

The EC of the CI therefore deliberately advises the Australian Communist Party to join the State Labour Party as well as the Federal Labour Party, carrying out the resolution of the Australian Trade Union Congress in June 1921 and 1922 on the Unity Question.

We emphasise: the application of the United Front tactics as already emphasised by the Comintern on numerous occasions, does not deprive the Communist Party of its freedom of agitation, propaganda and criticism in all situations and at all times, nor does it impair the organisational independence and the subordination of Communist Party members and organisations to the discipline of their Party under all circumstances; on the contrary, these things are rather emphasised thereby. Wherever we find ourselves as Communists, in carrying out the decisions of the Communist International, we observe the strictest Party discipline and the most complete devotion to the Communist International.

It should be your aim to bring together all the militant elements within and without the Australian Labour Party and to convince them that the working class of Australia needs above all the unity of all the class conscious elements under the banner of the Communist Party.

But should the Labour Party leaders refuse to admit us into their organisation, this is no reason for abandoning the "United Front". It only means that our efforts will have to be redoubled to maintain the "United Front". It must never be said that the Communists divided the workers. That must be left to the leaders of the Labour Party. Our duty as Communists and the party of the working class is to bring our class to victory. This can only be done by pointing the way and working with the masses and showing them that we are the real leaders and that our place is inside the workers' organisations. Again, should the Labour Party leaders refuse to admit you, it is no reason for falling down before these leaders, asking for mercy. We have to carry on the fight as Communists, among the rank and file of the Party, and ultimately they will demand our admittance.

The policy of the bourgeois Labour government was always reactionary in substance. It hindered the workers in the carrying out of their real class struggle against the bourgeoisie. It tied the hands of the exploited masses, and made them the worshippers of the authority of the Capitalist State. As against this, it is the duty of a Communist Party to remove all the influences that hinder the development of the revolutionary forces of the working class, and are obstacles to the class struggle. For this reason the Communist Party must take the initiative

in all the mass movements of the workers, and try again to secure the leadership of the various labour organisations, and mobilise them for the fight against the capitalist class. If the Communist Party should find it necessary in this connection, in order to increase the resisting power of the working class, to unite temporarily in joint activity with other labour organisations, by forming a bloc or a workers' coalition government, not a liberal Labour government but a real militant workers' government composed of representatives of the working class, the Communist Party should not shrink from such a task. The intensification of the class struggle against the bourgeoisie, which is bound to follow the formation of such workers' government, will enable the Communist Party to fight for the realisation of the real dictatorship of the proletariat from this intermediary stage.

The United Front tactic is not a peace treaty. It is merely a manoeuvre in the proletarian class struggle. It is not an end in itself, but a tool for the acceleration of the revolutionising process of the masses. The struggle against the leaders of the Right Wing of the Australian Labour Party must be pursued with all emphasis both within and without, constantly and persistently, exposing their policy, which consists of binding the workers hand and foot and delivering them to the bourgeoisie. At all elections the Communists must retain the right of participating in the pre-selection ballot. It is by joining the Labour Party that this will be made possible.

Now a few words about your press. Much as we congratulate the Australian Communist Party for its activity and work accomplished in the trade unions, particularly in New South Wales, we must point out to you on the other hand, that your press leaves a good deal to be desired. It is high time that you should become clearly aware that the whole [activity] of the Communist Party does not consist of the enlisting of adherents, but also of really taking part in the class struggle. It is not enough to show up cleverly the backwardness of the masses, but it is rather necessary to change their class consciousness. The masses cannot be convinced merely by leaflets and cleverly-written articles. The first thing needful is live activity and example by deed. Through your press you should take part in the daily struggles of the workers. Your press should be the mirror not only of the life of the Party, but of the entire proletariat and of all the exploited and oppressed. A proletarian newspaper must play the role of a popular tribune. It is this feature that is lacked by your press. We have no doubt that you will remedy this defect. To make your press more lively you should do your utmost to get the masses of the workers to contribute to your paper by sending letters and descriptive articles of their daily life, and at the same time shaping your papers so that their contents should speak not only to the mind but also to the heart of the workers.

Your Party is still weak, your experience of the class struggle as a Party is still inadequate, your preparedness for taking the lead in the future intensified

class fights is still deficient. You should not hide your light under a bushel, but take all the measures to increase your organisation, also numerically, above all in the great organisation of workers, the trade unions, where you ought to make particular efforts to strike deep roots. This requires the untiring self-sacrificing and uninterrupted activity of every member of the Party without exception. The Australian proletariat is still trammelled by the petty-bourgeois democratic illusions. To help them shake these illusions it requires not only vigorous educational activity, but also patient and judicious treatment of the backward elements. Finally, the Communist Party must never forget that the calm periods of the class struggle are merely the calms before the storms, that these moments of respite must be utilised to prepare the *working*-class for the future struggles whether defensive or offensive. If this should be neglected, you are in danger of surprise-attack and provocation on the part of the bourgeoisie, of premature struggles with their inevitable defeats.

By following the advice you get from experience of many years' fighting of the advanced proletariat of all countries you will overcome the capitalist offensive which menaces you with slow destruction, profound misery and brutal disfranchisement, and triumphantly march to the final victory.

Long live the United Front of the workers of Australia!

Long live the Communist Party of Australia!

For the Executive Committee of the Communist International.

Dec. 1922

Document 27

RGASPI 495–94–18. 28 February 1923, Zuzenko: letter/report: to ECCI. In Russian, typescript. Excerpts. (For a complete translation of this long report with details of Zuzenko's activities in the USA and Canada, see Windle 2004b.) Trans. by KW.

Zuzenko reports here on his long mission on behalf of the Comintern to Australia, over the period 1920–22. Zuzenko fears that the Comintern may have forgotten his service, and prepares the ground for further missions to the Anglo-Saxons. Separating this document from the next in CAAL (Zuzenko's memo of 18 March 1923, which appears as Document 28, below), a page bears the manuscript words, in Russian, 'To Wallenius, for the Secretariat. What are we to do about Comrade Zuzenko?'

To the Executive Committee of the Third Communist International from Aleksandr Mikhailovich Zuzenko, Comintern official.

Foreword

In the summer of last year, 1922, I learned to my astonishment from a letter from my wife that nobody in the Comintern Executive Committee remembers me, knows me or thinks they sent me on any assignment at all. In view of this

I consider it my duty to supply the Comintern Executive Committee, at the beginning of my report, with a brief reminder of my existence.

I became a party worker in 1904. In mid-1905 I was discharged as unreliable from the training vessel ‘Velikaia Kniagina Kseniia Aleksandrovna’ [Grand Duchess Kseniia Aleksandrovna] and expelled from the Magnushof Maritime Training College. In autumn 1905 I joined the combat organization of the Socialist Revolutionary Party. For organizing a political strike I was expelled from the Riga Maritime Training College in early 1906. I took part in a number of terrorist acts in Riga and in southern Russia. I experienced Tsarist prisons twice—in Riga in early 1906 and in Nikolaev in 1908.

I fled Russia to avoid an investigation and trial in 1911. By my work I assisted in the organization of the Union of Russia Seamen Abroad (in Antwerp, Belgium). Having lost faith in the Socialist Revolutionary Party I broke with it and worked in Australia as an organizer of IWW (‘Industrialist’) groups and as a proponent of anarchic communism. While working in Australia as a sugar-cane cutter, I organized and conducted a number of strikes in the sugar industry and the industry’s first general strike to do away with contract labour.

After the departure from Australia of Comrade Artem Sergeev and others, I acted as secretary of the Union of Russian Workers in Australia, edited the paper *Znanie i edinenie* [Knowledge and Unity] in Russian and founded and edited *Knowledge and Unity* in English. Three times the Australian authorities ordered me to cease my campaigning and organizational work. I continued. *Znanie i edinenie* was closed down. I set about publishing an illegal newspaper, *Deviatyi val* [The Ninth Wave].⁵⁹

For general propaganda work I drew together the more revolutionary element of the socialists and ‘Industrialists’, arranging revolutionary demonstrations by the unemployed and by revolutionary groups of soldiers. A revolutionary demonstration on 25 March 1919 led to a clash with the police and the temporary success of the demonstrators, but then to the rout of the Union of Russian Workers in Australia and the arrest of its most active members.⁶⁰ On 27 March 1919 I was arrested and at the end of April the same year deported from Australia. It was the intention of the Australian authorities to deliver me into the torture chambers of the ‘true Russian authorities’, that is, of Denikin.⁶¹ Having passed

⁵⁹ *Znanie i edinenie* was closed down in December 1918. The English-language version began to appear at the end of December 1918 and continued long after Zuzenko’s deportation in April. *Deviatyi val*, on the other hand, lasted for only four issues, December 1918 to February 1919.

⁶⁰ ‘25 March 1919’: date as given. All Australian archive and press sources give Sunday 23 March as the date of the red flag procession in Brisbane. Street clashes occurred over the following few days.

⁶¹ General Anton Ivanovich Denikin, commander of the anti-Bolshevik Volunteer Army in southern Russia in 1918–20, which was finally expelled by the Bolshevik forces in February 1920. ‘Torture chambers’ is a free translation of a word for which English has no exact equivalent—*rasprava*, denoting extremes of torture, commonly ending in death, usually without legal sanction. Zuzenko later told of

through several prisons, in October 1919, thanks to the insistence of my sick wife, who was also deported from Australia,⁶² I was released under police supervision from a Turkish prison in Constantinople, and at the end of that month made my way to Odessa, where I remained until the Red forces arrived.

While working in Tiraspol (Odessa region) as editor of *Izvestiia tiraspolskago revkoma* [News of the Tiraspol Revolutionary Committee], I joined the Ukrainian Bolshevik Communist Party. In March 1920, as a delegate from Tiraspol, I was sent to the Third All-Russian Congress of Trade Unions in Moscow. Comrades Artem Sergeev and Berzin (the Comintern Secretary) sent me to Petrograd to report to the Small Bureau of the Comintern on the situation in Australia. In May 1920, by a decision of the Large Bureau, I was taken into the employment of the Comintern and directed to Australia to form a Communist Party of Australia.

Aleksandr Zuzenko, alias A. Nargen

Memorandum

In early May 1920, by a decision of the Large Bureau of the Comintern, I was taken into the employment of the Comintern and directed to Australia to form a Communist Party of Australia. I was ordered to go to Tiraspol (Odessa region), hand over the editorship of the newspaper to my deputy, and to be in Moscow with my family by the opening of the Second Congress of the Comintern.

At the Second Congress of the Comintern I represented the communist group of Queensland, Australia, without voting rights. In mid-October I left Soviet Russia by way of Murmansk and Vardö, in Norway, having received £150 sterling for travel expenses and £500 for agitation and propaganda in Australia. I had to leave behind in Murmansk a suitcase full of selected literature for Australia, on the advice of Comrade Vasten.⁶³ Travelling light, with no luggage, with a seaman's documents in the name of Alexander Holmst [phon.], I set off, accepting the assurances of comrades that I would receive all that I needed in Norway and England. In Christiania [Oslo] Comrade Latimer [phon.] (also known as Jurgis) and in England the Communist Party would supply all necessary documents and render comradely assistance. In Vaida-guba I was just two hours too late to

being under sentence of death during this period, but it is clear that no Australian or British court passed such a sentence, and he escaped the clutches of Denikin.

⁶² Zuzenko's wife Cecilia (née Rosenberg) was not, in fact, deported, but left Australia voluntarily to follow her husband back to Russia in May 1919. Her father, Michael Rosenberg, was deported in September.

⁶³ Aleksandr Petrovich Vasten was for a period in charge of Soviet intelligence in the Murmansk area, where Sylvia Pankhurst met him during her visit to Russia in 1920 (Pankhurst 1921). He was later thought to have visited Britain on Soviet ships. PRO KV 3/15 (SF 450-0302-2/ Vol. 2) Appendix H.

catch the group of French comrades, and the storm which sank them held us prisoner for about a week in the fishing settlement of Zemlianoi.⁶⁴

In Vardö I had my first opportunity to experience the ‘brilliant’ international liaison arrangements that we had heard so much about in Moscow. A certain Bodin [phon.], a louche-looking eighteen-year old with the air of a criminal, was working there. He was engaged in secret work, but the ‘secrets’ were known to the entire population of Vardö, including the police.

I reached Christiania without incident. (Before my arrival they had been arresting every delegate who passed through.) I had to spend ten aimless days in Christiania before, with the aid of some strong language, managing to see the other ‘Comintern boy’, the forty-year-old Latimer (otherwise Jurgis), the organizer of the Comintern’s international liaison. The storage he had set up for communist literature was stunning in its childishness. Comrade Latimer had established this in the middle of Christiania, in the building which housed the Folkets Hus or cultural centre, permanently ringed by police. Here in broad daylight bundles of literature were delivered and packets of books carried out, before the eyes of the police and their informers. The dispatch of every pound in weight of literature cost almost ten English shillings. It was plain to me that disaster awaited the product of Latimer’s endeavours. I shared my concerns with him and received the reply that that was his business. With this I hastened to agree. I read of the seizure of the Comintern store, the arrest of Comrade Kurre-Grep [phon.] and Latimer’s flight from Norway when I was in Liverpool, and the news came as no surprise. Latimer refused to give me any help at all, so with the help of Kurre-Grep I set off for Bergen, and from there stowed away to Newcastle-upon-Tyne and on to London. The suitcase of literature that I left behind in Murmansk with Comrade Vasten is probably still there, even though they promised to deliver it to Christiania before I got there.

In England

In London I successfully made contact with Jack Tanner,⁶⁵ the editor of *Solidarity*, but he was unable to render any assistance as he had no links at all

⁶⁴ ‘Too late to catch the French comrades.’ Accounts of this episode differ, and the dates vary. According to Victor Serge (1963, 112), Serge’s friend Sasha Tubin and three French socialists making for Vardö in a fishing smack perished in a storm, in ‘August or September 1920’. A warning had been sent by a party of British delegates, including William Gallacher, Sylvia Pankhurst and John Clarke, who had struggled through the storm to Vardö by the same route only days earlier, but the warning came too late (Gallacher 1966, 155 ff). *Bolshaia Sovetskaia Entsiklopediia*, however, (under Lefebvre) dates the disaster as occurring on 1 October, and Zuzenko’s list of expenses (National Archives of Australia: A6122/40 111, Summary of Communism, p. 151) also indicates the beginning of October, rather than the mid-October date he gives in this report. The French casualties were Raymond Lefebvre, François (Jules) Lepetit (Louis Bertho), and Jean (Marcel) Vergeat. Sasha Tubin, also from France, was acting as their interpreter (see also Broué 1997, 183).

⁶⁵ Jack Tanner: active member of the shop stewards’ movement. With Gallacher he attended the 1920 Comintern congress. He was later suspected by British security of industrial espionage on behalf of the Soviet Union. PRO KV 3/15 (SF 450–0302–2/ Vol. 2); KV4/124.

with the seamen's union. He did not know the address of a shop that sold false passports, and for some reason he regarded Tom Barker, the IWW 'industrialist' whom I knew from Australia, as untrustworthy so refused to put me in touch with him. On learning that I was carrying about £100 destined for Australia, Comrade Tanner spent hours trying to persuade me to leave the money with him.⁶⁶ He would send it to me in Australia, he said, as it might be confiscated if I was arrested, and so on. But, knowing the financial situation of *Solidarity*, I declined these comradely favours.

Armed with a letter from Comrade Tanner to the Braddock brothers, I set off for Liverpool to take up the place arranged for me as a sailor on a steamer sailing for Australia. The comrades Jack and Wilfred Braddock introduced me to a sailor called Jack White, (a thief with a series of convictions), and through him to some representatives of the seamen's union. I was to pay two representatives £10 each for their time, and the same to the Braddock brothers and other comrades who had arranged my departure.⁶⁷

Owing to the incompetence of those who had undertaken to help me, I was arrested while signing my contract on the ship, for presenting a British unemployment registration card instead of the card issued to foreigners. After questioning me at length at the Aliens' Office, they seized my documents but released me, accepting my assurances that I would be in Southampton the next day and would obtain a passport from my consul, that is, the American consul [sic]. With my papers I lost any opportunity to join the crew of a ship. I could not obtain false papers because the British were unfamiliar with methods of clandestine work. The Communist Party of Great Britain at that time turned out to be the same as it very likely is now, not a united, centralized party of communists, but scattered and uncoordinated communizing crowds. There were crowds following Maclean, Sylvia Pankhurst and Gallacher; there was Jack Tanner's crowd and John Clarke's crowd, grouped around *The Worker*—a total of about a thousand people.⁶⁸ In a city like Liverpool, the communist cell numbered just over fifty. Having lost hope of obtaining documents, I decided to make my way to America and count on Russian comrades there to help me manufacture the necessary papers.

In mid-December 1920, on board the steamer 'Baltic', I was arrested again, and released only after a three-hour interrogation, saved this time by the rosary

⁶⁶ 'About £100': as given, although Zuzenko has stated above that he was carrying £500 for agitation and propaganda in Australia.

⁶⁷ Jack Braddock (1893–1963): well known activist of the IWW and early communist movement, later a prominent Labour politician and leader of Liverpool City Council 1955–63. He and his fiancée Elizabeth Bamber took care of Zuzenko during part of his time in Liverpool in 1920–21. Both left the CP in the early 1920s, and Bamber, as Bessie Braddock, achieved fame as the long-serving Labour member for Liverpool Exchange (Braddock 1963.)

⁶⁸ John Maclean (1879–1923): prominent Scottish socialist at this period.

I had in my pocket and my exaggerated good manners. In Liverpool raids had started to catch Irishmen, so I had to decamp to Stoke-on-Trent and stay there until the middle of January 1921. Helped by a stoker, I made my way to Saint John, New Brunswick, as a stowaway on the steamer 'The Queen of Ireland', posing as a stoker by night and a passenger by day throughout the ten-day crossing.

In Canada

I found a place in the Salvation Army hostel in Saint John and made the acquaintance of Carland [phon.], a fugitive Sinn Feiner from Ireland and persuaded him to cross the American border with me. I would provide financial help to pay his way to Boston, while he undertook to use the Irish route to get me across the border in the guise of a fellow Sinn Fein fighter. Helped by Irish priests, we crossed the border between Saint Stephen in Canada and Calais in the United States. I had to leave my things in Saint Stephen with a tailor named Higgins. We were given an autumn coat and felt hat each, so as to look like Americans, and crossed the border bridge by night. Then we travelled about twenty-five miles by car before taking a train to Boston. We arrived safely in New York, where I immediately tried to contact the American Communist Party through the Soviet bureau.

In America

I arrived in New York in late January 1921. After a week of daily visits to the office of Isaac Hourwich,⁶⁹ I was fortunate enough to see Comrade Cherny,⁷⁰ a member of the Executive Committee of the Communist Party, and ask him for the favour I needed. I asked him to help me get some papers forged and advise me—at least—on how I might proceed from there. I gave Comrade Cherny a photograph of myself to show to Alexander Bilan or any other delegates to the Second Comintern Congress, so that they could recognize me. He promised to see me again in one week, for which I was grateful.

On the appointed day there was nobody there to see me, and only after seven weeks of continually pestering Isaac Hourwich did I receive a reply, through Hourwich, which said, 'Zuzenko is staying with Korneev the sailor in his flat, so let Karneev help him.'⁷¹ I was not amused by the wisdom of this advice. I was in no mood for it. I had left Russia in poor health. After those stormy times in Brisbane, after a voyage in chains round the world through the prisons of Australia, Tasmania, Ceylon, India, Egypt and Turkey, after a hunger strike and scurvy in Bombay and all the charms of the condemned cell, after the inferno

⁶⁹ Hourwich: this is the spelling used by the Hourwich family in the USA. A closer transcription of the Russian form is 'Gurvich'.

⁷⁰ Cherny: possibly Chernago, Chernogo or Czerny.

⁷¹ Korneev/Karneev: Zuzenko uses both spellings. It has not been possible to determine which is correct.

of the underground during Denikin's rule and sometimes over-demanding work in the Soviet Ukraine, it is not surprising that my nerves were in shreds. 'Pray tell the authors of this wise advice, Jesus Christ's sky-pilots,⁷² that I am not begging but demanding,' I said to Hourwich, 'that one of them comes down from the Olympian heights of the party to my level.' I wrote a memo demanding a meeting, as was my right under Paragraph 11 of the Comintern Statute concerning party discipline.

A week later I had a meeting with Alexander Bilan, who explained that all that time each of two American communist parties had been trying to pass me into the care of the other. As a consequence of the meeting with Bilan, I was sent a letter of introduction to William Costley, the organizer of the united Communist Party in San Francisco.

I spent more than ten weeks in New York altogether. [...]

As I was expecting a reply to a letter sent to the Comintern in Moscow (encoded and sent to Artur Iuzenius, at Tomtabagatten [phon.] 24, Stockholm, Sweden), I asked William Costley to enquire of the Executive Committee of the American Communist Party whether there was any mail for me from Moscow. I also asked him to pass on the fact that I was leaving for Australia on 25 April. A reply came three days before my planned departure, in the form of a telegram saying, 'If Nargen is an Australian he is now undeserving of any trust at all. Do not give him anything,' signed 'ARDEN'.⁷³ On receiving this cable, Comrade Costley flatly refused to give me any help at all. 'How do I know?' he asked. 'You might be an *agent provocateur* for all I know.'

I did not succeed in departing on 25 April. On 1 May 1921 a seamen's strike began and for several months any possibility of proceeding to my destination was removed. At the end of June, over two months after the cable virtually accusing me of being a provocateur, I met William Costley, who said that he had just received a letter from New York advising him to help me leave America. He proposed that I embark as a strike-breaker and jump ship on arrival, but refused to render any assistance. [...]

For the first few months after the strike it was absolutely impossible to find work on any ship bound for Australia. With the aid of Comrades Edric B. Smith and M. J. [G.?] Smith and some other comrades from the Auckland section of the Society for Technical Aid to Soviet Russia, I tried several times to leave America, without success. The most important thing I lacked in order to sign

⁷² '*Etim aeroplanam Iisusa Khrista*', more literally 'Jesus Christ's aeroplanes', a figure of speech of a kind regularly found in Zuzenko's prose.

⁷³ Zuzenko cites this telegram in Russian but it was most probably sent to Costley in English. When Zuzenko was arrested in Melbourne in August 1922, among the material found on him was a telegram in English which read: 'If Nargen is Australian then now unreliable give nothing Arden.' NAA A6122/40 111 p. 147.

on as a crew member was identity papers, and I had no opportunity to acquire any.

In October 1921, on the advice of some comrades, I enlisted Comrade William Sheehan, from Seattle, an influential seaman and IWW 'Industrialist', who could use his contacts to help me embark for Australia. Comrade Sheehan tried until mid-December and found me a job as a galley hand on an Australian ship, but the port authorities refused to let me sail without a passport. Frustrated by this failure, Comrade Sheehan departed for Chicago, leaving me to find my own way out of the situation. [...]

In order to avoid arrest I had to cross to Victoria, B.C., for a while, and thence on the steamship 'Niagara' I sailed for New Zealand, so as to be able to slip into Australia unnoticed on a local tramp steamer rather than an immigrant ship. I left Canada in early May 1922 and in early June arrived in Auckland, where I stayed for one month and obtained the right to permanent residence in New Zealand and a police registration card. I then set off for Sydney, where I disembarked without hindrance at the beginning of July 1922.⁷⁴

The American Communist Party, or rather some of its minions, had put about every conceivable vile story concerning me and sent these on to Australia. For example, much was written about my not wanting to go to jail in Australia again, about my cowardice, and about my going over to the anarchist camp. But none of these fabrications were believed. That I was not a coward was known. The silly fable about my anarchism was also rejected, since my article 'A Reply to Emma Goldman', published in *The British Columbia Federationist* and the *American Worker* and signed Aleksandr Nargen, had been received and read in Australia.⁷⁵ The extraordinarily energetic little tale-mongers from America had also written of my rabid anti-semitism, little knowing that I was married to a 'semitic' and had a 'semi-semitic' daughter.

In Australia

While I was travelling, a Communist Party had been formed in Australia and already a schism had developed over the question of who should lead it: members of the former Australian Socialist Party or members of the trade union movement. The two groups had managed to antagonize each other since the split, and by the time Comrade Freeman arrived there was a deep rift separating them. The

⁷⁴ His date of arrival in Sydney was 11 July 1922.

⁷⁵ Emma Goldman (1869–1940): an exponent of radical feminist politics and anti-capitalist thought. Born in Lithuania, she spent most of her adult life in the USA, but was deported to Russia in 1920. She left Russia in late 1921 and wrote of her deep disillusionment with the revolution. The article referred to here was published in *The Worker* (New York), 15/7/1922, under the headline 'Russian Worker Delivers a Smashing reply to Emma Goldman's Lying and Misleading Articles'. The byline is 'Nargin' (without first name). (Zuzenko used the forms 'Nargin' and 'Nargen' interchangeably.) 'Silly fable': in fact Zuzenko had been a committed anarchist for many years, but had renounced his anarchism some time after the October revolution.

late Comrade Freeman only had dealings with the socialist group.⁷⁶ During his short stay he had done nothing to foster the unification of the warring sides, and he had departed leaving a deeper division than before.

Shortly before my arrival the comrades grouped round the trade union movement had appropriated all the Communist Party's furniture at night and placed it on their own premises. They had also seized all their books. The Socialist Party (or rather Reardon, Everitt and Co.,⁷⁷ without the knowledge of the others) had responded by selling the party's printing equipment and type. My arrival, as an organizing comrade from Moscow, impelled them to re-examine the matters which had led to the rift. (In a quarrel the origins of the dispute are usually forgotten with time.) I had to listen to both sides, tell both of them that they were in the wrong and demand that a conference be called to unite them.

A report on the conference was sent from Sydney by me to the Executive Committee, in coded form.⁷⁸ I sent it as soon as the results of the proceedings became clear. The sides reunited on the basis of equal representation on the Communist Party's Executive Committee. As long as the Communist Party of Australia has existed it has not committed any tactical errors, if we discount the split. Its only organizational weakness was that it was not tightly interwoven with the masses. I informed the comrades of the details of the structure of the Russian Communist Party, and it was decided to devote more attention to the establishment of cells in the trade union membership.

During my stay in Sydney I gave twelve lectures about Soviet Russia and succeeded in dispelling the prejudice against Soviet Russia that was forming in the Russian community in Australia under the influence of anti-Soviet agitation by a group of Russians who had returned from Soviet Russia not long before I arrived.

After Reardon, Everitt and Co. had sold the party's printing equipment, printing of the newspaper *The Communist*, of pamphlets, appeals and the like had to be contracted out to private firms, which is very expensive. The lectures I gave in Sydney and Melbourne were for the benefit of the fund for agitation and propaganda. They yielded about £60. This laid the foundations of an agitation and propaganda fund. I handed over to the party's Executive Committee the £110 I had brought from Moscow (all that I had not expended on the journey). To the addresses of the North Queensland comrades I sent subscription notices, which by my reckoning should yield at least another £60 for the party's funds. All these contributions reinforced the party's financial position, but no more

⁷⁶ i.e. the Australian Socialist Party.

⁷⁷ Zuzenko has 'Riordan' and 'Everet'.

⁷⁸ The conference was held on 15 July 1922. The 'report in coded form' is presumably the letter dated 21 July 1922, dealing exclusively with Australian CP matters. CAAL, 495-94-13, p. 31ff. See Document 18, above.

than that. There is much that we cannot do. It will take years to raise the funds to acquire typesetting and printing machinery, and time waits for no man.

Our request is that the Comintern assist us with the acquisition of this equipment. In another report, dealing exclusively with the situation in Australia,⁷⁹ I will try to give a clearer account of the need for such expenditure by the Comintern for the good of the communist movement in all the Anglo-Saxon countries, because the course of history is preparing a place for Australia as the first among the Anglo-Saxon countries to have a workers' government (I mean, one on the Soviet model).

In Sydney I laid the foundations for a Society for Technical Aid to Soviet Russia in Australia, and in early August the party sent me to Melbourne to set up a Melbourne Communist Party branch. While the party was divided, the Melbourne branch had come apart at the seams and ceased to exist. I managed to establish a Russian group, to which I intended to link some English cells. In Melbourne I delivered a few lectures, but one evening, while on my way to my next lecture, I was arrested by the police and detained in Melbourne's central prison. I was arrested on 9 August 1922 and on 17 August I was tried for returning to Australia while being a prohibited immigrant.⁸⁰ There were photographs of me in all Australian ports, along with my fingerprints. The police were able to prove only that I was the person deported from Australia for organizing the Brisbane riots in March 1919. I insisted that my real name was Toni Tollagsen Tjorn, a Norwegian by birth and that my passport, issued by the Norwegian Consul General in Montreal through the consul in Vancouver, was my genuine passport. If the Australian authorities sought to deport me, they should send me to Norway.

There was little the authorities could do with me without calling forth a hue-and-cry against themselves. The Australian Seamen's Union, led by Tom Walsh, took up my case.⁸¹ The leaders of the Labor Party, the proletarian member of Federal Parliament Considine, and others, set about causing a stir. Two solicitors took on my defence. I was sentenced to three months in prison and deportation, but my comrades would not accept my serving out the prison sentence. I was released on bail and my comrades secured a promise from the authorities that if I paid my own fare the authorities in Britain would not impose their penal hospitality on me. The newly re-established Melbourne branch of the Communist Party raised about £65, paid my fare to London and gave me about £20 for personal expenses. The fare to London came to £48. I did not want

⁷⁹ Presumably a reference to the document which follows this one—Document 28—at CAAL, 495–94–18, pp. 18–27, Zuzenko's report to the ECCI, 18/3/23.

⁸⁰ Zuzenko writes 'emigrant', meaning 'immigrant'.

⁸¹ Walsh and his wife, Adela Pankhurst Walsh, were close friends of Zuzenko at this time. A short time later both defected from the cause and were reviled as traitors to the working class.

this collection for myself, preferring to be deported at the Australian government's expense. I offered to put the money into the party's propaganda fund, but the comrades insisted.

I had no time to visit Brisbane or the North Queensland towns to which people kept inviting me.

Before I left Australia I wrote a series of articles in Russian for the Russian community, explaining everything that was happening in Russia. I published these in the form of a booklet of twenty printer's sheets. In Melbourne a bureau of the Society for Technical Aid to Soviet Russia was set up.

On the steamship 'Hobson's Bay', accompanied by Comrades Jock Garden and Tom Payne, two other delegates of the Communist Party of Australia, I departed Australia's inhospitable shores on 7 September 1922. In Fremantle Comrade Tom Payne was detained and his passport seized by the customs authorities. I insisted that he continue his journey to Moscow, heedless of all prohibitions, to show the rulers of Australia that we would take no notice of their caprices. In Colombo police officers arrested Comrade Payne on board the ship and brought him to my cabin to collect his things. A few minutes later he vanished from my cabin without trace. They searched the ship for two hours, to no avail.⁸² By this time the ship's company were fully informed about the mission of communism. Every evening I led discussions with the deck hands and stokers.

A famous Church of England preacher in Australia, Canon Watson, during an argument with me about the nationalization of women in Soviet Russia, challenged me to a debate on the theme 'Religion in the Light of Science and Philosophy'. Not being confident that with my foreign accent I could hold my own against the Holy Father [sic], I suggested to Comrade Garden that he should speak instead of me, but Comrade Garden refused.⁸³ The Holy Father turned out to be not so strong as I expected. In a debate that lasted about four hours he was unable to overcome a single one of my arguments. The audience of several hundred passengers and over a hundred crew members were on my side, which shows a significant shift in Anglo-Saxon thinking. In 1915 or 1916 the same audience would have tossed me over the side. The debate went better than I had expected. Passengers clustered about in knots until two in the morning, discussing the matters we had raised. When we sailed from Australia, a large crowd packed the dockside in Melbourne, singing revolutionary songs. I

⁸² Tom Payne: see the tape-recorded interview with Payne conducted on 17 May 1976 by Ann Turner and Andrew Reeves and held in the National Library of Australia, (NLA ORAL TRC 700).

⁸³ The irony of this request, of which Zuzenko seems to have been fully aware, is that Garden had been a preacher, and could slip into or out of preaching mode as the occasion took him, even after he became a communist.

delivered a farewell speech from the deck of the ship. We sailed to the strains of *The Internationale*.

Looking back over the events on the ‘Hobson’s Bay’, the revolutionary send-off from Melbourne, the mysterious disappearance of Comrade Tom Payne, and our debate, I did not expect to be warmly welcomed in London. I was not mistaken. In London they were waiting for me. I was arrested on board the ship by two Scotland Yard men and flung into Brixton Prison.

In all the prisons I have been in, I have struggled with the prison authorities from the very first day. Knowing that subsequently many of my comrades-in-arms would find themselves in just such conditions, I made it my business to struggle against the brutal, intolerable British prison regime, which destroys not so much a person’s body as his spirit, bringing him down to the level of an object: number so-and-so, cell so-and-so. In His Majesty’s Brixton Prison I had to wage a prolonged struggle day by day to win one concession after another. I had to fight for the right not to wash the floors, the right to exercise where I felt like it (not round the yard like all the others), the right to smoke in my cell, not to attend parade, not to doff my cap to prison officers, etc. My last demand was to be informed immediately of the progress of my case. I demanded that my case be handed over to Scotland Yard to implement the deportation order, and demanded a change of diet. When the authorities refused to meet my demands, at the end of November I declared a hunger strike. All this time I was being held without trial or investigation. They did not observe so much as a semblance of legality. According to English law, nobody can be detained for more than twenty-four hours without being sentenced by a judge.⁸⁴

On the third day of my hunger strike I was transferred to hospital, and on the fifth they started feeding me by force. They choked me twice a day ‘to save my life’ (as a doctor put it) for eight days, and then informed me that my case had been transferred from the Home Office to Scotland Yard. I asked that both my demands be met, or else I would continue my hunger strike to the same conclusion as MacSwiney, who had been held in the same isolation cell.⁸⁵ The authorities gave in. As a result of the hunger strike I was twice summoned to Scotland Yard and questioned about my work in Australia. To the end I maintained that my name was Toni Tollagsen Tjorn, that I was a Norwegian and that I nothing to do with the Third International, being an anarchist by conviction. I had worked, I said, only on technical assistance to Soviet Russia, setting up farming collectives.⁸⁶

⁸⁴ Zuzenko displays an imperfect understanding of English law.

⁸⁵ Terence MacSwiney, Lord Mayor of Cork, starved to death on hunger strike in October 1920. His death provoked large demonstrations in London and elsewhere.

⁸⁶ Zuzenko was interrogated on 19 and 20 December 1922 by Captain Guy Liddell and Captain H.M. Miller. For a transcript of the interrogation see Windle 2005c.

I was prepared to be deported to Norway or Latvia, or anywhere else, if only to avoid telling the enemy I was Russian and an emissary of the Comintern, so as not to give them the chance to speak of the bad faith of Soviet Russia, which was sending forth its propagandists in spite of undertakings not to do this. The conservative newspaper *The Times* printed a dispatch late last November, reporting a speech by the Australian Minister for Defence, [George Foster] Pearce, in which he said that a Russian Bolshevik agent had recently been deported from Australia.

In spite of all Scotland Yard's ploys aimed at obtaining any information at all against Soviet Russia, they had to replace my Norwegian passport with an alien's travel document in the name of Toni Tollagsen Tjorn, — 'nationality unknown' — departing for Russia. From prison I wrote several letters to the Soviet mission in England, asking them to forward my things to my wife. I did not want the [British] sleuths rummaging through my things, which contained all issues of *Knowledge and Unity*, the Brisbane paper I had founded, two Australian statistical yearbooks and all published Australian books on agriculture. I wrote several letters to George Lansbury, the editor of the *Daily Herald*, and to Sylvia Pankhurst. (They are known to be opponents of the Comintern.) During my interrogation sessions at Scotland Yard, I was told several times that the actions of my friends, especially Sylvia Pankhurst, were terrible, that it was wrong to behave as they did, and that such behaviour was impermissible in any civilized society, and so on. I asked them several times how that 'poor defenceless lady' could possibly do them any harm, and received the evasive answer that such actions could have adverse effects upon my fate. From the hints and insinuations of the chief of police I deduced that in connection with my imprisonment the Scotland Yard sleuths wanted to charge Sylvia Pankhurst with poisoning the head of Scotland Yard by sending him some poisoned chocolate. With a comrade who was being released I sent a letter to the Soviet representative in London, asking him to warn Sylvia Pankhurst. In the latter part of January this year I was transported to Newcastle, then Leith prisons and delivered to the SS Irtysh, which was sailing from Leith in Scotland to Petrograd, where it arrived on 31 January this year.⁸⁷

If the comrades on the Comintern Executive Committee feel that any parts of my general report on my work over almost two and a half years spent abroad seem imprecise, I will give a more detailed account in person. I will report on the state of affairs in Australia in a separate memorandum. I will try in a report to the ECCI to set forth my reflections on ways in which agitation and propaganda work might be conducted more successfully in the Anglo-Saxon countries. Edric B. Smith, an American communist engineer, former member of the American

⁸⁷ The Scottish prison and port is named by Zuzenko variously as 'Vleit' and 'Vleis' (in Cyrillic). It seems certain that he is referring to Leith.

Communist Party and now a member of the Russian Communist Party, will be spending two weeks in Moscow. His address will be: Gruzinsky pereulok 4/Staraiia ploshchad 10, Apt. 40. He will be able to supply a clearer picture of the moral temper of the leadership of the American Communist Party.

In concluding my report, I would like to remind the ECCI that the Communist Party of Australia has empowered me to represent it at the ECCI until the Fifth Congress of the Comintern, and to represent it at the Fifth Congress if no other decision has been taken on the matter by that time. A person who has forged close ties with the revolutionary movement in Australia and knows what is going on there can have most success in establishing firm links, following the course of organizational work in the young party, reporting its achievements to the ECCI and sending news of the progress of organizational work. I beg the ECCI to recognize the validity of the mandate entrusted to me by the Communist Party of Australia and place the conduct of matters relating to the Australian communist movement in my care. I request that the ECCI accept my assurances that I am insisting on my right to continue working for the Comintern not for the sake of my career, but for the good of the revolutionary movement in Australia, which I regard as the Achilles heel of British imperialism. Working in Soviet Russia, by applying every effort perhaps I shall be able to assist the revolutionary forces of Australia in binding together. And when the period of organizational work comes to an end, the highest honour for me will be to be in Australia as the standard-bearer of the socialist revolution.

I realize that by my report I shall make many new enemies; I realize that such reports do not make 'careers', but my duty as a revolutionary commands me to call things by their proper names, to call a spade a spade.

With communist greetings,
Aleksandr Mikhailov [ich] Zuzenko (A. Nargen)
Official of the Communist International
Moscow, 28 February, 1923

[Lines below appended in handwriting]

I delivered a report similar to this one at the Unification Conference of the Australian Communist Party. My report was adopted and the resolution carried on this matter was communicated to the ECCI in July 1922. This conference entrusted to me the leadership of the Australian delegation to the Fourth Congress of the Comintern. Before I left Australia I was instructed by the party to work on the ECCI as the representative of the Australian Communist Party.

Aleksandr Zuzenko, alias Nargen.⁸⁸

⁸⁸ A newspaper clipping—'A Soviet Agent Sentenced in City Court to be Deported'—follows in CAAL.

Document 28

RGASPI 495–94–18. 16 March 1923, Zuzenko: report: On the situation of the Communist Movement in Australia. In Russian and German, typescript. Trans. by KW.

Zuzenko used this memorandum to the ECCI to continue his campaign for Comintern employment in Australia. It emphasizes his knowledge of the Australian labour movement. Zuzenko stresses the opportunities for communism in Australia, pointing to the broad sympathy among workers for the CPA, but arguing even more strikingly (after the style of Lenin, in fact) that 'Australia is British imperialism's weakest and most vulnerable point'. He makes an appeal for Comintern aid in financing a proletarian printing works in Australia.

To the Executive Committee of the Third Communist International
by Aleksandr Mikhailov [Mikhailovich] Zuzenko, Comintern official.

Memorandum

On the Situation of the Communist Movement in Australia

The great Russian Revolution with its incredibly great achievements has resounded in every corner of the globe with an upsurge of revolutionary spirit in the proletarian masses and made all socialist organizations, including the IWW (Industrialists) in the Anglo-Saxon countries, confront the need to review their attitude to the proletarian revolution. In Australia, in early 1918, the Queensland Socialist League, under pressure from the rank-and-file majority, drafted a new programme in the spirit of the decisions of the Zimmerwald and Kienthal conferences. In other states, for example New South Wales and Victoria, there has also been a noticeable shift away from the thorny path of socialist petty bourgeois thinking, which the socialist movement had followed until about 1915-16, to the left, towards the path of revolutionary Marxism.

The fierce struggle against the introduction in Australia of compulsory conscription, which mobilized all revolutionary forces in the country to resist rampant chauvinism – successfully, we may add – stirred into life the stagnant swamp of socialist gradualism, while the Russian Revolution forced every socialist to face the question: was he fighting for what was being fought for in distant Soviet Russia, and if so what was the extent of his contribution?

In late September 1918 agreement was reached between representatives of the trade union movement, the Queensland Socialist League and the Industrialists, —with a view to strengthening the rising revolutionary mood of the masses— to embark on coordinated action to organize demonstrations by the unemployed—revolutionary demonstrations with red flags—and take up the struggle for free speech. A demonstration on the evening of 7 November 1918 and a mass meeting in South Brisbane markets, broken up by the police and troops, united all the revolutionary forces of Queensland around the red banner.

The movement felt a need for a revolutionary newspaper of its own. A paper entitled *Znanie i edinienie* (*Knowledge and Unity* in English) was founded, with funds from the Union of Russian Workers, and the socialists and Industrialists took an equal part in its distribution. New venues for street meetings were wrung from the police and bands of soldiers organized by the military authorities, and security teams were formed for meetings. Up to the end of March 1919 a series of very successful demonstrations and mass meetings was held and a mass of unemployed workers deployed for propaganda purposes. On 25 March 1919 a demonstration with red flags culminated in a clash with the police,⁸⁹ the rout of the police detachments and mounted troopers, and the temporary triumph of the workers, a triumph which the leaders of the movement were unable to exploit. For the first time in the history of Australia the sacred and untouchable figure of the policeman appeared before the proletariat as ‘touchable’. The magic wand in his hands was no more than a truncheon, and the street was the best school for revolutionaries. ‘Queensland’s Black Friday’, when several hundred workers and women were beaten by the police during a demonstration on 27 February 1912, was justly avenged. The next day, gangs of soldiers organized by the military authorities began attacking the area where the Union of Russian Workers and the Industrialists had their premises. Battles between patriots and police left some dead and wounded. The Brisbane events, dubbed by the press ‘a Russian Bolshevik revolution’, were echoed in Townsville (North Queensland) in battles with the police and exchanges of fire with troops, and trouble in Port Darwin (Northern Territory) and Perth (Western Australia). The most compromised comrades—those involved in organizing the movement—were arrested and sentenced to six months in prison. Twelve Russians were deported to Siberia after serving their sentences, and the secretary of the Union of Russian Workers was deported, with his wife, to Constantinople.⁹⁰ The accused exploited the legal processes for propaganda purposes, to propound their programme. Both the socialists and the IWW ‘Industrialists’ called themselves Bolsheviks. Those comrades who remained at liberty carried on working harmoniously to prepare the ground for the establishment of a communist party of Australia.

In these turbulent conditions a communist movement was born in the northern states of Australia. In the southern states the preparatory phase was calmer, with the exception of a determined attempt by a large crowd of workers at the Sydney docks to free Paul Freeman, who had declared a hunger strike. In New South Wales, after the failed general strike in August 1917, all the revolutionary forces of that state turned to the trade union movement, with the aim of seizing control of it, exploiting the working masses’ bitterness against their old leaders, who had betrayed the strike.

⁸⁹ The date of this event was actually Sunday, 23 March, 1919.

⁹⁰ i.e. Zuzenko himself and wife Civa (Tsiva, Cecilia).

Organized on the basis of communist groups in Queensland and New South Wales and the left wing of the Socialist Party of Australia, the Communist Party of Australia assumed the leading role in the workers' movement in the two most industrialized states of Australia, Queensland and New South Wales. After unification in July 1922 the membership of the party was just over five hundred, but the influence of this small party among the proletarian masses was immense. Measured by the power concentrated in its hands, the Communist Party of Australia is the strongest and most influential of all communist parties in the Anglo-Saxon countries. The trade union movement of the entire state of Queensland, over 50,000 workers organized in trade unions, is in the hands of the Communist Party of Australia. All officials—all chairmen and secretaries of the unions—are communists. In New South Wales 120 unions are united in the NSW Labour Council. The membership of these unions exceeds 147,000. Of the fourteen-man executive committee of the Labour Council in the state of New South Wales, twelve are communists, including the secretary and the chairman. In Newcastle, the centre of Australian heavy industry, all members of the executive committee of the Labour Council are members of the Communist Party of Australia. Though weak in numbers of actual members, the Communist Party of Australia is strong in having great numbers of sympathizers, who obediently carry out the orders of the party's centre—great numbers of proletarians in the industrial states of Australia. Thus there are approximately 300,000 organized workers under the direct leadership of the Communist Party. In the states of Victoria and Western Australia the Labour Councils undertake no serious action without consulting the Red Labour Councils of Sydney and Brisbane. Those seeking counsel know full well that through the Sydney and Brisbane Labour Councils they are hearing the voice of the Communist Party of Australia, of leaders experienced in the class struggle, who, in the harsh years of economic crisis have managed to stand firm and not yield so much as an inch to the attacking forces of capitalism, and have not only organized the defence of their class against attempts by the bourgeoisie to reduce workers' pay and extend their working day, but have even counter-attacked and achieved a position that nobody in the world can boast of (except for Soviet Russia). The disparaging tone in which some comrades here in Moscow speak of Australia is comical in the extreme.

'By their deeds shall ye know them,' ... The cowed and crushed seamen's unions of Britain, America and Canada ... Wages have been reduced to a minimum below which they can fall no further. There is no sign of an eight-hour working day. Abetted by its venal accomplices, such as Havelock Wilson (in England) and Andrew Furuseth (in America), the bourgeoisie is dictating terms to sailors and implementing its 'American plan'—the open shop (the hiring of

non-union labour).⁹¹ And a similar ‘plan’ is being adopted by the capitalists in all other countries of the world. Since 1919 Australian seamen have achieved a great deal. Their pay is about £18 a month; their board is better than it was in 1919 and crews’ living quarters have been revamped on all vessels, in accordance with directives from the Seamen’s Union. After three months at sea a sailor is entitled to a fortnight’s leave etc. The position of Australian sailors is better than it has ever been. The bourgeoisie is afraid to touch ‘Tom Walsh’s wild red hordes,’ having experienced to its cost all the delights of superbly organized resistance. Led by the splendid communist fighter Tom Walsh and having resolved to fight to the last, the sailors cut all links between Tasmania and the mainland for months, bringing ruin to thousands of Tasmanian farmers and threatening to bring industry throughout the country to a standstill. In July and August 1922 an alliance of manufacturers and employers decided to reduce workers’ pay at their enterprises by 15% in order to increase productivity. In this way they tried to provoke the workers to strike, hoping to stifle them by their organized power. They even succeeded in forcing some workers to come out on strike. Bearing in mind the fact that in July the number of unemployed had reached 100,000, the Communist Party of Australia decided to retire from an unequal struggle. The NSW and Queensland Labour Councils compelled the striking workers to return to work on the employers’ terms. In *The Communist*, and even the bourgeois press, in the articles of Comrades Garden and Howie, so much was said about the need for the workers to respond to lower pay with lower productivity—this form of sabotage was so eagerly promoted—that the nervous bourgeoisie started calling on the workers to turn their backs on the Bolsheviks’ ‘fiendish, reptilian, treacherous’ methods and return to the ‘honest’ old methods of striking. In proposing sabotage in place of open warfare, the Communist Party was mindful of the psychology of the bourgeoisie. Even if a worker worked himself to exhaustion, the day after sabotage was declared the employer would think that the worker was working more lazily than usual. And indeed, within a few days the employers’ attempts to cut pay were abandoned. One after another they began to renounce the venture.

From last September to the present, the situation of the Australian worker may have deteriorated, but it cannot sink to the craven level of the British or American worker. Certain particular traits of the Australian character, the product of the specific conditions of the Australian economy, will never allow the Australian worker to descend to the depths of slavish servility reached by the British worker, disillusioned in everything, whether employed or unemployed.

⁹¹ Havelock Wilson (1858–1929): president of the (UK) National Sailors’ and Firemen’s Union and Liberal member of Parliament; Andrew Furuseth (1854–1938): long-serving leading member of the International Seamen’s Union.

Australia should not be spoken of in dismissive tones. Of all the countries drawn into the last murderous war of 1914–18, Australia alone was successful in ensuring the collapse of the imperialist plan to enact a law on compulsory military conscription. That same Australia that ‘voluntarily’ (under the knout of hunger) supplied Britain with over 300,000 men rejected compulsory conscription by an overwhelming majority in a referendum. Only in Australia were there the stout hearts to wage the struggle against military dictatorship.

Australia, for all that its population is insignificant, is a very important factor in the evolution of legislation and the workers’ movement of Britain and all her other colonies alike. And history is undoubtedly preparing for Australia a role in the future as a vitally important factor in the revolution both in Britain herself and in her colonies, since in the field of legislation and social reform Britain is accustomed to imitating what has been implemented and tested in practice for decades in Australia. In 1902 the women of Australia received the right to vote. All women over the age of 21 are entitled to vote. Only two decades later was a law passed in Britain, in maimed and mutilated form, under which the entire active part of the female population (all women under 30) was exempted from voting rights, and this after a prolonged and determined struggle by the suffragettes. In 1901, faced with the rising power of organized labour, the ruling class in Australia had to enact laws on arbitration, under which conflicts between workers’ unions and employers would be resolved by industrial arbitration courts (pouring oil on troubled waters). In 1910 the Australian Labor Party proved itself the strongest political force in the land, winning 42 seats in Parliament against the Liberals’ 33. On the eve of war the Labor Party gained power not only in Federal Parliament, but also in five of the six Australian states (the exception was Victoria). While in Britain a Labour seizure of power is still a daydream at the limit of people’s wildest hopes, Australia has already shown that the future belongs not to the appeasers, not to the gradualists, but to the new and growing revolutionary power. In the twelve years of ‘Labor’ rule in Queensland, two or three state sugar mills have been built, a few small government fish shops have been opened in a few Queensland towns, and with this their much-vaunted programme of nationalization of industry has come to an end. It is becoming clear to the workers that this is as far as the appeasers will go. In the sphere of social reform, there have been some amendments to the laws regulating working hours and pay, workers’ compensation, pensions, insurance etc., but this is all that the heralds of socialism through social legislation have given and can give.

Faith in the Australian Labor Party as a leader is waning in the working masses of Australia, along with faith in the power of the unions. The new leader, the Communist Party of Australia, is one of the purest ideological parties in the Anglo-Saxon countries, and fully deserves the deep respect in which the fighters for communism are held among the proletariat. In the upper echelons of the

party are concentrated the best revolutionary forces in the country, tried and tested in the class struggle, and this alone explains the strange fact that a numerically small party has in its grasp all the major workers' associations: the trade unions and the labour councils of Australia's most highly industrialized states. As long as it has existed (leaving aside the schism), the Communist Party has not made a single serious mistake in its work. Every decision of the ECCI and of the congresses is implemented.

One of the weakest aspects of the organization is the fact that cohesion with the working masses led by the Communist Party is insufficient. Due attention has not been paid to the formation of cells within the trade unions. The immense amount of work that all active party members have had to do in the recent turbulent years to resist the thrust of organized capital has claimed all their time. This is why, in spite of huge masses of sympathizers, the party remains numerically insignificant. And this is the reason for the restricted funding base of the Communist Party of Australia.

Not long before my departure from Australia work began on achieving coalescence with the masses; intensive work is in hand to set up cells; a plan has been adopted to transfer party forces from one district to another to arrange successful public meetings. According to this plan one hundred or more comrades will gather at an agreed venue, start an open-air meeting, keep order at it, protect the speakers from thugs, help them by asking questions, and hand out literature and so forth.

Since coming into existence the Communist Party of Australia has done much to popularize the ideas of the Russian Revolution by publishing pamphlets with the works of Comrades Lenin, Zinoviev, Trotsky, Kamenev, Bukharin's *ABC of Communism*, etc. Before I was arrested the last time I handed over to Comrade Garden 35 pamphlets (one copy each of those reprinted in Australia) and asked him to convey them to the Comintern library. The party newspaper *The Communist*, published in Sydney, is one of the most successful papers in the Anglo-Saxon countries. By its work the Communist Party of Australia has measured up to its calling. Much has been achieved, but all past work is as nothing compared to the grave trial of political maturity which awaits it in the near future. I refer to seizing control of the proletarian movement called One Big Union. The party will be able to accomplish this only with the aid of the Comintern.

The idea of One Big Union, that is, a union in which workers are organized not by trade but by their branch of industry (a similar form of organization to that in Soviet Russia) was brought to Australia by American 'Industrialists' (the IWW) in 1911-1912 and in a relatively short span of time became deeply rooted among the working masses. In 1916, at the height of its success, the Industrialists could claim about 75,000 members and sympathizers. The Great Russian

Revolution compelled the IWW to review its attitude to matters of the dictatorship of the proletariat, the political struggle, and parliamentarianism. The review of the IWW programme led to rifts and a separation of strata in the organization. The movement's best forces joined ranks with the Communist Party while the remainder were scattered. The remnants of a once strong organization survived in the International Industrial Workers' Union,⁹² which has no strength whatever (it is more like little groups of propagandists than an industrial force), and in Western Australia one or two old-style IWW groups are living out their time.

The lessons of Soviet Russia's Socialist Revolution, and the class struggle itself in recent years have thrown into sharp relief the discrepancy between the Industrialists' theory and the practice of class warfare. They have had to come to a clear understanding of this and accept the inevitability of the revolution, and that of the dictatorship of the proletariat and political struggle. The question of parliamentarism was under discussion much earlier. Comrades Percy Brookfield and Considine were elected to Parliament with Industrialist support at a time when the IWW was still flourishing.

The great service of the IWW to the proletarian movement in the Anglo-Saxon countries lay in their acerbic and truthful criticism of the trade unions, the meretricious old leadership and its conservatism, and their severe, pitiless criticism of the parliamentary fetish. Being proletarians themselves, they called on the workers to overthrow capitalism in the name of an Industrial Republic, and to wage a revolutionary class struggle. They did much to reorganize the proletarian forces. Their plan for One Big Union uniting the workers by their branches of industry is beginning to take firm hold in Australian life. In this movement for One Big Union the errors of the Industrialists who summoned the workers from the trade unions to build industrial unions were taken into account and corrected (the mountain did not come to Mohammed). The builders of One Big Union were those who entered the old trade unions to reorganize them.

In early January of this year, 1923, One Big Union began to function. It brings together the following organizations: the Railwaymen's Union, with 50,000 members; the Miners' Federation, with 45,000 members; the Waterside Workers' Federation, with 32,000 members; the abattoir workers, with 30,000 members; the Australian Building Construction Employees and Builders Labourers Federation, with 40,000 workers; and the Australian Workers' Union, with 120,000 members.⁹³ This makes a total of 317,000 in One Big Union. According to the statistics for 1921, Australia had 771 trade unions with 627,685 members, which means that over 50% of the country's organized workers have joined One Big Union. Before I left Australia, seventeen separate unions in the building

⁹² It is not clear from the Russian title exactly which body is meant.

⁹³ Not all of these organizations can be positively identified from Zuzenko's Russian translations.

industry decided to amalgamate, forming the Building and Construction Section of One Big Union. In the very near future we may expect to see all the scattered groups of industrial workers drawn into the mighty movement of One Big Union.

The urgent task of the Communist Party of Australia in days soon to come is to seize control of One Big Union so as to become master of the situation in the country. This will be very easy if the Comintern pays serious attention to what is happening in Australia and renders assistance in the form of advice and directives, and by sending two or three comrades from the Communist Party of Great Britain (there is a need for speakers and propagandists) and typesetting and printing equipment. The great advantage of the Communist Party of Australia over those of other Anglo-Saxon countries is that former 'Industrialist' proletarians comprise the bulk of the party. The Communist Party is a purely proletarian organization, and this is the secret of its popularity among the working masses and its success in gaining control of a large part of the workers' movement. This is its virtue, its strength, and at the same time its weakness. The party has no major intellectual forces capable of properly organizing political education, lectures or work on newspapers—the party is too proletarian for that.

The Communist Party's publishing affairs have so far looked as follows: about 35 pamphlets containing the speeches of Comrades Lenin, Trotsky, Zinoviev, Kamenev and others were sent for printing to Andrade's Bookshop, 201 Bourke St., Melbourne. The party undertook to assist in the dissemination of literature. In September last year, 1922, the proprietor of the company, an old anarchist, refused under police pressure to print any more revolutionary literature. Through talks with the communist manager of the company, Comrade Laidler, I established that it is possible for us to acquire the company's warehouse and bookshop in Sydney, if the Party obtains the equipment to manage its own publishing affairs. The typesetting and printing equipment will serve as a guarantee that the former proprietors will be reimbursed in regular instalments for the cost of shop. Agitation and propaganda work can be placed on a sound footing only when the Communist Party acquires typesetting and printing equipment, when publishing does not depend on the whim of casual contractors who waver and quail at the first whiff of the police, when it is no longer necessary to pay private printers 30 pounds per month for each issue of *The Communist*. We had to cease publication of our fortnightly magazines solely because the bloodsuckers of private publishing were draining all the Communist Party's funds. If we had our own well-equipped printing shop, it would be possible to publish a daily paper, pamphlets, a fortnightly magazine, fliers, appeals and occasional papers, and take on work from the Labour Councils, printing their reports, appeals etc. A proletarian printing shop would consolidate the Communist Party's material position in perpetuity and give it the kind of strength in election campaigns that it lacks at present.

In requesting that the ECCI assist the Communist Party of Australia by supplying typesetting and printing equipment, I realize that I am contradicting myself. 'If the party is unable to find the funding to sustain itself, it is incapable of anything and might as well stop taking up valuable space.' That is my own view. When I started publishing *Knowledge and Unity* I had £30 in the editorial coffers to publish the paper in Russian and English. The paper began to recoup the investment only after three months. Nothing is impossible. If the Communist Party of Australia is viable and vital, it will collect all the funding it needs and create favourable conditions for its own success, but it will take years for it to do all this using its own resources. The Russian community in Australia and the groups of foreigners who have aided the revolutionary movement by their generous donations are now worn down more than other communities by unemployment ('Australia for the Australians'), and little can be expected of them. Nor will the Anglo-Saxon workers' usual contributions of a few pence go far.

There is no time to lose. The best conditions exist now and only now for consolidating our influence in the proletarian masses who recognize the need to restructure their ranks. Once it has gained control of One Big Union, the Communist Party of Australia will be able to present a 'united front' (without entering into any agreements with the hired clique of gradualists) against the brazen bourgeoisie. Equipment purchased in Germany may be sent to the Communist Party of Australia not as a gift, but on condition that the cost is paid off in an agreed period. I am convinced that the Communist Party will make such a strong recovery that it will soon be able to repay the cost of the equipment. There is no point in sending financial aid as other uses may be found for money.

In my opinion (and in 12 years of work one can learn a few things about a country), Australia is British imperialism's weakest and most vulnerable point. Even an appeaser's organization like the Australian Labor Party, seeking to grow in the esteem of the voters, is promising to struggle against the imperial federation and for absolute national autonomy. The Communist Party of Australia has a broad field of work before it, and, judging by what it has done in the time that it has existed, we may hope that it will cope well with its tasks.

I endeavoured to extort some criticism of the party leaders (members of the executive committee) from those who 'for reasons of principle' have not joined the party, but even those bitter critics who 'could see more clearly from the outside' could not give any valid grounds to justify their inaction. The most serious accusation is that some executive committee members are an unknown quantity to the socialists, although well known to the trade union movement and the industrialists. Comrade Garden was accused of only recently having been a freemason and a Baptist priest. (Comrade Garden is Secretary of the New South Wales Trade Union Council.) Comrade Baker was a soldier in the imperialist

war (until the end of last year he was editor of *The Communist*). The ones who work hardest are the ones upon whom all kinds of inactive mediocrities vent the most spleen. This may be taken as a general rule in all squabbles. Both Comrade Garden and Comrade Baker have done much for the Communist Party of Australia in the past. When I was in prison I wrote in letters addressed to my wife warning the ECCI not to place too much trust in Comrade Garden and not to pass to him anything for the Communist movement in Australia. These letters were handed over to Comrade Piatnitsky. The circumstances which induced me to send these warnings were as follows: Comrade Garden and Comrade Tom Payne were passengers on the steamship *Hobson's Bay*, on which I was being sent to London. A freemason party of thirty-five people was travelling on the same ship. I am of the view that the comedy which was acted out later was prepared in advance by the masons. Comrade Garden was invited by them to a private meeting, at which he was asked to work for the Second International and campaign for cooperation between capital and labour. He was 'unanimously' elected chairman of the Sports Commission, and a delegate to the fourth Congress then had to open and close the ship's concerts with singing of 'God Save the King'. He promised me that he would make use of the masons and their play-acting for purposes of agitation, but instead let himself be fully used for their black propaganda. In Port Said he listened for hours while Egyptian soothsayers and palmists read his fortune, and he gave them written testimonies to their clairvoyance and accurate vision. All these matters are trifles, of course. While he was on board ship he simply forgot that he was a communist and enjoyed himself. He is an Anglo-Saxon, a product of masses to whom revolutionary traditions and revolutionary ethics are alien. Only the stern struggle which is in store for the Anglo-Saxon countries in the near future will produce the fighting type and make plain the rigorous discipline of the Russian revolutionaries. Comrade Garden has done much to promote the success of the CP of Australia, and I would not wish to have exclusive importance attached to what I am saying about him. As secretary of the NSW Trade Union Council he has great influence among the working masses, and only the appeasers will draw satisfaction from the exposure of his failings. However, I felt that I should not conceal what took place on board the steamship.

While engaged in organizational work in Australia, in parallel with my party work I set about establishing an Australian Society for Technical Aid to Soviet Russia. A Provisional Bureau of the Society for Technical Aid to Soviet Russia was founded in Melbourne, and in all the major cities of Australia the toiling masses of Russian emigrants eagerly began to set up groups and agricultural communes. A few days ago letters from Australia told of meetings of a group of New South Wales miners who intend to make their way to Soviet Russia with their equipment and tools, to work in the Donbass coal pits. In Cairns, North Queensland, an agricultural commune of 40 families has been set up. In

Melbourne and Sydney the Society for Technical Aid to Soviet Russia is forming communes of metal-workers.⁹⁴

This spring and summer all these groups and communes plan to set out from Australia to help consolidate the position of industry in Soviet Russia, reinforce the mainstay of the Comintern and support the practical propagation of communism by their work. The members of all these communal associations are members of the Communist Party of Australia. All organizational work is in the hands of the Communist Party's Russian section. The political reliability of the membership of the communes may be vouched for.

The VSNKh [Supreme Council for the National Economy] has a special department which is responsible for immigration matters (or rather, re-immigration).⁹⁵ This department very quickly shows new arrivals that 'an uninvited guest is worse than a Tartar'.⁹⁶ People become disillusioned, dispirited and lose heart, and are soon dragged down by the routine of dreary day-to-day Russian life, along with all the experience they have acquired abroad. The 'California' commune, which I organized while in America, and the 'America' commune, consisting of groups from Seattle and Vancouver, are at present operating in the south of Soviet Russia. In spring last year when members of these communes came to Moscow they forcefully expressed their feelings about A. Mamin, who had assured them in America that Soviet Russia needed their work and that the Soviet government would do everything to assist them. Having spent all their money on machinery and agricultural equipment, they spent many difficult minutes [sic] seeking the funds to pay the customs duty on imported machinery, grain etc., and for the fare to their place of work. It must be expected that Matulichenko or Zuzenko will not have an easy time when the communes from Australia arrive this spring or summer.⁹⁷ The Provisional Bureau of the Society for Technical Aid to Soviet Russia has charged me with applying to the Soviet government for unhindered passage for the communes into the territory of Soviet Russia, and with applying for land for them and other preparatory matters of similar nature.

As long as the ECCI fails to pay due attention to this most important aspect of propaganda for communism, and as long it does not use its influence to change the existing bureaucratic attitude to this matter, the returning communes whose enthusiasm has evaporated and whose faith in the importance of their work has been shaken will be a burden to Soviet Russia, rather than being of value to it.

⁹⁴ See 495-95-8 (Document 22), which contains a letter of 26 August 1922 from an RSFSR representative in Stockholm to the Ipswich comrades, seeking clarification about what sort of *artel* they wanted to establish in Russia and whether they had any capital.

⁹⁵ Zuzenko writes 'emmigration' and 'reemmigration', apparently meaning '(re-)immigration'.

⁹⁶ Russian adage with no English equivalent.

⁹⁷ Mamin and Matulichenko were two of Zuzenko's many aliases.

The purpose of this report is not merely to present a picture of the communist movement in Australia, but also to make the ECCI aware that, thanks to the particular features of the Australian proletarian movement, opportunities exist there which so far do not exist in the other Anglo-Saxon countries. Based on the broad masses of organized labour, the Communist Party of Australia, though weak in numbers of actual members, is strong in having a huge number (for Australia) of sympathizers of the communist movement. Aid is needed. Not financial aid, which has a corrupting effect on the staff of communist parties, but machinery to equip the first proletarian printing shop in Australia. Equipment purchased in Germany will be inexpensive. The Communist Party of Australia will probably see to the freight charges, as well as the customs duty. Comintern aid will show the Australian comrades that special attention is being paid to Australia, that their work is appreciated, that they have an important and responsible mission, and this will boost their strength and give them renewed energy and confidence in their own strength.

The seizure of the proletarian One Big Union movement by the communists (if it happens) will lend the Communist Party of Australia the strength and weight which until now the Labor Party has undeservedly enjoyed, and in the longer term I am deeply convinced that the first of all the Anglo-Saxon countries to declare itself a true Workers' Republic will be AUSTRALIA.

Aleksandr M. Zuzenko

P.S. I have started a report on measures which can promote the success of the communist movement in the Anglo-Saxon countries.⁹⁸

Moscow, 16 March, 1923

Document 29

RGASPI 495–94–15. 4 April 1923, Presidium ECCI: letter: to CC of CPA. Typescript.

With recognition comes responsibilities. This letter is the first of many that would be sent in coming years from the ECCI to the CPA complaining about a lack of timely information. In this case, the information concerns the split of the Sydney group from the Party in December 1922 (see Document 24, above).

April 4, 1923

To the Central Committee
of the CP of Australia

Dear comrades,

In *The Communist* for January 5—the only number for 1923 received by us—we have read the decision of the CP convention about the split between the Sydney Branch and the former CEC of the Party. But we have received no

⁹⁸ This report has not been located in the CAAL collection, or in our researches in RGASPI in Moscow.

information direct from you and especially on the expulsions it would have been important for us to have information in due time.

We are now in receipt of information about the split only from the side of the disruptionist Stettler, and he has i.a.⁹⁹ asked for recognition of his “party”. In a letter, dated December 7 1922 he writes the following:

At a special meeting held on Monday December 4 1922 Sydney Branch declared itself the Communist Party of Australia /The Australian Section of the Communist International/ and herewith apply for recognition. We have started good and have already started a group in the Breakaway section that is doing good work in exposing the CE members to the rank and file that have followed them.

Because of this we today sent the following cables:

Denford—Comintern can under no circumstances tolerate two communist parties stop urge you positively to win oppositional Sydney Branch back to party stop send information about split and present situation stop Presidium.

Stettler—Comintern cannot recognise or tolerate defiance of party central committee or convention decisions stop Request you positively in interest of Australian Working class to unite with old party stop first then you according to statutes of CI have right to appeal to ECCI in all questions when treated wrongly stop Presidium.

We ask you—if not done when you receive this letter—at your earliest convenience to send us a complete report about the split, its origin and its development, and also about the situation in the party. Please notify us about the actions of the expelled former members of the party: Healy, Devlin and Stettler.

We trust that you already have received our letter asking for regular information to be sent to the ECCI.

Yours for communism

THE PRESIDUM OF THE ECCI

Document 30

RGASPI 495–94–128. 1923 [possibly May or June], Earsman: Report: Report on Australia. Typescript.

Earsman did not return to Australia after the Fourth Comintern Congress at the end of 1922, but stayed and worked for the Comintern in Europe in the following year. In the meantime, he had been told by the Australian authorities in Britain that he would not be allowed to re-enter Australia. This document shows that the Comintern used Earsman’s knowledge to interpret information received from Australia, especially about the progress

⁹⁹ *inter alia*

of the 'united front' policy. The CPA changed the name of its newspaper—a decision with which Earsman here disagrees—to assist in implementing the 'united front'. Because of this report, the ECCI sent the CPA a 'please explain' request (Kuusinen to CPA, 27 August 1923, CAAL 495–94–15).

REPORT ON AUSTRALIA

The latest news to hand by reports show that the CP is beginning to make some headway. At the Labor Party Conference of New South Wales the CP application for affiliation was accepted. It was by a very narrow majority, on the casting vote of the chairman. Nevertheless it was secured and along with it 3 members of the Party have been elected to the Labor Party executive as representatives of unions. There are also between 8 or 9 sympathisers out of an Executive of thirty (30). For the All-Australian Executive two delegates were elected, one being [a] member of the party.

In the elections of the Labor Party Executive, 15 were direct members of unions and so also is the President and the two vice-presidents. This shows clearly the effect of communist work among the trade unions.

It would be well and helpful to the party if the Secretariat gave a few minutes' consideration to the question of the Australian Party at this time. It must always be remembered that the Party is small and has no great influence outside of New South Wales and now that they have secured affiliation with the Labor Party a little advice would be most helpful. The struggle for working class leadership now begins and there are many pitfalls for so young and so small a party. A letter to the party at this time should be sent.

Along with the report of the Labor Party Conference I have received information that the name of the party organ *The Communist* is going to be changed to the *The Workers Weekly*. This in my opinion is a mistake. There is no justification at this moment for it when the Party has an opportunity to make good and when it seems that the party membership is increasing. It looks as if it is the case of simply following the British CP.

Speaking of conditions generally in Australia the economic conditions are much the same as they have been for the past 2 1/2 years with a good number of unemployed. In spite of this the workers have maintained their conditions and have not yet been forced to accept a lower standard, though there have been many strikes.

W.P. EARSMAN

Document 31

RGASPI 494–94–21. 12 August 1923, Ipswich Branch of the Communist Party: letter to Comrade Bukharin. In Russian and English; typescript.

Despite the years of work on organizational unity among Australian communists, in 1923 there still remained an outpost of Russian communist workers in Brisbane who insisted on their Bolshevik credentials, and maintained hostilities with the CPA (described here as the ‘Australian Communist Party’, ACP). In this letter to one of the foremost theoreticians of communism, the ‘Ipswich Branch of the Communist Party’ appeals to Bukharin to urge unity among communists in Australia on Bolshevik grounds. It is doubtful whether the Ipswich communists were familiar with the Comintern debate over the application of the ‘united front’ in Australia, as the differences of principle with the CPA they cite over the ALP seem to stem from CPA implementation of Comintern policy.

12/8/23. Ipswich

Dear Comrade Bukharin,

We, the members of the Ipswich Branch of the Communist Party¹⁰⁰ send you comradely revolutionary greetings.

We are convinced that you, who have done so much to popularize communist ideas, are steadfastly continuing the work of awakening the class consciousness of the masses. As theorists, we had occasion to make one of the manuals published by you in our endeavours to spread political education from a communist viewpoint. We trust that the fact of our making use in our studies of such publications as your *ABC of Communism*, *Theory of Historical Materialism*, *Marxist Sociology*, and *Program of the Communist Party (Bolshevik)* is sufficient to show you that we the Ipswich Branch of the Communist Party of¹⁰¹ *Australia* understand the nature and aims of the Communist (Bolshevik) Party and the history of the social revolution. Moreover, we have been working on this field since 1920. You must be of course fully aware of the difficulties confronting our Branch which has to carry on its work in the teeth of the opposition of bureaucratic trade-unionism, the adherents of the Yellow International¹⁰² doing their utmost to eliminate from the political platform the adherents of the Third International, looking upon the latter as their worse enemy. Depending on their numerical superiority, they endeavoured to discredit us by calling us “Bolsheviks” and adherents of the Red International. But we stuck to our guns—opposition and hostility to the bourgeoisie, and carried on in addition to general propaganda among the Australian working class, as strenuous agitation

¹⁰⁰ ‘of Great Britain’ has been struck out, by hand, and ‘Australia’ which was written by hand in its place has also been struck out.

¹⁰¹ ‘Great Britain’ has been struck out, by hand.

¹⁰² i.e., the Second International of social-democratic or ‘reformist’ workers’ parties.

among Russian workers, inculcating into them communist ideas and bringing before them the aims and ideals of the workers of the RSFSR.

As there are many Russian organisations in Australia which, by their titles, claim to be communistic, (the Union of Russian Communist Workers in Brisbane, a similar group in Sydney and the group of Russian communists in Melbourne) so the Ipswich communist party nucleus (Bolshevik) made several attempts to convene a conference with the object of bringing about fusion among these various groups. But all our efforts were in vain. 1921 was a very bad year for us. In 1922 we again convened a fusion conference, but our efforts were frustrated by the appeals which come from abroad in connection with the Russian famine. As the collections on behalf of the famine-stricken districts of Russia continued throughout 1921, 1922 and 1923, none of the above-mentioned communist groups participated in the conference, except Brisbane. Hence, the scrappy nature of the minutes of the conference. As we knew with what kind of people we had to deal, we exercised great caution in connection with the Russian famine. As we were not at all anxious to become actors in Krylov's fable "The Hermit and the Bear" (the bear, having made friends with the hermit, watches over the latter's sleep chasing away the flies from his face. In attempting to kill a troublesome fly, the bear kills his friend—the hermit). Living in an imperialist-democratic State, which is an enemy of the Soviet Government, we never trusted the bourgeoisie, nor the latter's good intentions in connection with famine relief. Therefore, all the conference work came to naught. As we suffer complete defeat and were attacked on all sides by the communists of many shades who attended the conference, we insist [on] depriving those who do not submit to Party discipline of the name of communists. But this only led to closer union between the opportunist communists, which manifested itself by the refusal on the part of the Union of Russian Communists of Brisbane and Ipswich to read at their meeting the political letter received by us from Comrade Herman Bykov¹⁰³ of the Far Eastern Bureau of the CC of the RCP. And these people call themselves communists.

Dear Comrade Bukharin, it is stated in the 6th edition of the book on political literacy published by Kovalenko that there is not a single State without a Communist Party (page 59). In 1921, 51 communist parties in various countries were adherents of the Communist Party. We have here the Australian Communist Party, which is an outcome of the former Socialist Party. Having been made aware of our knowledge of communism and of our belief in communist ideals, we trust that you will assist us by letting us know if the Australian Communist Party was included in the 51 Parties, adherents of the Comintern, in 1921, and

¹⁰³ Bykov, also known as Rezanov, was active in the community of Russian radicals in Brisbane in 1917–19. With Zuzenko, he took a leading role in the Red Flag procession of 23 March 1919, and was subsequently deported from Australia.

also if our Party is recognised as a full-fledged member of the Third International. We want to be quite sure about this, for we consider that as a Communist Party nucleus our place is in the Third International. In our endeavours to ascertain this, and in order to give them an idea of our work, we trusted them with our minutes book for which we hold an official receipt. We were anxious to know why we received no answer and why the books were never returned. But now we know why: because we enforced party discipline and expelled from our ranks adventurers and friends of Breshkovskaia,¹⁰⁴ which facts were mentioned in the minutes. At present these gentry are in the ACP Brisbane Section. Neither could we admit into our nucleus persons who were not only without any political education, but were even illiterate. It is said in the *ABC of Communism* that political illiteracy cannot be tolerated in the Communist Party. They all entered the ACP. All this shows you what kind of political organisation the Brisbane Section of the ACP is.¹⁰⁵ Understanding the meaning of internationalism, we are also strict with persons who have become British subjects after 1918 without showing any good reason for it, for being a British subject implies allegiance to king and crown. Is this admissible for revolutionaries and communists? All such people joined the ACP.

Having explained our position, we beg of you, Comrade Bukharin, not to allow our request to remain a voice in the wilderness. Common sense and our own feelings tell us that our place is in communist ranks. Do make it possible for us to be with you, for if you do not we as young revolutionaries and communists will be compelled to cede the political arena to the yellow trade unionists. In that case we shall be left without a Party. To show you how earnest we are in our work, we lay before you the following request: in 1922, at the time of the 4th International Congress there were delegations from 62 countries. If at the 5th International Congress there will be a delegation from the Australian CP, we beg of you to demand from it the documents of our Ipswich Communist Party Organisation of Bolsheviks, and to let us know if we are to continue the work planned by us together with Paul Grey Clark in 1920, or if we are to dissolve. For work in the ACP is impossible, for it is with the Third International when it is to its advantage, and passes resolutions in favour of collaboration with the Labour Party when this suits it better. The enclosed newspaper cutting will show you that this is a fact. The Labour Party is the Second International, which betrays the workers. If we join the Labour Party, we must submit to party discipline. When it suits them they will use their power to compel us to support the Labour Party, but we are not willing to support the Amsterdammers in the person of Ramsay MacDonald, which is admissible in the ACP. If your

¹⁰⁴ Ekaterina Breshko-Breshkovskaia was a Socialist-Revolutionary activist who became known as 'the grandmother of the Russian Revolution'.

¹⁰⁵ The next line has been cut off the microfilm image of the page. It has here been reconstructed from the Russian version.

constitution allows it we beg of you to assist us or to let us know whom we have to approach for a visa for free entry in to the RSFSR, in order that we may shake hands with you in a truly comradely fashion. If you are acquainted with comrade Paul Grey Clark, please give him, as well as comrade Herman Bykov-Rezanov, our communist greetings.

With Communist Greetings
Executive Committee of the CP Org.
Chairman: V. Tupikov
Treasurer: V. Kugatov
Secretary: Kochetigov-Lubimoff.¹⁰⁶

Document 32

RGASPI 495–94–17. 1 November 1923, R. Stewart: letter: to The Secretariat (Australia). Present in a German version only, typescript. Trans. by KW.

This letter is a response by the Comintern to requests by Russian communists in Brisbane and Ipswich to affiliate with the Comintern. It was sent to Australians (whether in Moscow or Australia is not clear) and urges them to attempt to win over to the CPA the genuine communists from among these Russians.

Moscow, 1.11.23
The Secretariat (Australia),

Dear Comrades,

The enclosed documents were sent to Comrade Bukharin by a branch of the Union of Russian Workers.

They relate to attempts made in Brisbane in 1921 to set up a unified organization, and to internal differences between two branches of the organization in Ipswich and Brisbane.

I have studied these documents carefully and am of the opinion that the people and organizations concerned are Russians living in Australia and only loosely linked with one another, some of them communists, but mostly non-communists. At their unification conference, unity of the various parts could not be achieved as a result of ideological, political and personal differences.

I propose that the Communist Party of Australia be advised that they should attempt to win over those elements which would make good party members. The authors of the enclosed documents should be told that the CPA is the only organization in Australia that can be recognized by the Comintern.¹⁰⁷

R. Stewart

¹⁰⁶ The signatures appear only in the Russian manuscript version. Lubimoff (Liubimov) signs in Latin script with this spelling. 'Lubimoff' is a pseudonym of Kochetigov.

¹⁰⁷ This last paragraph is sidelined by hand and marked in English, in handwriting: 'Attended to'.

Document 33

RGASPI 495–94–15. November-December 1923, ECCI: letter: to CPA. Typescript.

The Comintern's official reply to the 'Ipswich Branch of the Communist Party' was sent late in 1923 (the letter itself indicates '5 December', but it was attached to a covering letter dated '27 November'). It was included in the following communication to the (affiliated) CPA, with the advice to recruit as many of the Russian communists as possible. CAAL also includes a 'suggested letter' to the Ipswich communists, though it is not clear whether this or the shorter version was sent to them, nor whether the 'suggested letter' was copied to the CPA. The 'suggested letter' remains interesting, however, in hinting at the Comintern's 'united front' policy with regard to the ALP. It was a policy to which a brief letter could not possibly do justice, and was unlikely to have been sent on those grounds alone.

27th November, 1923

To the CP Australia.

Dear Comrades,

We are in receipt of a number of communications from an organisation at Ipswich. These include an address to the Russian Proletariat, Minutes of a Unity Conference held at Brisbane on June 12th and continued later in June, also copies of letters passing between Union of Communist Workers and the Ipswich CP organisation.

From these communications we learn that considerable friction prevails amongst these sections, which our Australian Party should be able to allay and probably, in consequence, recruit any amongst these comrades who would make good members of our Australian Party.

We enclose you copies of the communications and our reply, and ask you to give them attention and convey your observations to us as speedily as possible.

With Communist Greetings,

ECCI

December 5th

TO THE COMMUNIST PARTY ORGANISATION

(BOLSHEVIK)

IPSWICH, AUSTRALIA

Dear Comrades,

We have received your report addressed to comrade Bukharin and have examined the whole matter. We request you to approach the Australian Communist Party which is the only Australian Section recognised by the Communist International. The latter has been informed on this question.

With Communist greetings,

The Secretariat of the ECCI

Suggested letter to the Communist Party Organisation (Bolshevik), Ipswich, Australia.¹⁰⁸

Dear Comrades,

Your communications have reached us through Comrade Bucharin and have been carefully examined. We regret that Unity Conference of which you enclose Minutes had not completely satisfactory results. Your enquiry as to whether the Communist Party Australia is one of the sections of the Communist International admits of but one answer. Yes. The Communist International recognises only one Party in any country. The policy of the CPA in seeking affiliation to the Labour Party Australia is not because of love for the Labour Party but in keeping with the necessity of the Party to seek to become a party of the masses. That the policy is a right one is being proved by experience, particularly in Great Britain where the CP influence is exposing the reactionary character of the Labour leaders without isolating the party from the workers and their daily struggles. We strongly advise you to get into touch with the CPA as only in loyal cooperation within a definitely constituted section of the CI can your efforts be of real value and the cause of the Australian workers be successful.

For the United Front of the Australian working class and their leadership by the CPA.

With Communist Greetings.

ECCI

¹⁰⁸ The body of this letter has a diagonal line drawn across it, indicating either that it was a draft or was superseded by a final version which has not been located in CAAL.