

Section 2

Wilderness years: 1924–1928

The documents in this section cover the period from early in 1924 to the end of 1928, that is, from before the Fifth Congress of the Comintern until just after the Sixth. The Sixth Congress marked Stalin's victory within the RCP over Bukharin (though the latter remained—briefly—President of the Comintern), and its principal doctrinal outcome was to declare that the world had entered the 'Third Period', characterized by increasing capitalist crises, imperialist wars, and threats against the Soviet Union. The policy outcomes of the Sixth Congress were highly significant, but they would take another year to impact fully upon Australia, and their momentous effects will be charted in the next section. But for the years which this section covers the reality was that the relative stabilization of capitalism in Australia, according to the communist formula, continued. The Comintern's 'united front' tactic of making an alliance with the ALP produced both confusion and dissension within the Party, and in important respects deflected it from developing. One of the Party's founding members, Guido Baracchi, urged it to dissolve itself in 1925; upon resigning in December that year, Baracchi complimented the communists, but felt 'that the Party itself, as an organisation, is such a tragic farce that I cannot bear to be associated with it a moment longer' (495–94–26). In 1926 it lost the services of Jock Garden to the ALP and Trades Hall. Baracchi and Garden were formally expelled at the Sixth Conference in December 1926, though Baracchi's political journey was complicated and he would take his final leave of the Party only in 1940, and Garden was dogged into the 1930s by claims that he was Moscow's agent inside the ALP (Ellis nd). In sum, in the mid-1920s, the Party was very weak. Furthermore, the Comintern's interest in the CPA was desultory. The Party had worked hard to meet the Comintern's insistence on a united Communist Party; now disappointment crept in and the future began to look bleak. This was reflected in defections from the ranks, such as the two mentioned above, and in the bitterness of in-fighting, particularly over an appropriate orientation toward the ALP. The two main themes of the documents in this section are organizational weakness, and the CPA's preoccupation with the Labor Party.

The organizational side of the CPA came under Comintern scrutiny from the moment the Party was recognized as a national section. The expression 'could do better', which tends to blight every school child's report card at some stage, was almost a refrain in correspondence from the Comintern on organizational matters. In 1924, the ECCI complained that:

We have no up-to date knowledge of the condition of the Party, or whether its membership and influence is increasing or decreasing. We receive no indication as to whether the policy being operated by the Party is correct, and whether it produced results. So long as this silence on your part is maintained, we can never hope to build an effective section of the Communist Party in Australia. (Document 35)

In August 1927 the Organizational Department of ECCI wrote to the CPA to say that mail was not getting through; it asked the Australians to improve their communications, and then criticized them for defective organizational work (495–94–33).

The Australian comrades were defensive, and sometimes even defeatist, in reply. The flavour of this period may be ascertained from some correspondence from Carl Baker in Newcastle, NSW, to the Secretary of the Executive Committee of the International Red Aid organization (created by the Comintern for particular campaigns), which was collecting funds for the defence of strikers around the world. In a letter of 25 March 1926, Baker wrote:

Let me make one or two matters clear. The CP in this country has been on the decline for several years. The party today is smaller than ever before and its activities are more restricted. Its membership is insignificant, its organisation in the trade unions has practically ceased to exist, its paper has but a small circulation and the Executive of the Party today, while made up of existing communist material, has no prestige whatever in the labor movement, and is not taken seriously by any labor organisation.

As an organization, Baker argued, the Party is confined to Sydney; there are a handful in Brisbane and some without direction in northern Queensland. 'To sum up—the CP of A at the present time has ceased to be a serious factor in the Australian Labor Movement and is moving rapidly towards dissolution' (CAML 539–3–232). It came as no surprise when Baker left the Party in 1926, expressing sentiments similar to those of Baracchi. Baker, in any case, was one of the 'unreliable' middle-class communists (he was an optometrist), but in September of the same year, the much more reliable Hector Ross wrote to the same Executive Committee giving other reasons why they still could not fulfil the latter's requests: 'The general condition of the workers is very favorable when compared with that of workers in other countries.' They have a shorter working week, and Labor state governments; it is hard to interest them in the 'White Terror' in Europe (CAML 539–3–232).

The organizational picture painted by Baker may have been dismissed as coming from a class enemy, but it was essentially confirmed by reports given a couple of years later to the April 1928 meeting of the Political Secretariat of the ECCI, which considered matters related to the Australian party (see Documents

47, 48 and 49). Robson, an English communist who had attended the December 1927 conference of the CPA on behalf of the Comintern, reported that ‘Politically and organisationally the Party was and remains extremely weak and inexperienced’.

That the CPA was weak did not mean that it was inactive, but rather that its activities lacked steady direction and brought no appreciable gains. In an attempt to respond to the ‘united front’ policy, communists joined and strove to influence the Labor Party, until the ALP expelled them or absorbed them. It meant attempting to gain positions in trade unions, until officialdom itself became attractive to leading communists. Jock Garden’s translation to secretary of the New South Wales Labor Council in 1926 was more than a key factor in his expulsion in December that year; it also led to the CPA’s increased focus on influencing rank and file unionists. Jack Kavanagh, who owed his position as an organizer for the NSW Labor Council to Garden, led the ideological charge against him (see Document 41), and soon became a highly influential leader in the trade union movement. (Despite his leadership profile, he himself would be humiliated and expelled by the Party in January 1931 for right-wing deviation, after attempting to have Australia exempted from the Comintern’s ‘social fascist’ line towards the ALP. The CPA, even when it painstakingly built its reputation among the workers, seemed to be expert at destroying its own gains.) In addition, there were frequent—perhaps too frequent—demands from the Comintern and its international front organizations to mount a campaign, or raise money, in this or that cause: ‘Hands off China’; against the conviction for murder of the anarchists Sacco and Vanzetti in the United States;¹ and for the International Defence Committee in aid of Colorado miners (as Moxon and Robson reported, among other things, in 1928; see Document 49).

The difficulties of communication are another important theme of the documents in this section. They added to the sense of isolation that communists in Australia felt, and given the reliance of communists on authoritative advice from the centre, it added to their sense of strategic drift. While Earsman and Garden had attended the Fourth Comintern Congress in 1922, there were no Australians at the Fifth Congress in mid-1924, Australia being represented by Dora Montefiore. Hector Ross was in Moscow for the ECCI meeting of April-May 1926. Tom Wright, secretary of the Party since 1924, spent August to October of 1927 in Moscow, discussing Party matters with the ECCI leaders. Chief among these matters were strengthening the Party’s work in the trade unions, opposing the ‘White Australia’ policy, and relations with the ALP. The result was the ‘October Resolution’, the main thrust of which was to support communist

¹ Nicola Sacco (1891–1927) and Bartolomeo Vanzetti (1888–1927) were Italian immigrants to the United States, and anarchists, who were convicted of murder and—after substantial domestic and international protest—executed.

propaganda in Australia, and to attempt to transform the Labor Party into a genuine workers' (i.e. communist) party (see Document 45). Herbert Moxon went to Moscow for a similar meeting in April 1928 (along with the English communist Robson, returning from Australia, and Norman Jeffery and Jack Ryan). Esmonde Higgins was the CPA's delegate to the Sixth Comintern Congress in July–September 1928, but arrived in the midst of its six weeks of sessions. His report on the Congress is Document 53.

While personal contacts were intermittent, mail—as has already been noted—took months to arrive, if it ever did. The Australian secretary noted that one letter from the Agitprop department of the Comintern in 1926 had taken seven months to reach Sydney (Document 42). At the end of 1927, Jack Howie reported to the Party's Seventh Congress that 'Our contact with Headquarters has failed [during the past year] and we are practically isolated from the Communist Parties of other countries of the world' (495–94–35). This may have been due largely to the series of measures taken by the Australian and British governments to confront what they saw as a serious communist threat. In 1921, Australian Customs regulations were expanded to prohibit a wider range of undesirable material from entering Australia; and in 1926 the Crimes Act was amended to broaden the range of activities considered a threat to good order. Meanwhile, the British government had acted to stop the transfer of money from Moscow to Australia through British banks.

The Executive Committee of the Comintern concentrated its attention on 'the Australian question' three times during this period: the first time at a Plenum in April–May 1926; the second in October 1927; and the third at a meeting of the Political Secretariat in April 1928. At the 1926 meeting, Hector Ross travelled to Moscow to present a report (Document 37), and the subsequent 'Resolution on the Australian Question' (Document 40) was adopted at the CPA's Sixth Conference in December that year. Wright went in 1927, and in 1928 Moxon, Jeffery and Ryan (with the Comintern's view put by R.W. Robson). Standard Comintern procedure was followed in each case: seek information from a national section, draft a document that uses this information but reflects Comintern priorities, and expect, allow or require the particular section to adopt it. The quality of such resolutions depended heavily on the clarity, quick-wittedness and forcefulness of the national section's representative(s). Only in the 1928 case was there a change of routine and, once again, policy towards the ALP was at the root of it. Moxon's criticisms of the CPA were driven by his desire to change the Party's policy on the Labor Party by outflanking the ALP rather than building a revolutionary alternative within it. At different periods, Moxon could be described by a variety of communist formulae; let us simply say here that he was a man of the 'Third Period' *avant la lettre* (and while he would initially do well by the Comintern's subsequent change in policy later in 1928, like most communist leaders, he would not survive as leader through the 'Third Period').

Moxon ultimately got his way, at least in the case of Queensland, where his Party support base lay, but Jeffery and Ryan dissented in their report to the ECCI. It would be a taste of the turmoil to come in 1929 in the Australian Party, explored below in Section Three.

The resolutions that were often the product of these trips were part of the prevailing Comintern ‘style’, which moulded facts, hopes, prediction and guesswork into authoritative sounding position papers, based increasingly on the arbitrary ‘periodization’ of post-First World War history (reaching its formulaic height in the ‘Third Period’). The difficulties with this style are clear from the Australians’ confusion about how, as good communists, to deal with the ALP. The fact which communists had to confront in many countries, but particularly in Australia, throughout their existence was that the industrial working class was frustratingly loyal to what the communists saw as ‘reformist’ parties which could not but disappoint and ‘betray’ its interests. A key issue, therefore—if not *the* key issue—was how to win the workers away from such reformists. The numerous twists and turns in the communist answer to this question will not be traced here, but for our purposes they form a text (sometimes ‘sub-’, and sometimes ‘supra-’) in many of the documents in this collection.

Document 34

RGASPI 495–94–15. no date [early 1924], ECCI: letter: to EC of CPA. Typescript.

This letter is a complaint from ECCI that the CPA is not engaged properly in building the party. It rejects, in particular, the view that the CPA should be focused chiefly on work in the trade unions; it advocates reaching beyond trade union leaderships to the workshop. Attempts to replace or bypass trade union leaderships led to the departure from the Party of Jock Garden and his supporters in 1926.

To the Executive Committee of the CP of Australia

Dear comrades,

After reading thru your statutes and especially your last report, we ask you kindly to take up your statutes and party rules for consideration and revision. We do not wish to criticize them from here; we only ask you yourself to find out in which way they could be improved.

It is one of the most important problems for your party to find the forms for the best application of the communist organization in Australia. The experience of the last year has shown that you have not been on the right path, as your membership has sunk down to 250, according to your last report, dated November 1923.

One of the most important questions, when discussing the statutes for a party, is: where is the centre of gravity to be placed?

We think that the “centre of gravity” should not be in the Trade Unions—although this is one of the most important fields—but in the workshop. The shop nucleus must be the heart of the communist party. The workers are scattered over the places where they live, but in the shops the party finds them concentrated, and the shop is the place where the party must organize the workers.

The party is a political body, the trade unions have their activity on the economic field. That is one reason why the party also not should be based upon the trade unions. But also in the trade unions there is a very great task for the party, and this is the reason why it is very necessary for every good communist party to have active and well organized groups of communists in every trade union. But these communist trade union factions should not be the base for the party organization. They should be suborganisations of the party, like factions in the parliaments, in municipal bodies, in cooperatives, in military units etc.

In your statutes you have abandoned the local branches. This is a fault, then still there always is a need of local meetings of the workers; around the places where the party members live there still are many important tasks, which must be attended to by the party.

To dissolve every kind of territorial organization is as bad as to organize only industrial branches, as some American comrades have proposed.

The main local tasks can in the best way be attended to by small local groups with clearly defined tasks. We refer to the enclosed document about the organisation of nuclei and working groups, from which you may see, how these groups are to be organized and what kind of work they are supposed to do.

When entering a Communist party a worker certainly should hand in recommendations from at least one or two earlier party members, but the time of probation can be different in different countries. In a country like Russia, where the Communist Party is in power, the probation must be much harder and taken for a longer time than in the capitalist countries. We ask you to consider the question, if your probation time, three months, is not a too long time for a worker in Australia. We do not claim that this time is too long for a non-proletarian intellectual. With the temporary removal would it not assist you in the development of your party to a real mass party?

A small party like yours is very likely to get infected with sectarian tendencies, if the natural growth of it is hampered by too many difficulties put in the way of true revolutionary workers, wishing to become members of the party. Your first task now in Australia is to build a real good and fighting Communist Mass Party.

We advise you to go very thoroughly into this matter. A careful study of the Thesis on the Organisation of the Communist parties (3. world-congress)² will give you much valuable advice and assistance.

The Organisation Department of the Executive Committee of the CI is working on a general plan about party-organisation—putting especial stress upon the structure of shop-nuclei. In the next future a copy of this plan will be sent to you.

We are sure that you yourself will find which dangers there are in your present form of organisation, which will develop the party—based as it is only upon the basis of the trade unions—to a general opposition movement in the trade unions, but not *to* a real fighting Communist Mass Party

With the best wishes for a successful work we are
Yours for communism

Document 35

RGASPI 495–94–24. 18 August 1924, Secretary ECCI: letter: To CC of CPA. Typescript.

In this letter the ECCI puts its view that communication between the CPA and Moscow is poor, a view supported by the lack of an Australian representative at the Fifth Comintern Congress, and by the paucity of information about the CPA arriving in Moscow. What little of the Party's press that has been seen is uninspiring. The ECCI states that the Australian section is one of the weakest in the Comintern, and requests information immediately on a range of organizational and background matters.

To the Communist Party of Australia
Central Committee

Dear Comrades,

The Fifth Congress of the Comintern has now concluded, and I expect you will receive a report covering the main decisions from Dora Montefiore. She fell ill, and had to return to Germany before the Congress actually concluded, but I gathered from her that she intended procuring all the available material in order to compile a complete report for you.

During the last two years, the contacts and communication between the Australian Party and the Secretariat have been very bad indeed. The supply of information regarding the whole situation in Australia has been totally inadequate to enable us to form any real impression of what is happening. This is also true regarding party information itself. We have no up-to date knowledge of the condition of the Party, or whether its membership and influence is increasing

² This seems to be a reference to the 'Theses on the Structure of Communist Parties and on the Methods and Content of their Work' adopted by the Third Comintern Congress in July 1921. Lenin, following this conference, complained of this resolution that it was 'too Russian' (Degras 1956, 257–71).

or decreasing. We receive no indication as to whether the policy being operated by the Party is correct, and whether it produced results. So long as this silence on your part is maintained, we can never hope to build an effective section of the Communist Party in Australia. We would very strongly urge that the Central Committee take immediate steps to remedy this deplorable condition of affairs, and to see to it that we are regularly informed of the whole of the Party's work, and of the changing situation in Australia.

Occasionally, we receive copies of the *Workers' Weekly*, and in the paper we notice a flatness and lack of animation. Our paper does not seem to be alive. Instead of being a living part of the actual every-day struggles of the masses, it tends rather to be merely an abstract pseudo journalistic "write-up" upon any subject. We would strongly recommend more concentration by you on the character of our paper. Strenuous efforts should be made to secure a regular supply of information from the workshops, factories, etc. regarding the everyday struggles. In this way, by a systematic treatment of the class struggle news supplied, our paper would, from time to time, become the means of expressing these struggles. This would attract the workers to our paper, and encourage them to begin looking upon it as their own. We do hope a strenuous effort will be made by you in this direction.

The Congress which has just terminated has sent out the slogan:

"A World Party and the bolshevisation of all its sections!" This means that our most important task for the next year must be concentrated on our weakest sections, and ensuring their development into real live sections of an effective International Communist Party.

Australia is one of the weakest sections of the Communist International. Consequently our task is heavy here.

We earnestly urge that more intensive party work be put in by our members in Australia. Workshop groups and nuclei should be formed immediately, as these form the basis for the building of our party, and without them it is utterly impossible to maintain any contact with the masses and ever to become a mass party. More intensive campaigns should be initiated amongst the workers, giving very special consideration to the trade union movement. We are sure that these things are appreciated by you, but in our opinion, they do not receive adequate attention.

We would especially urge that you immediately prepare a report for us covering the following points:

1. The Party. Its membership, where they are situated, and how their activities are organized.
2. The Paper. How it is edited and controlled, and its circulation.
3. The character of the organized trade union and labour movement:

- a. Total number of organized workers
 - b. How they are organized
 - c. General influence and effectiveness.
4. A survey of the general situation and progress of the class struggle.

If you could appoint some comrades immediately to compile this material, it would help us considerably, and we on our part will endeavour from time to time to assist you in every possible way by making suggestions, offering criticisms, and encouraging where the direction and the policy of the party is correct.

The Fifth World Congress made it clear that our tasks are greater than ever, and we must therefore set to with greater and greater energy.

With Communist greetings,
The Secretary of the EC of the CI.

Document 36

RGASPI 495–94–28. no date [but presumably soon after 30 March 1926], Simonov: report: On Kushnarev. Present in German only, no Russian version located; typescript. Trans. by KW.

In this document responding to an obituary in *Pravda*, Simonov attempts to put on record some of the complicated history of the formation of the CPA from various radical currents in the Australian socialist movement, and (his somewhat heroic view of) his own role in the development of the CPA.

In the obituary devoted to Comrade I. G. Kushnarev (A. Rogov, *Pravda*, 30.3.26, No. 72), the writer, who clearly has little knowledge of Australia, commits a regrettable error. Comrade A. G. Rogov writes that Comrade Kushnarev was a member of the ‘Australian International Socialist (now Communist) Party’. This party was called the Australian Socialist Party. It was sometimes called ‘The International’ after the name of its official organ, *The International Socialist*, to distinguish it from the official organ of the other socialist party, *The Socialist*. Both groups were factions of the same Australian Socialist Federation, which was headed by Tom Mann, while he was in Australia. After Mann’s departure, the Federation declined and soon folded. One of the factions, under the name ‘The Australian Socialist Party’, more or less adhered to the propagation of the ideas of internationalism. On this basis it chose the name ‘The International Socialist’ for its newspaper. The other faction became a purely local organization of the state of Victoria (more precisely, of Melbourne, the capital city of Victoria) and an appendage of the reactionary Labor Party. Both factions, however, came to a swift dissolution. The first, the ASP, existed mainly in Sydney, but a number of provincial groups belonged to it, and Comrade Kushnarev was a member of one of these groups. Until Comrade Kushnarev’s departure (before 1917) this

faction was fairly active as a purely propagandist faction. It could not, however, be considered a revolutionary organization, as it was completely divorced from the masses. It regarded participation in the activity of trade unions, to which over 65% of Australian workers belong, as 'fundamentally' harmful or 'unsocialist'.

In 1917 and 1918, this 'party' finally shrank to an insignificant family group, centred round the printing press, and in reality owed its existence solely to the fact that for this group the printing press represented a certain source of income.

The rise of the Communist Party in Australia began in 1918 with small clandestine groups in Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne and other centres. In 1920 it became (still in secret) a party with a programme and a constitution. By this time, however, it exerted significant influence over the trade unions and bore the entire weight of the propaganda campaign against the intervention in the RSFSR. Under its influence, sharply worded resolutions of protest were formulated at all trade union congresses and conferences against that intervention. These resolutions were known to have enormous influence on the Australian troops on the Archangel front, and in England, and on the Canadian and American troops in the Russian Far East.

When the ASP became aware of the great influence of the CP, it was seized with anxiety, as it had until now regarded itself as 'the organization furthest to the left' in Australia. It therefore convened a conference of 'active rebels' with the aim of establishing a legal communist party.³ Naturally, those who attended were mainly members of the existing CP. The latter were quite sincerely prepared to take part in this conference, as they were already strong enough to show themselves openly as a party, and the ASP proposal concerning their premises, printery and newspaper suited them very well. A 'United Communist Party' was formed, and feverish activity commenced. The ASP clearly needed this as publicity for itself (weekly meetings in their hall on Sundays, with collections of funds). On what turned out to be a thoroughly unlucky day for them, their leaders proclaimed their party the Communist Party, and expelled all members of the first Communist Party from the premises and the printery, hoping in this way to strengthen their own position and destroy the first Communist Party. But the first Communist Party was already so strong that within a week it possessed a better editorial board and a better newspaper, *The Communist*, which exists to this day. As the author of these lines has been regarded as the instigator and organizer of this first Communist Party, the People's Commissariat for External Affairs and the Communist International have received numerous reports from the ASP leadership alleging that he is in the pay of Australian military intelligence and has recruited the dregs of the population of Australia

³ 'Active rebels': this phrase given in English.

under the banner of a 'Communist Party' in order to discredit the very idea of communism. The usual membership of the ASP (about thirty), who until now had had blind faith in their leaders, now questioned the behaviour of these leaders and set up a special commission to investigate the whole business and to review Party affairs. The result of this investigation was the dismissal of these 'leaders' and the handover of the printing shop to the Communist Party. Thus the ASP ceased to exist. The former general secretary became a factory foreman and participated eagerly in the exploitation of the workers. His wife opened a stationery shop with the former editor of the defunct *International Socialist*.⁴ From 1921 to this day the CP is the Australian section of the Comintern. Early this year it was declared illegal under a law passed by the reactionary federal government, and it is entirely possible that it will temporarily collapse, as the Australian workers still have insufficient experience to operate illegally. But the founders of the Party probably still remember their brief experience of 1918–19, and we may assume that after some time the Party will rise again as an illegal organization.

This Communist Party is therefore not the former ASP or the Australian International Socialist Party. The founders of the CP were mostly members of the IWW.

P. Simonov,

Former Secretary General and Editor of the newspaper of the Union of Russian Communist Workers in Australia until 1918, and Consul General of the RSFSR in Australia (January 1918–November 1921).⁵

13 Granatny Lane,
Moscow
Telephone: 3–41–52

⁴ 'Former general secretary': these lines refer to Arthur Reardon and his wife Marcia. See Document 9, above: the letter from Simonov to the Comintern of 8 April 1921 (495–94–6). The former editor of the *International Socialist* is Ray Everitt.

⁵ The latter date is puzzling. Simonov relinquished his office in August and left Australia on 20 September 1921. See reports in *The Communist* for these months.

Document 37

RGASPI 495-94-29. 14 April 1926. Report of the CP of Australia to the ECCI. Typescript.

This report was presented by Hector Ross to a meeting of the ECCI in April and May of 1926, a meeting requested by the ECCI after the proposed 'liquidation' of the CPA by Guido Baracchi at the end of 1925. The outcomes are presented in Documents 38, 39 and 40, below. Ross is keen to stress that the Party is a going concern, but requests financial assistance from the ECCI.

REPORT OF THE CP OF AUSTRALIA TO THE ECCI. 14.IV.26

I. ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

DEVELOPMENT OF BRITISH AND AMERICAN CAPITALISM during the last few years has been considerable in steel, textile, electric, cement, paper industries and agriculture. The present move to erect a high tariff wall, particularly in the metal industry is the result of the influx of foreign capital. This process is most clearly marked by the operations of Vickers from England and the erection of Ford's motor factories in Australia while plans are being made to transfer German nitrogen plants to New South Wales under the control of mixed company.

Inefficient Research Work.

The Australian Section has been severely handicapped through the lack of the Research Bureaux. Much of the work is voluntary, records are scarce and detailed information regarding the above growth of modern industry is not available.

The Attitude of Governments to the Workers.

All governments in Australia have developed a more ruthless policy in suppressing strikes especially in the last year when the arbitration Court has proved its uselessness as an instrument of social peace.

Labour Governments Suppress Strikers.

Queensland and West Australian Governments have during the year openly fought striking transport workers. In some cases police violence was employed and in others scabs were protected and thugs permitted to drive militants away from the fighting centre. In cases where the Labour Government assisted striking workers or remained neutral in a dispute such action resulted from direct militant pressure from the trade union movement. Such actions were invariably accompanied by considerable sabotage.

The Labour Governments have attempted to give small concessions to the workers without offending the petty bourgeoisie and in order to convince foreign

capitalists of the stability of the Labour regime they have been very definite in crushing any substantial demand or any sign of militancy coming from the working class.

The open formation of a skeleton fascist organisation in Melbourne which has received the endorsement of the Prime Minister and the semi-fascist bodies in West Australia and Queensland are an indication of the struggles of the future.

General Economic Outlook.

Industry in general is in a sound position. A succession of good harvests and successful marketing have been reported. Last year's wool clip was a record, 11% above the previous year and other branches of the pastoral industry are improving their position. Industry is also fairly stable, and in some cases government bounties have been given to assist the establishment of new industries such as paper, cement and hemp.

Unemployment is not considerable and statistics are extremely unreliable, and from the official figures from the Trade Union Information unemployment generally reaches from 8–9% of the membership.

Much labour is seasonable and workers migrate to and from it, but chronic unemployment is very small and government insurance schemes and doles are able to cope with it fairly effectively.

There appeared no prospect of a crisis developing within Australia at present, the only danger appears to be from a dislocation in European economic conditions.

II. THE OUTLOOK OF THE WORKERS

Trade Unions.

These are well developed in all States and are generally under the domination of reformist leaders, but there exists a militant element in each industry centre which has put up some good fights during the year:

In Queensland, the railway men, waterside workers and seamen; in Western Australia, seamen, fire brigade and hotel employees; in New South Wales, rubber workers, stove makers and others.

The manner in which the masses rallied to the support of the British seamen demonstrated that there exists a spirit of militancy among the rank and file, but the fact that the yellow transport leaders were able to break down the fight against the proposed deportation of the Seamen's Union officials shows the power of the reformist leaders.

Left Wing Unorganised.

Numerous attempts have been made to organise the Left Wing element, but up-to-date little permanent work has been achieved. In all industrial centres,

the Party has formed its groups of militants in either general or industrial groups, but these have usually weakened and disappeared. A splendid move has been commenced through the Vice-President of the New South Wales Labour Council, a splendid reliable non-Party militant. A good programme of economic demands to meet local requirements has been drafted and we regard this move as the soundest we have undertaken. But the vacillating nature of the workers as a whole has been demonstrated by the way the Bruce Government swept the poll in the Federal election with the fake anti-Communist campaign. There is plenty of fighting spirit amongst the workers of all States, but it is only visible in times of crises, otherwise the favourable economic conditions and the influence of the yellow leaders keep it in the background.

Problem of Foreign Workers.

This question applies with great importance to Queensland, where colonies of Italian workers have been driven by fascism. The Australian Workers' Union which is the dominant trade union excludes such workers from membership, and they constitute a serious menace to the local workers. The Party has launched an agitation for their inclusion in the union, which was progressing favourably when I left Sydney.

During 1925, the Party issued a series of leaflets in Italian which were printed on a small machine owned by the Party and some articles in Italian appeared in the *Workers' Weekly*. These were discontinued owing to our failure to secure a translator.

Large bodies of Slovakian workers have recently arrived and have been despatched to steel industry districts, where they are living in conditions of abject poverty, but here the language difficulty again intervenes and we have been unable to approach these workers.

The Greek and Russian Party groups in Sydney have made excellent contact with their countrymen throughout the country and supplies of literature have [been] procured for the purpose. There are no other language problems that we know of.

III. CONDITION OF THE PARTY

The process of eliminating the useless and ineffective members from the Party was completed by the end of 1925. The actual effective membership was then as follows:

NEW SOUTH WALES		QUEENSLAND	
Sydney	70	Brisbane	35
Hurstville	8	Blackall	7
Balmain	15	Cairns	17
Russian	11	Ipswich	15
Greek	11	At large	12
Lithgow	10		86
Wollongong	6	VICTORIA	
Kurri	3	Melbourne	28
Cessnock	3	At large	2
Newcastle	10		30
At large	11		
	158		
WEST AUSTRALIA			
	4		
TASMANIA			
	1		

The total membership for Australia—279

NEW ZEALAND MEMBERS:

are presently linked up as a section of the Australian Party and the estimated effective membership was 120.

Membership Scattered.

As will be seen from the figures, the Party members are scattered in small groups throughout the continent, and the long distances and slow transportation make Party organisation difficult. Practically every member is an efficient trade union worker and through this channel most of our work has been done.

Building Factory Nuclei.

Very little practical work has been done in this direction, because of the smallness of our numbers, but where more than one member is employed in any factory, they function as a nucleus. The party fully realises its obligations in this respect, and aims at recruiting new members through the workshop.

Party Press.

The Party maintains a monthly and a weekly organ. The monthly organ *The Communist* has been edited by Comrade Baracchi and was not regarded as a good journal because of the failure of the editor to deal with local conditions. The circulation has remained in the vicinity of 2,000 copies. Since Comrade Barrachi's resignation in December, Comrade Kavanagh from Canada has been appointed editor and the Executive expects the sale to increase rapidly.

The *Workers' Weekly* has a circulation of 6,000 of which 1,489 are subscribers. Both journals circulate in all States which means extremely late delivery.

Costs of Printing.

The difficulties of printing are very great. Owing to the restrictive provisions of printing laws, most printers refuse our work, while a few charge very heavily for their services. Book publishing has been entirely impossible for us, and as the only local radical publisher has abandoned this work, we are dependent on small supplies from England.

Acquiring a Printing Plant.

The Party has realised that a printing plant is essential and steps have been taken to raise funds for this purpose and a capable comrade has arrived from New Zealand to operate the machinery when it is procured. The press will not be operated in the name of the Party. It will be a great financial help to the Party as well as a much *more* efficient means of getting propaganda to the distant centres of Australia.

Party Officials.

At the present time all the official work of the Party is done on a voluntary basis which is extremely inefficient. Most of the Executive members are manual workers and the Party propagandists travel long distances at week-ends and, as almost every member is prominent in the trade unions, the bulk of our membership is overworked.

The 1926 Conference decided to strike a levy on the membership to provide a salary of £5 a week for one official, and this was in preparation when I left Sydney.

National Organiser.

In September 1925, Comrade Jeffery was despatched to Queensland in time for the sugar and meat industries [sic]. He arrived when the strike of railway servants against the Labour Government *broke out* and later on took part in the bitter struggles of the waterside workers which was in November crushed by thugs.

Comrade Jeffery did wonderful work for the Party and took a prominent part in all fights and gathered together a large number of militants who will provide many recruits for the Party when our organiser again visits there this year.

New Zealand Tour.

On returning in December, Comrade Jeffery went to New Zealand where his tour is most successful, especially as the Communist Executive is strongly

represented on the Executive of the Miners' organisation. He is still engaged in this work although receiving no wages from the Party.

The affiliation of the New Zealand Communist groups to the Australian Party took place at the end of 1925 as a means of settling a very difficult unity problem. This has been successful and now experience only is needed to enable them to develop in to a useful Section of the International.

Slow Recruiting.

During 1925 the Party was subjected to the most bitter attacks in its history. The State and Federal elections and the new Zealand elections resulted in all parties attacking the Communists, and the Labour party launched a campaign of expelling all communists from the reformist party. Under such conditions, the winning of workers to the Party was extremely difficult as our small numbers and inefficient Executive machinery were powerless to deal with the monstrous campaign levelled against us.

The Crimes Bill.

The effect of the passing of the amendment of the Crimes Bill by the *Federal* Government has also made our task harder, for the provisions of the Bill threaten not only the Party but its supporters. Preparations have been made to carry on in the event of the Party being declared illegal and many splendid demonstrations have already been made by the trade union movement including the Industrial Conference held in Sydney on February 20.

The Necessity for Assistance.

In view of the great obstacles against which we struggle in Australia and the necessity for carrying the message of the Party to the distant centres, we urge the Secretariat to regard as urgent the granting of some assistance to the Australian Section without delay.

The literature available in Australia is entirely inadequate to meet the requirements. Scarcely any Marxian classics are available and then only at prohibited [sic] prices, while the essential new Leninist literature is extremely scarce.

We are confident that in the future, the Party will be faced with considerable struggles, both of the general war of the workers against the encroachments of capitalism and in our own fight for existence, and if our Party apparatus is enabled to carry out its tasks, we are confident of developing into an important factor in the impending struggles in the Pacific.

Document 38

RGASPI 495–94–29. 16 April 1926, Pepper (Chief of Agitprop, CI): letter: To CC of CPA. Typescript.

This is one of the outcomes of an ECCI meeting held during April and May of 1926 which considered political and organizational issues related to the CPA. The letter recommends increased 'Agitprop' work, and makes substantial criticisms of the *Workers' Weekly* for appearing to be more a trade union than a communist political paper.

Moscow, 16.IV.1926

To the CC of the CP of Australia.

Dear Comrades,

On the basis of the discussion with your representative we note that the CP of Australia has not as yet organised a systematic, organisationally and ideologically definite Communist Agitprop activity. In view of the numerical weakness of your Party, and of the role that it momentarily plays in the Australian labour movement, it is very clear that this work—a broad, concrete, revolutionary agitation among the working masses and a real Leninist leadership of our own membership—constitutes THE FOUNDATION OF the present existence of the CP of Australia itself, as well as the necessary premise for its further development into a mass organisation.

Let us say in advance that the present weakness of the Party must not be permitted to constitute a hindrance to the most rapid initiation and carrying out of this task. From the example of the CP of Canada, whose conditions in many respects resemble those of your Party, we have tried to show your representative how good Communist agitation and propaganda activity can be carried on even under unfavourable circumstances and with the lack of the required forces. We urge you to utilise the material sent you per the above-mentioned comrade as an INFORMATIVE pattern for the organisation of your Agitprop work. It is self-understood that you must proceed with this organisation step by step with the most exact application to your concrete conditions.

STRUCTURE OF THE AGITPROP APPARATUS

The first premise for the gradual extension of your Agitprop work is the establishment of an Agitprop apparatus, directed centrally and spread out over all provincial organisations. For this purpose we propose to you the following organisational scheme:

CENTRAL AGITPROP COMMISSION:

A Central Agitprop Commission, consisting of the Director and two or three other comrades, especially adapted for agitation and propaganda work and possessing experience in this field, is to be organised in the Central Committee.

The Chief of this Commission will be designated by the Central Committee and is responsible to the latter for the entire work. He must himself be a member of the CC in order to assure the closest connection between the Agitprop work and the general political activity of the Party. It is desirable, furthermore, that the editor of your central organ *Workers Weekly* be attached to the Central Agitprop Commission.

The tasks of this Commission consist in the organisation and direction of all agitational and propaganda work. Special emphasis must be paid to taking measures to carry out in a centralised manner the campaigns which it has planned concretely, according to a calendar schedule, with definite instructions for all provincial organisations, and that these campaigns be carried out under the most exact control and registration. The Central Agitprop Commission, in addition to its regular reports to the CC, should likewise furnish half-yearly reports on its activity as a whole to the Central Agitprop Department of the ECCI.

Agitprop Commissions of the Provincial Organisations.

In all provinces, or in the largest organisations, similar commissions will be set up consisting of two or three comrades, one of them a responsible head, nominated by the Provincial Committees. Their task is to realise the instructions issued by the Central Agitprop Commission and to carry out the whole agitation, press and cultural activity in local organisations subordinate to them.

This simple structure we consider adequate, for the present for your conditions. But so as to reckon also with the perspectives of development, we propose that insofar as in certain large cities you have good sized factory nuclei, the institution of the AGITPROP DIRECTOR be introduced.

Agitprop Directors are the organisers of the entire agitation and propaganda in the nucleus; they attend to the dissemination of our press, to the preparation of nucleus newspapers, arrange for and organise workers' correspondents from their factories to our organ, carry out the instructions of the Agitprop Commission in the initiation of campaigns, carry on individual propaganda, etc.

DECISION ON AGITPROP WORK.

In carrying out this work it is necessary that the newly created Central Agitprop Commission itself achieve complete clarity concerning the special field of Agitprop activity and its forms, as well as that the membership be informed in detail concerning same. First of all it is to be noted that our Agitprop work, although conducted through a special Party organ, is closely bound up with the entire political life of the Party. Our factory nuclei can be imbued with a real political life only on condition that all members of these nuclei carry on the necessary agitation and propaganda work among all factory workers in conformity with their actual everyday needs.

It is further desirable that the political consciousness of the membership be permeated with the essential difference between agitation and propaganda.

Agitation is the spreading of our ideas amongst the masses in the form of a few fundamental ideas and slogans which, adapted to their concrete needs, expresses the standpoint of our Party clearly in every activity. Propaganda is a comprehensive presentation of our conception, either in a single definite field, or in our whole social philosophy of historical and dialectical materialism.

It is a matter of course that although agitation and propaganda are differentiated from one another, they nevertheless are very closely related, which in practice means for us that every agitational campaign of our Party must be propagandistically intensified and vice versa, that every propagandist activity, as for instance our Marxist-Leninist educational work, must be at the service of our agitation. To summarise it may be said: in order that the political work of the CP of Australia may more and more win access to the masses, in order that its factory and street nuclei be imbued with real political life, it is necessary to carry out agitprop work systematically within them, under a strictly centralised direction.

PROPAGANDA AND CULTURAL WORK.

If the CP of Australia is to cope with its political tasks, its entire membership must be imbued with the ELEMENTARY KNOWLEDGE of Marxism-Leninism, and its cadres of functionaries must receive SPECIAL TRAINING on this basis. For this purpose your Central Agitprop Commission must work out a definite plan for the organising of elementary schools. Next winter at least one elementary school must begin activity in each provincial organisation. As to the programme for these elementary schools we propose that you utilise the elementary programme of the CP of Canada which we have sent you. For the special training of functionaries, you must organise short-term courses on definite subjects, as for example, the trade union question, imperialism and the empire, study of the decisions of the last Enlarged Executive, etc. Special attention must be devoted to ensuring that all tasks confronting the party, for example, such as are connected with the party's political campaigns like that against the Crime Bill, the campaign against the expulsion of Communists from the Labour Party, be worked out in a propagandist-theoretical manner, by means of special functionary courses, in order by this means to gain access to the membership as a whole. As a special organisational form of these courses, we recommend the so-called week-end schools which have proved very practicable in Great Britain and Canada. A scheme for these courses was sent you.

In order to get the required literature for your general educational work, you must get into closer contact than heretofore with the Agitprop of Great Britain and of the Workers' (Communist) Party of America. The establishment of a

literature fund in England to make available long-term credits on book shipments must be arranged by the Agitprop Commission of your Party with the Agitprop Commission of the CP of Great Britain. In this connection we also point out the need for a greater circulation of “Inprecorr” and the “Communist International” in Australia.

We await your reply concerning the manner in which you contemplate organising the propaganda life of your Party and what special questions and requirements you desire to address to us in this connection.

Concerning your activity on the field of agitation we have no comprehensive report. Since we have only a few issues of the *Workers Weekly* available upon which to base our judgement, we shall deal with this question in the discussion on the *Workers Weekly* since our remarks concerning your organ—mutatis mutandis—apply also to the agitation work of your Party.

THE WORKERS WEEKLY.
THE PRESENT CHARACTER
OF THE PAPER.

The organ has the character more of a trade union than of a political organ of the Communist Party. It devotes great attention to the daily demands and trade union struggles of the Australian working class and follows the practice of permitting as many workers as possible to express themselves in the form of workers’ correspondence. The instructions issued in this regard, however—insofar as they are given by the paper itself—bear no systematic character, but are issued only incidentally, from time to time.

The chief shortcoming of the paper consists in that it neglects the actual policy and political tasks of the Party. It concerns itself much too little—in some issues not at all—with the inner political questions of the country, either of the governmental policies or those of the Labour party. In the appraisal of trade union struggles also the political viewpoint is left entirely out of consideration. It moves entirely upon the rails of a trade union policy rather than of a Communist policy. But also the foreign political events, even the political events of the British “motherland” are not dealt with systematically, but are only occasionally, almost incidentally, touched upon without raising the problem of British imperialism and the Empire. The trade union question, also, to which the paper devotes very much space, is dealt with from a narrow Australian viewpoint, and its connection with the INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION MOVEMENT is given too little consideration.

All this gives the organ a provincial touch. The paper as a whole is not sufficiently Communist, which is very regrettable especially in view of the Reformist illusions of the great mass of the Australian proletariat.

There is still too little workers' correspondence and that which is available concerns itself more with general than with factory affairs, or concrete workers' questions.

The paper pays too little attention to the agrarian question.

The question of the International Labour movement in general and the Communist movement in particular receive very little notice in the paper.

The paper pays too little [attention] to the question of the relationship to Great Britain. It does not deal at all with the separatist tendencies and their effect on Australian policy, with the threatening war developments between America and Japan, between Britain and Japan, with the extension of the naval base at Singapore by Great Britain, etc. Precisely through the treatment of such and similar world political problems, the provincial horizon of the Australian workers could best be extended.

The party's campaigns are still not given adequate emphasis by the paper. True, the campaign against the Crime Act was given enough space by the paper, but it was not conducted with the necessary sharpness, nor was it sufficiently exploited agitationaly. The campaign against the expulsion of the Communists from the ALP is not conducted with sufficient system and sharpness in the paper.

The organ publishes practically no theoretical matter. It prints neither extracts from the Marxist-Leninist literature, nor discussion of the decisions of the CI Congresses, nor material on the labour question in Great Britain which could well be taken from the press of the CP of Great Britain. The neglect of this task of a Communist organ of Australia where Marxist traditions are utterly lacking, is an error. It is made still worse in that the paper publishes utterly worthless un-Marxist citations, as e.g. that on revolution by a Social Revolutionary—Gardiner (!),⁶ which was printed without any comment whatever. Such quotations must of course be eliminated entirely.

Our reorganisation proposals.

From the above it is apparent that the organ requires thorough reorganisation. The most important measures to be carried out and which certainly can be carried out with the limited means at your disposal, are, in our opinion, the following:

1. It is necessary to divide the available space in the paper so that the internal and foreign political events, the politico-economic facts, the trade union movement, the Australian and the international labour movement, the Communist world movement, etc., will be assured a definite space in every issue.

⁶ The parenthesis is Pepper's.

2. Each issue shall contain an inner political and foreign political weekly review—a systematic presentation and comment upon the political events of the week from a Communist viewpoint.
3. Apart from this concise weekly review various outstanding events of inner or foreign politics should be dealt with in special notices or articles.
4. Events in Great Britain, particularly the struggles of the British proletariat and the imperialist foreign policy of the British Empire, must be consistently followed by the organ, and this from the viewpoint of Australia's role in the struggle of the imperialist powers for world hegemony, criticised from the standpoint of Australia's role in the Pacific Ocean. In this connection the events in China and India must be followed up with special attention and the whole anti-Russian incitement policy of British Imperialism must be most vigorously combated.
5. The paper must periodically report on Soviet Russia, on its ascendancy, on the rapidly improving standard of living of the Russian worker and peasant. Material on this subject can be taken from the British and American papers of our brother Parties.
6. The exclusion campaign of the ALP against the Communists must be followed up constantly and systematically by the paper, must be criticised and combated instead of, as has been the case until now, an occasional and incidental attack.
7. Trade union questions should, as heretofore, be given the greatest attention, but they must be dealt with also from their political aspect.
8. Various problems of world policy, particularly of British policy, should be dealt with more often than heretofore in theoretical articles or extracts from such articles. You will readily find whatever you need in the British and American Party newspapers and magazines.
9. Apart from quotations from Marx, Engels, Lenin, etc., the paper should try to popularise single slogans of your campaign and international Communist campaigns, by means of headlines extending, in big letters, over several columns. All party organs appearing in the English language can serve you as examples in this.
10. The style of writing in the organ must be more Communistic than heretofore. All articles and notices must be written from the viewpoint of the living class struggle, and must be brought into connection with the big revolutionary struggle of the world proletariat and of the Comintern.

TECHNICAL MAKE-UP OF THE PAPER.

More attention than hitherto must be devoted to the make-up of the paper. Especially the first page, in content as well as technique, must have an appearance that will catch the attention of the reader and induce him to read the whole paper. The manner in which the material in a paper is distributed, and the

make-up in which it presents itself to the reader, is of greatest importance to the agitational and propaganda effect, as well as to the salability of the paper

FACTORY PAPERS.

In connection with the extension of the Party on the basis of factory nuclei, the Party must encourage the establishment of factory newspapers with all energy, and this question must receive the greatest attention. It must go hand in hand with the comrades in the factories, enable the factory nuclei to issue their factory papers, and the Party must supply instructions as to the contents and technical make-up of factory papers

We urge you to send us a detailed report regularly every six months to supply us with exact information with regard to your activity on the field of propaganda, agitation and press. We also ask you to send us material such as placards, leaflets, etc, since only on the basis of concrete material can we get a correct picture of your work and help you in your activities from here.

With Communist greetings,
Pepper,
Chief of the Agitprop Dept.,
of the ECCI.

Document 39

RGASPI 495-94-27. 28 April 1926, Fried: resolution: On the question of the CPA. In German, typescript. Trans. by KW.

This is one of the outcomes of an ECCI meeting held in April and May of 1926 which considered political and organizational issues related to the CPA. It summarizes the most important organizational and political tasks, and seems to promise financial assistance.

28/4/26 On the Question of the CPA

The following must be seen as the most important organizational and political tasks of the Party:

- I. the organization of the Party itself,
- II. the organization of a leftist movement corresponding to the English Minority Movement.

Further to Point I:

1. a paid secretary to be appointed to the Central Committee;
2. the division of the Central Committee into organizational and political bureaux to be terminated; a single bureau to be established, and CC members to be charged with specific tasks (organizational, trade union, agitation and propaganda, or women's matters), for which they should set up committees;

3. energetic and systematic recruiting campaigns, linked with the reorganization; reorganization to be focused on Sydney, Broken Hill, Brisbane and Auckland;
 4. a territorial bureau to be set up for New Zealand.
- III. reorganization of the youth movement;
 - IV. establishment of a Red Aid section on a broad mass basis;
 - V. establishment of organizational and political contacts with the New Zealand Maoris and other peoples of the Pacific islands;
 - VI. when forming links with foreign workers, Chinese, Japanese and Indian workers, who constitute a large percentage on certain islands, should not be overlooked.

These proposals should be seen as complementary to those of Comrade Bamatter.

Fried
28 April, 1926

Document 40

RGASPI 495–94–27. 1926 [May], Presidium ECCI: Resolution of the Australian Question. Typescript.

This resolution is the most important outcome of the meeting of the ECCI in April and May 1926 with Hector Ross to discuss the ‘Australian Question’. While it acknowledges the ‘difficulties and peculiarities of the objective situation’, it suggests that the Party—despite its expulsion from the ALP—continue to work within the Labor Party, and that it combat the ‘White Australia’ policy and British imperialism.

Confidential.

RESOLUTION ON THE AUSTRALIAN QUESTION

The Communist Party of Australia fights under difficult and peculiar conditions. All the forces of the nationalist reaction, the emergency legislation and the reformist labour leaders are concentrated against it. Prime Minister Bruce waged the last election under the slogan: “Save the country from the Communist peril!”. The “Crimes Bill” interdicts all organisations that disturb public peace and aim at the overthrow of constitutional government. When passing this law Parliament had in mind primarily the Communist Party.⁷ The labour lieutenants

⁷ This assertion is essentially correct. Section 30A of the Crimes Act was inserted in 1926 to declare unlawful any association that advocated the overthrow of the Commonwealth Government by revolution or sabotage. Sawyer (1972, 221) declares that this part of the Act was ‘originally designed to deal with the Communist Party and fellow-traveller organizations, under which “seditious” associations can be dissolved after trial by a judge sitting without a jury’. (See also Sawyer (1956, 268).)

of the bourgeoisie, on their part, have also outlawed the Communist Party by excluding the Communists from the Labour Party.

Our Australian brother Party must overcome, in its struggles, certain difficulties and peculiarities of the objective situation. The country is a vast one, a whole continent, and it is sparsely populated. Heavy industry is very immature and relatively undeveloped. True giant enterprises do not exist. On the other hand not less than half of the total population is concentrated in five or six towns. Small peasant strata are almost entirely lacking, since the country is covered with large scale cattle and sheep ranches. The strata of semi-agricultural and semi-industrial workers are quite large, and constitute one of the most important elements among the toilers. Partly due to conditions and partly to the conscious efforts of the bourgeoisie and reformist labour leaders, the industrial proletariat itself was almost completely shut off from the proletariat of the other continents. Certain craft traditions still dominate the trend of thought of large sections of the Australian proletariat. Certain strata of the labour aristocracy still stand upon their prerogatives, and still largely hold a leading role in the labour movement. The slogan of a "White Australia" serves as the rallying cry of all reactionary elements in the labour movement, who are steeped in nationalist ideology, and who seek to isolate themselves in aristocratic arrogance away from the coloured workers and in general from foreign proletarians. The Australian trade union movement is exceptionally powerful (having no less than 700,000 organised workers in a country with a population of 5 1/2 millions). In some places (as for instance, in the Central Trades Council of Sydney) good, militant elements have already taken leadership of this trade union movement, but in general the trade unions, as well as the Labour Party, are still dominated by petty bourgeois minded, craft narrowed elements who are integrated with the bourgeoisie. Australia was the first country to have a labour government, and even today there are five States in Australia being run by such governments. But the history of all these "labour" governments, without exception, has proven that they never represented the real interests of the proletariat, that they showed themselves the best defenders of capitalist private property and of bourgeois society.

Against this false "labour" government the CP of Australia must set the slogan of the true, the real Labour Government which will lead a relentless class struggle against the bourgeoisie and will free the proletariat from the yoke of capitalism.

Under these difficult conditions the Communist Party of Australia was founded, and from that day to this it has had to wage a desperate struggle for its very existence. The Party is still a small organisation and has been able to find connections with the broad mass in only a few localities. The emergency laws, the persecution on the part of the Government, the expulsion of the Communists from the Labour Party, and the lack of success of the Communists

in the last elections have aroused an attitude in some leading comrades that endangers the continued existence of the Party. Ex-comrade Baracchi even went so far as to propose, in Sydney, the formal dissolution of the Party and the institution of a “commission of liquidators”. It is to the credit of the Australian Communists that this liquidatory proposal did not receive the support of even a single comrade. The case of Baracchi and a few of his predecessors must, however, serve as a lesson to the Party. Although the Party is small and weak, and without sufficient ideological resources, its first and chief task must be the ideological and organisational assertion of the Party. Such liquidatory incidents must serve as the basis of a thorough-going Communist ideological campaign, which on the one hand indicates the necessity to the workers of the historical mission of the Communist Party, and on the other hand, the organizational anchoring of the Party by means of a recruiting campaign in the trade unions and in the most important towns.

The membership of our Australian brother Party comprises trade unionists throughout. Grim patience in the trade union detail work is one of the most important virtues of the Australian Communists. In some places the workers already see that the Communists are their best champions also in the day to day questions—the history of the great seamen’s strike showed clearly the valour of the Communists and the treachery of the reformists—but the next task of the Party must consist in crystallising also organizationally the trust of the Left militant organized workers. A minority movement of the Left wing workers can and should be organized under the participation and aid of the Communist Party.

It would be wrong if the Communists were to forego their right to belong to the Labour Party merely because the reformist leaders have expelled the Communists from it. It is the duty of the Communists to be present everywhere that workers are organized. We cannot therefore agree with the conception expressed in several articles in the *Workers Weekly*, according to which the Labour Party was not really an important organ of the workers and never really represented an essential avenue between the Communists and the workers. The very fact of the exclusion itself should convince the Communists of the importance of belonging to it. The reformists want to drive us out of the Labour Party—therefore the Communists must stick with redoubled energy to the very centre of the working masses in the Labour party. The Australian comrades should not forget the advice of Comrade Lenin to the British Communists on the question of joining the Labour Party. The Australian Communists should also learn from the successes of the British Communists, which are due primarily to that correct Leninist united front tactic of affiliation and collaboration in the ranks of the trade unions and Labour party. The Communists can combat all betrayals of the so-called Labour Governments much better inside the Labour Party than when they permit themselves to be isolated from the working masses.

For these reasons alone it would be a mistake to cause a split in the Labour Party through the establishment of a "revolutionary Labour Party".

The Communist Party of Australia must combat with all its forces the ideology of the "White Australia". The slogan is not alone against the coloured workers and foreign-born proletarians, but it contradicts the true interests of the Australian working class itself. The slogan of the "White Australia" builds a bridge between the reformist leaders of the labour aristocracy and the nationalistic bourgeoisie. Under the banner of the "White Australia" Prime Minister Bruce beat down the seamen, conducted the anti-labour elections, and whipped through the "Crimes Bill" which menaces the freedom of the workers' organisations. It is one of the most important duties of the Communist Party of Australia to get a foothold not only among the masses of the native-born Australian proletarians, but also to champion the interests of the foreign-speaking element of the country. These tasks have thus far not been fulfilled with sufficient energy by the Party. In the future the Party should concentrate much more strongly on this battlefield.

The daily struggle for the economic interests of the proletariat must be in the centre of the Party's endeavours, yet it must not forget—as has happened in the past—its great historic mission: the combating of British imperialism. In its agitation and propaganda the Party should raise the question of the independence of Australia from the British Empire. Foreign capital—British and American—today dominates economically almost the whole industrial life of Australia. The foreign policy of the Australian Commonwealth is determined entirely in London by the British bourgeoisie. Membership in the British Empire signified the growing danger that Australia will be involved in all diplomatic intrigues and military undertakings of British imperialism.

The Communist Party of Australia can and will become a Communist Party in the true Leninist sense of the word, when it learns how to combine the fight for the everyday demands of the workers with the combating of the craft spirit of the Labour aristocracy, of the ideology of the "White Australia", and of British imperialism. In the interest of the future development of the Party it should be in closest possible connection with other brother Parties (especially with the Communist Parties of Great Britain, America, China, Japan and Indonesia), and with the Executive Committee of the Communist International.

Parallel with this political advice the Org. Dept., and the Agitprop Department of the CI have formulated suggestions for the organisational and the agitational-propaganda work of the Communist Party of Australia

With Communist greetings,
PRESIDIUM OF THE ECCI

Document 41

RGASPI 534–7–1. no date [late December 1926], J. Garden and J. Kavanagh: report of a debate: 'The present Central Committee has deviated from the Leninist path'. In Russian, typescript. (English version not located in CAAL, but this meeting was reported in the *Workers' Weekly* of 24 December 1926.) Trans. by KW.

At the Sixth Conference of the CPA, 25–28 December 1926, at which the previous 'Resolution on the Australian Question' was adopted, the recent expulsion of Jock Garden was confirmed. Garden had raised communists' ire by continuing his long flirtation with the Labor Council and the ALP, but matters came to a head when he was reported in the press in early December as denying he was a member of the CPA; he resigned a day later, and was formally expelled on 10 December. Shortly afterwards, Garden and Jack Kavanagh (CPA secretary) had the frank debate which is reported in the following notes. Apart from the invective, the debate reveals the confusion created by the application of the Comintern's 'united front' policy to the ALP.

Garden and Kavanagh on the Policies of the Communist Party Subject: 'The Present Central Committee has Deviated from the Leninist Path'

Comrade Garden voiced assertions of this kind at a packed meeting. Comrade Moxon was in the chair.

Garden began by stating that the party had departed from the true path, citing the Communist Manifesto, which sets forth the shared interests of the Communist Party and the working class, in addition to the difference between the international viewpoint of the former and the national viewpoint of the latter.

The speaker accused the Communist Party of fighting with other workers' parties and making no distinction between the leadership and the Party as a whole, which contradicts the spirit of the Communist Manifesto. The Communist Party occupies a wavering position, constantly promoting subjective conditions at the expense of objective ones.

The Central Committee had demanded that he refrain from expressing his personal opinions, as all his statements were regarded as official party statements. The speaker had complied with this instruction, and was now being criticized for staying in the background.

Contrary to the speaker's wishes, the Central Committee had declared *The Labor Daily* a scabs' paper and singled it out as a target.

After this, the decision was amended and the party evinced no reaction to the party member who spoke against it.

Two party members then criticized him in the Council over a matter about which he knew nothing at all. The Central Committee did not react. This was a deviation from Leninism.

He had drawn up the theses, upholding the idea of a new industrial (workers') party, but the theses had not been printed. Precisely because there had been no discussion of this important issue, the party had turned into a sect.

The Central Committee did not see in the new line of the Australian Labor Party the broad prospects which Loughlan and Co. understood. The Central Committee was holding on tight to the word 'communist' and did not want to hear anything else.

If the party had followed the correct line, it would by now have joined the ALP. Instead the party had taken offence at one or two words. Purely because Lang had insulted us, we had moved to the left, to the detriment of the broad workers' movement.

The speaker refused to attack Lang, as the capitalist press might then claim that he was a hireling of the Nationalists.⁸

We have done nothing to defend him against the attacks by Cohen, using a forged photograph of him. Hence the speaker concludes that the Central Committee is guided less by the interests of the movement than a wish to have Garden's head on a platter.

Comrade Kavanagh replied to all these accusations. Many of these incidents had occurred while Comrade Garden had been the party's political secretary, so he should bear some of the responsibility for them.

With regard to the forged photograph, Cohen had stated more than once that this photograph of the Eastern Bureau of the International, taken in 1922, was genuine, and the Central Committee had tried to compel Garden to demonstrate to the workers that it was genuine, and that it was a matter of pride to be in the company of politically aware workers from other countries. Garden, however, had not shown Cohen the proof that it was genuine.⁹

When the speaker arrived in Australia, the party was completely absorbed in the election campaign. At that time the hunt for votes seemed more urgent than a revolutionary programme. All those candidates who had been with Comrade Garden then had left the revolutionary movement even earlier than he.

⁸ The Nationalist Party was Australia's major non-Labor party during this period (joining with the smaller Country Party to form coalition governments); after some name changes it became in 1944 what is currently called the Liberal Party of Australia.

⁹ When the Party was challenged over this photograph (which showed Australian communists, including Garden and Earsman, in the company of Asian delegates at the Fourth Comintern Congress), it claimed—wrongly and knowingly—that it was a forgery.

Rightist tendencies had arisen in all countries following the Russian revolution, when many revolutionaries who were not sufficiently staunch became despondent because they could not understand the partial stabilization of capitalism. These elements swung to the right and, in order to justify this, invented errors of one kind or another in the party line.

The trade union movement was rife with former radicals who had gradually become bureaucrats. These, and not the rank and file workers, were the very people who had lost any understanding of the aims of the working class.

We should not refuse to criticize the ALP merely because of various palliative legislative measures. Any capitalist party in an advanced country adopts laws of this kind, for example America and Germany. They are becoming an economic necessity. The federal trade unions struck for six weeks and gave up the fight with the loss of four hours' pay. The principle of the forty-four hour week was not acknowledged.

Comrade Kavanagh then declared that the Labor Council, which had not provided guidance in the struggle against the danger of arbitration in connection with the Piddington base rates, showed an unhealthy interest in arbitration even among the leadership. In conclusion, the speaker said that, whatever the ideological errors of the members, Comrade Garden, as a prominent member of the leadership, bears equal responsibility for them.

Comrade Garden (15 minutes)

The main issue before the present session was the fact that the leaders of the movement had given directional campaign guidelines for the struggle for the forty-four-hour working week, but in many cases the masses had refused to abide by these.

He had taken the initiative in connection with the Piddington declaration. A conference of secretaries had been convened and an appropriate question addressed to the government, while his opponent was sitting in his office writing little articles...

The speaker chastised the League of Trade Union Propaganda for its revolutionary nature and for its opposition to the founding of a new workers' party, at a time when active elements were indignant at the behaviour of the Queensland Labor Party.¹⁰ The session ended with critical comments by *The Workers' Weekly*, which had exposed a recent squabble among the waterfront workers' union leadership. We should have recommended that the seamen support the waterfront workers.

¹⁰ These comments reflect a move in 1926 by the parliamentary Labor Party against its industrial wing, which led to threats of a breakaway Labor party. Garden supported this move; the executive of the CPA under the leadership of Kavanagh did not.

Comrade Kavanagh (15 minutes)

The speaker was critical of the leaders of the aforementioned struggle. Their tactics had driven the active union of seamen to the arbitration courts.

Comrade Kavanagh rejects the claim that the party's shift to the left was the cause of a fall in membership.

At present we are stronger than ever before, stronger not only because of our numbers, but because we have now shed the reformist elements which had burdened our ranks.

The speaker spoke in favour of the activities of the League of Trade Union Propaganda, which had to uphold a revolutionary standpoint if it was to fulfil its task and mobilize the active elements of the union movement.

As for Garden's charge that he had supposedly been pushed into the background, Kavanagh set forth the story of the 'Young incident', when, according to the press, Garden had denied being a member of the Communist Party.

The Central Committee had demanded that Garden retract his words and declare that he was a party member. He had been expelled from the party for refusing to do so. This proves that Garden had excluded himself by his own actions.

Concluding Remarks

Comrade Garden again repeated his charges, castigating *The Workers' Weekly* for its uncompromising line. His opponent had stated that the workers had allegedly lost the ability to fight; this was untrue, as the workers had always been prepared to fight. The speaker protested that the Central Committee had held a knife to his throat and some CC members had 'picked on him'. The Council would now move forward because he, Garden, could freely uphold a genuine fighting policy.

Comrade Kavanagh concluded the debate by pointing out that it was incorrect to claim that the Communist Party had 'undermined' Garden, who had received no instructions from the Central Committee in all the time that the speaker had been in Australia.

The speaker was certainly not saying that the workers had lost the ability to fight. He was saying that they had lost the ability to wage an open and direct struggle against the employers. Instead their leaders had forced them to squander their resources on useless court cases. The active elements should exploit the Piddington decision to campaign against arbitration.

The majority of union officials had encouraged the legal struggle. The secretary of the stonemasons' union had been the only notable exception. This

nightmare must be dispelled, in order that the workers can be filled with the genuine fighting spirit which will help them achieve their final objective—liberation.

Document 42

RGASPI 495–94–33. 8 Feb 1927, Wright: letter: To Secretariat ECCI. Typescript.

This brief covering letter confirms the sequence of events already suggested by the documents above, but it adds a little more to our understanding of the difficulties of communication between Australia and Moscow. The CPA is reporting to the Comintern for the first time in a year; Moscow seems to have promised to support financially one organizer for the Party (see Document 38, above), but no money has arrived; it seems to have taken seven months for a particular letter on agitation and propaganda matters to reach Sydney from Moscow.

395 Sussex Street
Sydney
8th. Feb. 1927

To the Secretariat
ECCI

Comrades,

We are enclosing herewith our first Report since the departure for Moscow of our Delegate Comrade Ross in February 1926.

Comrade Ross reported to you regarding the organisational difficulties of our Party. We welcomed your decision on the matter of our inability to maintain even one paid official but we regret to report that to date we have received no further information on the matter.

In September 1926 we received a copy of the resolution on the Australian Question carried at the Plenum of the ECCI during Comrade Ross's visit.

The letter of instruction from the Agit-prop Dept dated 16th. April 1926, we received in November. Both were discussed together with the report of Comrade Ross given at our sixth Annual Conference held December 25th–28th 1926.

With Communist Greetings

Wright

General Secretary

Document 43

RGASPI 495-94-43. no date [1927?], J. Howie, Secretary CPA: letter: to Murphy, Secretary ECCI. Typescript.

This letter indicates, and is to some extent a cry of protest against, the isolation from Comintern activities and opportunities felt by the CPA.

J.T. Murphy,
Secretary, ECCI

Dear Comrade,

We have been privileged to receive a copy of your circular of June 14, re the enrolment of new students in the International Lenin Courses.

This circular we have read with great interest. We are glad to be able to state that there are several members of our Party whom we would consider eminently suitable for selection as students and we realise that our Party could receive no better assistance than by the attendance of one or two of our members at such courses.

This would do much to remedy our isolation and our lack of trained leaders and to help us play correctly our very difficult part in a colony of the British Empire on the Pacific Ocean.

We would have preferred to have learned of these courses before, but this is our first intimation that they are to be held.

It appears that this copy, which is addressed to the South African Party, was not intended to reach us and came only in error. Further, our Party is not shown as having any quota of new student enrolments. It seems to be unique in this respect; two students, we note, are allotted each to Canada and South Africa.

We would welcome a straight answer to the question, Do you consider our Party to be a part of the International? We quite realise that the revolutionary development of Australia will follow that of Europe and the East, and that the main attention of the Comintern must be directed to the Imperialist and the strictly colonial countries. But are our efforts never to meet with anything but complete indifference?

When, last year, our delegate visited you, he went to great trouble to provide you with all possible information on the situation in Australia. He was assured that now, at least, assistance would be given us. But nothing has come from you; even theses which he was assured would follow immediately have not yet turned up.

And now we find that we are to have no share in the *facilities* for training Communist leaders!

Can we be expected to show results worthy of a Communist Party?

In this connection we would also ask you: Are you in communication with J.S. Garden, who was expelled from the Party a year ago? He asserts that he *is* still in receipt of letters from you, and that you recognise him and *not* our Party as your representative. As you were notified of his expulsion and of the reasons, we would dismiss these assertions as palpably absurd did we not know for a fact that bodies subordinate to the Comintern are regularly in communication with him, failing to even supply our Party *with* copies of the correspondence. If his assertions are true, you are helping to consolidate an individual who is bitterly anti-Party and who is attempting to build up an allegedly militant organisation owing allegiance to himself alone and trailing at the heels of *reformist* politicians.

We are hoping that the present visit of our representative may cause you to look on the needs of our Party in a new light and to treat us with some such consideration as might be expected by a section of the Communist International.

With Communist greetings,

J. Howie

Secretary, CPA

Document 44

RGASPI 495–94–33. 29 August 1927, Organisation Department of the ECCI: letter: To CC of CPA. Typescript.

This letter registers that Tom Wright, secretary of the CPA, was in Moscow at the time to report on the progress of the Party to the ECCI. It is further evidence of the difficulties of communication between Moscow and Australia; there seems to have been little information from Australia—and no personal contact—since the visit of Ross in April 1926. Wright's visit would culminate in the ECCI's resolution, in Document 45, below, sometimes described as the 'October Resolution'.

Moscow, August 29, 1927

To the CC of the CP of Australia

Dear Comrades,

We have learned from your secretary that the letter we sent you in May 1926 concerning the organisational tasks of the CP of Australia unfortunately has not reached you. We on our part, have likewise received nothing from you during the 14 months which have passed since your representative made his report here. Please do your utmost to improve the connection with the ECCI so that we may have a more lively exchange of opinion on the fundamental questions of the movement, which is so necessary at this time. We are pleased to be able to say that according to the report of your secretary, the CPA has achieved considerable results in its organisational work during the past year. But at the

same time it is certainly clear that the organisational work of the CPA remains very weak and this of course is one of the greatest obstacles in the way of the further development of the Party.

The basic defect in the organisational work of the CPA is that it does not concentrate its work on the factories, but on the territorial organisations like the Labour Party and like all such socialist parties. It has not yet commenced the work to reorganise itself on a factory nucleus basis. Therefore the Org. Department of the ECCI thinks that it is the most important organisational task of the CPA in the immediate future to entirely break with those old methods of work and to commence energetically the building up of the party on the factory group basis.

One cannot, of course, expect to build up a perfect Party apparatus as long as the CPA is so weak numerically. Therefore the numerical growth of the CPA is the most important question of its organisation work in the immediate future. However, it will be impossible to carry on effective recruiting work if the members of the Party continue to be scattered singly in enterprises and settlements.

The report placed before us on the condition of local organisations shows that in a number of states the local provincial organisations of the CPA are not yet fully organised and that the CC has to keep up direct connections with individual comrades scattered in various parts of these states. This deflects the CC from control over general Party work, scatters its forces and makes it impossible in such states to undertake any organised political campaigns. The CC should first of all set itself the task of coordinating the action of all Party members (even if there be only 3–5) in towns and other populated centres. Where there are ten or more *members* a local organisation should be set up with organiser, Sec. and Committee with departments, in relation to *size of membership*.

Another essential organisational premise for the successful reorganisation of the Party on a factory nucleus basis is the formation of capable district Party committees, thereby releasing the CC from the direct charge over individual comrades and the lower Party organisations. Considerable work in this direction will also have to be done by the CPA. As such district organisation develops the *higher* Party organisations should also be developed and consolidated—they should place the whole of the state and all its members under control of an elective state Party Committee. We enclose herewith model statutes of a Communist Party as elaborated by the 2nd International Org. Conference, which can serve you as a guide in the building up of the Party structure. Please note that in connection with the formation of a Party organisation, one should follow the rule that the structure of the Party should correspond with the existing administrative-political boundaries of the country, i.e., that every

administrative-political unit should correspond with the Party organisation working within its precincts.

The Org. Department of the ECCI suggests that the work for the consolidation and development of factory nuclei should be carried on *through the* local organisations. In order with their help to concentrate all availing [sic] forces in the big enterprises of the most important branches of industry.

Work for the reorganisation of the CPA on a factory nucleus basis should consist above all in energetic work for the recruitment of new members. This recruitment should not be in the nature of a casual campaign but should be carried on continuously and systematically. The Party should concentrate all available forces on the capture of big enterprises in the most important branches of industry. *For a very large and important factory the question of party members leaving a place employing a few hands to work in them should be considered.* It should carry on this work with maximum energy and steadfastness, verifying after every non-success the methods of work in order to return to the attack with renewed strength. In order to ensure the success of recruiting work it should be directed first of all towards those branches of industry and those enterprises where it has been noticed that the workers are best prepared to struggle against the existing state of affairs. The party should take upon itself the initiative to formulate demands, to organise for struggle, gaining a leading role in the movement by able and consistent guidance and by criticism of the reformists. In such cases workers learn their lesson by the concrete experience of everyday life and realise why it is essential for them to follow the lead of the Communist party. Party organisations, in their turn, should watch very attentively the conduct of every worker during the campaign. All those who show signs of revolutionary class spirit should be immediately approached for the purpose of eventually drawing them into the Party. Those in sympathy with the Communist Party should not be organised separately. They should be drawn into the Left trade union movement, and it is also of the utmost importance to draw them cautiously but systematically into everyday Party work, inviting them to district Party meetings, entrusting them with definite work, etc. In regard to sympathisers one should see to it that they should not be expected to do as much as Party members. Sympathisers should not be required to agree completely with the Communist programme and tactics: they can differ from the Party on one point or another. For such differences of opinion sympathisers should certainly not be repulsed as an alien element—on the contrary the Party should do its utmost to reeducate them in a comradely way into useful Party members. Factory newspapers are a great help to the Party in regard to its growth and consolidation. We enclose a special letter on the importance of factory newspapers and we suggest that you should begin to publish them without delay. You should also make the fullest possible use of the directions of the 2nd Org. Conference re the organisation of so-called concentration groups, i.e.

temporary nuclei formed of scattered Party workers employed in adjoining enterprises. The task of these groups or temporary nuclei consists in concentrating the efforts of such scattered Party workers in one enterprise in order to organise there an effective factory nucleus.

When the factory nucleus has been formed the local Party committee should guarantee it a correct organisation of its entire work, should continuously watch its further development, helping and instructing it, BUT AT THE SAME TIME IT SHOULD ENSURE MAXIMUM INITIATIVE AND SELF-ACTIVITY TO THE FACTORY NUCLEUS.

Side by side with the factory nuclei the Party should also form street nuclei, in accordance with the decisions of the 2nd Org. Conference, for the benefit of Party members who cannot be organised into factory nuclei work.

The CPA cannot develop into a mass political Party unless it strengthens its work in the mass organisations, first and foremost in the Labour Party and in the trade unions. The CPA should energetically oppose the idea that it should disassociate itself from the Labour Party, as advocated, to judge by the report of your secretary, by some comrades. In view of the trade unions' collective membership in the Labour Party, leaving the latter would be tantamount to leaving the trade unions; this would mean the complete isolation of the party from the masses. For our organisational consolidation in the Labour Party and in the Trade Unions, some of the most essential tasks of the CPA are: 1) Formation of fractions in accordance with the decisions of the 2nd Org. Conference and the 7th Plenum of the ECCI, [and] guarantee of correct and regular control over these fractions by the competent Party committees; 2) Help in the matter of better organisation and consolidation of the Left wing in the Labour Party and trade unions, efforts to secure a leading role for the Party in this Left movement through our practical work; 3) Intensive practical work in the trade unions and the Labour Party on all questions affecting the everyday interests of the working class, setting a personal example of utmost devotion to this task.

In conclusion, the Org. Department of the ECCI deems it necessary to deal with the question of the structure of the CC. The Org. Department thinks that in view of the numerical weakness of the CPA it is sufficient to have in the CC a presidium or secretariat as a working organ functioning in the intervals between the Plenums of the CC. You should also proceed to form the basic departments—organisational, agitational-propagandist, trade union, and for work among women. At first you should build up these departments in the form of commissions headed by a member of the CC and consisting of 3 to 5 comrades selected among the best workers in the local Party organisations, these comrades to be given certain tasks to fill. Local Party committees should be constructed in the same manner.

The party already has commenced the organisation of Party members inside the trade union. The mistake made on the field is that you have aimed to reorganise the party on this basis. The present industrial groupings, as basic units should be eradicated in place of the forementioned factory basis. The organisation of trade union fractions is essential not only as the best form of working inside the trade union but also as a necessary accompaniment for the successful development of factory activity. (In the decision of the 2nd Org. Conference will be found much detail on the question.)

The tendency to organisation of the foreign speaking members into language groups should be combatted. All party members must belong to their street or factory nuclei. This does not preclude the special work that should be conducted among foreign speaking workers.

For work among Party members and among non-Party elements who do not know the English language, commissions should be formed as necessity arises in the local organisations for work among the respective nationalities. *Through* these commissions, *the party should control the work among the foreign element*, playing the role of auxiliary organs of an agitational-propagandist character. If possible, one of the committee members should be at the head of the commission and 3 to 5 of the Party members of the respective nationality, appointed by the Party committee, should form part of the commission.

In addition to such committees of the Party we propose basing ourselves upon the experience of the Workers' Communist Party of America, that non-Party language clubs should be organised. In these clubs, the main task of which should be work among the proletarian masses, Communist fractions should be formed under the guidance of the local Party Committee. It would be well to organise in these clubs courses and circles for the study of the English language. Teaching English to comrades who have no command over it should be one of the duties of all Party members.

The *Workers Life* should be used as an instrument for the better organisation of the party: workers' factory letters; reports of our factory activity showing successes etc.; letters demonstrating how certain difficulties have been overcome, etc. etc.

The CPA should take up as a separate question of Org. work, the establishment of connections with the ECCI and also with English speaking Communist Parties and the Pacific countries.

Please send us regularly all material descriptive of the internal life of the CPA.

With Communist greetings

Document 45

RGASPI 495-94-31. 12 October 1927, ECCI: resolution: Resolution on the tasks of the Communist Party of Australia (manuscript marking 'Urgent'). In English, Russian, French and German copies; typescript.

This document is the political culmination of Tom Wright's 1927 visit to the Soviet Union, the so-called 'October Resolution'. It claims that the CPA has significant political influence, but must recruit more members. It sees opportunities in Australia turning away from economic isolation and into foreign markets, which will inevitably lead to a worsening of workers' conditions. The CPA must strengthen its work in the trade unions, assert its independence, work for the separation of Australia from British imperialism and oppose the 'White Australia' policy. As for the recommendations on the CPA's work in the trade unions and the ALP, matters of detail are avoided.

RESOLUTION ON THE TASKS OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF AUSTRALIA

The tasks of the CP of Australia in the present stage of development in the class struggle are determined on the one hand by the changes in the economics of Australia and on the other hand by the policy of British imperialism which is preparing to utilise Australia as one of the main bases in the coming war for supremacy in the basin of the Pacific.

As a result of an abnormally rapid industrialisation process, Australia has reached today a stage in its economic development when it can no longer remain isolated and reap the fruits of such isolation, but is compelled to find outside markets for its goods. The growth of Australian export is first and foremost the result of the economic expansion of Australia. An impetus is also given to it by the policy of the ruling classes of Australia who are doing their utmost to overcome the disproportion between import and export by increasing the export of raw material as well as of manufactured goods.

Struggle on and for foreign markets radically changes the whole policy of the Australian bourgeoisie.

With the help of the natural wealth of the country on the one hand and of protective tariffs which saved it from foreign competition on the other hand, the Australian bourgeoisie was a long time able to keep the existence minimum of the Australian workers at a comparatively high level. This high existence minimum was the foundation of the development of Australian reformism which came into being and assumed a definite form a considerable time before the world war. The so-called Australian Labour Party began to carry out the functions of the bourgeois Government considerably sooner than the "Socialist" Parties of continental Europe and the Labour Party of Great Britain. At the same time, there was formed in Australia a special apparatus of "industrial peace" in

the shape of arbitration chambers, which functioned satisfactorily for a comparatively long period.¹¹

The result of the struggle for foreign markets is determination on the part of the Australian bourgeoisie to lower the cost of production at the expense of workers' interests. The offensive against labour conditions, announced by the Australian Government at the end of last year, has practically begun.

Apart from this offensive directed against wages of *the* Australian workers, the ever growing cost of living, which is to a great extent the result of big payments for foreign loans, and first and foremost in connection with the debt to Great Britain as well as the 15% additions to prices of British goods, which benefit by so-called preferential tariffs in regard to Australia, all this combined affects adversely the real wage of all Australian proletarians. The result of the gradual worsening of the conditions of Australian workers and of the policy of the ruling classes directed towards the reduction of their existence minimum is: intensification and growing acuteness of the class struggle.

For a long time, the Australian bourgeoisie showed tolerance to the "Labour Party"¹² in the role of bourgeois government. But this attitude to the question of forms of government in Australia has undergone a change owing to the programme of offensive decided upon by the ruling classes. On the one hand, the bourgeoisie is endeavouring to weaken the autonomy of the individual States, and on the other hand, it is carrying on at present a struggle for the establishment of a strong and avowedly bourgeois government capable of carrying out energetically the programme of offensive against the conditions of labour of Australian workers. At the same time, the *frankly reactionary part of the* Australian bourgeoisie is endeavouring to get rid of the Arbitration Chambers regardless of the fact that as a rule these chambers support the capitalists in conflicts between labour and capital. The Australian bourgeoisie is endeavouring to bring the whole government apparatus into harmony with its new aspirations.

The offensive of the Australian bourgeoisie against the workers' existence minimum is in keeping with its more precise orientation in the sphere of foreign politics. At the last imperial conference, the representatives of Australia declared: "that Australia is vitally interested in keeping the territory in New Guinea in its hand and in not allowing it on any account whatever to be transferred to some foreign power."

Australian is *now* taking an active part in the fortification of Singapore, which is to enable Great Britain to rapidly move Australian troops to India in the event of a revolutionary movement breaking out there, and which at the same time means a gradual increase of the Australian war budget. According to the *Times*

¹¹ The double quotation marks in this paragraph were inserted by hand.

¹² The double quotation marks were inserted by hand.

of July 6, 1927, "expenditure for the defence of Australia amounts now to £3,000,000 and the Premier Bruce is pleased to be able to say that Australian public opinion is in favour of increased expenditure in this direction." Thus, the ruling classes of Australia are participating openly and consciously in the carrying out of the plans of British imperialism in the basin of the Pacific.

This capitalist offensive in Australia is accompanied by definite *changes of mood in the workers' ranks*. This unification takes the form of strikes, of a negative attitude to the Arbitration Chambers, of an endeavour to coordinate the hitherto disunited trade unions and finally, of conflicts between trade unions and the Labour Party which express and reflect the discontent of the masses in regard to the open defence of the interest of the bourgeoisie on the part of so-called labour governments.

In view of this growing acuteness of the class struggle, the Communist Party must make struggle against the capitalist offensive the point of departure of the campaign for the mobilisation and welding together of big sections of the proletariat.

For this purpose, the CP of Australia must first of all strengthen its work in the trade unions. The latter are controlled either by avowed reactionary reformists or by so-called Left leaders who do lip *service* to the moods of the working masses and in reality pursue the policy of agreement with employers.

The trade unions of Australia are confronted now with new tasks. For a long time their functions were those of insurance companies and of "defence" of the interests of their members before the Arbitration Chambers. Class struggle in Australia is entering upon a new stage. Trade unions will be compelled to carry out functions of organs of class struggle.¹³ The Communist Party can and must play an active role in regard to the complete reorganisation of the trade unions by continually and systematically exposing the reactionary reformist leaders and by explaining to the masses the new tasks imposed on trade unions in connection with the capitalist offensive.

Up to quite recently, trade unions played on the one hand the role of rate and tax payers for the Labour Party and on the other hand of permanently functioning election apparatuses. The leaders of the Labour Party, most of them ministers and ex-ministers of various Australian governments have succeeded in reducing to a minimum *the influence of the trade unions* on the policy of the "Labour"¹⁴ Party and the so-called Labour governments. The Communist Party is in duty bound to carry out a big campaign with the trade unions for a decisive struggle against the leaders of the Labour Party.

¹³ This sentence appears to have been struck out by a faint manuscript line.

¹⁴ The double quotation marks were inserted by hand.

The basic nucleus of the Labour Party bureaucracy has become indissolubly connected with the Australian bourgeoisie. The so-called Australian Labour Party cannot become a genuine Labour party unless big sections of workers and first and foremost members of trade unions do their utmost to purge the Labour Party of ministers, ex-ministers and all other officials who while sailing under the colours of the Labour Party have learned to defend more or less skillfully the interests of the Australian bourgeoisie. It is precisely for these reasons that the Australian CP must give full support to the timid attempts of individual trade unions to increase their influence on the Labour Party, exposing at the same time *those* trade union bureaucrats who profiting by the dissatisfaction of Australian workers with the Labour Party would like to occupy cushy posts in the apparatus of that Party. Neutrality in the struggle of trade unions versus Labour Party adds grist to the mill of the avowed social-imperialists at the head of the Labour Party who carry out the policy of the bourgeoisie within the working class.

It goes without saying that struggle against the capitalist offensive can [not] rest content with work in trade unions. Acting as an independent political Party, the CP must do its utmost to increase and extend its influence on the masses and to consolidate and give a definite form to the influence it already possesses by welding together and coordinating the workers for struggle against the avowedly bourgeois federal government as well as against the so-called Labour governments in the individual states.

Preparations for the forthcoming election campaign are carried on by the Australian bourgeoisie on the basis of the establishment of a strong bourgeois power. Regardless of the results of the campaign a majority in the Australian Senate is guaranteed to the bourgeois national party. It has also a splendid chance of retaining its power in the federal Australian Parliament and to gain power in those states where the so-called Labour Party has managed to bring disorganisation and demoralisation into the ranks of the proletariat. The Communist Party must carry on its preparatory work for the forthcoming election campaign under the slogan of welding together workers not only against the national party, but also against its agents in the person of the so-called Labour party which, by remaining under the control of social-imperialists, is paving the way to the establishment of a government of capitalist offensive.

Struggle against the capitalist attack on the workers' existence minimum must be coupled with struggle against British imperialism as well as against the imperialist policy of the Australian bourgeoisie.

In regard to British imperialism, the Australian Communist Party must explain to the workers what price they pay for being part of the "Commonwealth of the British Empire". The Australian bourgeoisie in conjunction with the British bourgeoisie, compels Australian workers to add 15% to their cost of living for

the benefit of British merchants, plus 27–28 million pounds sterling yearly interest to British and other *foreign* usurers. At the same time, Australian workers have their part of expenditure for defence which, according to the competent testimony of the Premier Bruce, will continue to increase. This defence expenditure is part of the preparation of *new imperialist wars against the USSR as well as against the Pacific Ocean basin* for which Australian workers will pay with their blood.

However, the CP of Australia cannot limit itself to exposing the role of British imperialism in Australia. It must carry on a decisive and energetic struggle for the ultimate separation of Australia from the British Empire. In this struggle the Communist Party must show up the half-hearted and insincere attitude of the Australian bourgeoisie and of its lieutenants in the person of the Australian reformists in regard to this question.

In the interests of successful struggle against British imperialism, the CP must get into as close contact as possible with New Zealand and other British colonies in the Pacific, and must do its utmost towards the establishment of close relations between the Australian Labour movement and first and foremost the trade unions of Australia and the labour organisations in other countries in the Pacific.

Struggle against British imperialism must on no account interfere with struggle against the imperialism of the Australian bourgeoisie. The CP must put up as energetic a fight against Australia's direct participation in the oppression of New Guinea and also against Australia's collaboration with British imperialism in its brutal policy in regard to China, India and all colonies and semi-colonies.

In the struggle against Australian imperialism, the Australian CP must pay special attention to the methods by which Australian reformists in the person of leaders of the so-called Labour Party and of the reformist bureaucrats in the trade unions are trying to disguise the imperialist policy of the Australian bourgeoisie. Social reformists pander to the petty bourgeois patriotism and prejudices of backward sections of workers and bring forward slogans against immigration in general and against the immigration of coloured workers in particular. Instead of endeavouring to draw the new arrivals into the trade unions for joint struggle against the capitalist offensive, reformists are practically helping the ruling classes to erect barriers between the various groups of exploited proletarians. The Australian Communist Party must put up an energetic and decisive fight for free immigration not only for white, but also for coloured workers and must initiate a campaign among the trade unions in favour of new arrivals being immediately admitted to the unions and drawn in to the common struggle against capitalist exploitation. Clear and definite struggle for freedom of immigration must in no way interfere with the struggle against immigration on the strength of mass contracts organised by the British and Australian

governments and directed against the European as well as the Australian proletariat.

The CP is the only Party in Australia which can take the lead in the struggle of the working class against the capitalist offensive, against British imperialism and the militarist policy of the Australian bourgeoisie.

The proportional weight of the working class in Australia is very high: one and a half million out of a 6 million population, 814,000 being industrial workers. Trade unions exist in Australia already several decades and embrace up to 800,000 workers. Separatist and guild tendencies which exist in the Australian trade union movement and are fomented by reactionary reformist leaders can only be liquidated in the process of the class struggle which is now entering upon a new stage.

The CP of Australia has a series of very genuine achievements to its credit in regard to trade union work. It has been able to effect and utilise a veering to the Left among the masses, and to consolidate it in the decision of trade union congresses re despatch of delegation to the trade union congress in the Pacific, and re despatch of delegation to the USSR. It is also an incontestable fact that the establishment of an all-Australian trade union council is *considerably* due to Communist agitation for the establishment of one united trade union centre. The success already achieved is a guarantee of the further development of Communist work and of the increase of Communist influence, in the process of the mobilisation of the masses for struggle against the Australian bourgeoisie.

The Communist Party has also been able to have a successful campaign directed against British imperialism in connection with the brutal war against the Chinese Revolution. Further struggle against British imperialism which is becoming more and more openly bellicose and which is at present preparing not only for war for supremacy in the basin of the Pacific but also for a counter-revolutionary war against the first socialist state cannot be successful unless it be closely and indissolubly linked up with the struggle against the militarist policy of the Australian bourgeoisie and against its present offensive against the existence minimum of Australian workers.

The fundamental weakness of the Australian Communist Party is its numerical weakness. The organisation strength of the Australian CP lags far behind its political influence. To do justice to the complicated and urgent tasks which the development of the class struggle has placed before the Australian Communist Party, the latter must extend and strengthen its recruiting work not only in trade unions, but also directly in factories and other enterprises. Communists must recruit new members for the Party among their fellow workers at the bench. First and foremost the Party should see to it that workers genuinely in sympathy with it should not remain outside the Party, but be drawn into its ranks as the Party cannot do justice to the fundamental tasks with which it is now confronted

without successful recruiting work. Success in this direction will be the criterion of the consolidation of the Party.

The Communist Party of Australia is in its composition a purely workers' party, and this is its main strength. Recruiting work must go hand in hand with the establishment of factory nuclei. Communist nuclei in factories and works will contribute to the establishment of factory and workshop committees, the need of which will be felt more and more as the capitalist offensive develops.

The recruiting campaign is one of the urgent and most important tasks of the Communist Party. At the same time the Party Congress will have to deal very seriously with the question of forms and methods for the coordination of all honest revolutionary elements in the trade union movement and in the working class who are fighting in their own fashion against the social-imperialists in the Labour Party and against the bureaucrats in the trade unions, but who do not join the ranks of the Communist Party. The CP of Australia must study very carefully the experience of brother parties in regard to the formation of mass proletarian organisations and particularly the work of the Communist Party of Great Britain in the minority trade union movement and in the Left wing of the Labour Party.

The Communist Party of Australia works preeminently among industrial workers. The Party press and the Party as a whole do not pay sufficient attention to rural workers and agricultural labourers particularly who, even prior to the capitalist offensive, were subjected to brutal exploitation. The Communist Party must take up in all seriousness work among agricultural labourers and must go thoroughly into the question of a clear programme in regard to all problems of class struggle in the agricultural sphere.

Difficult and complicated tasks are confronting the Australian CP and the ECCI is convinced that the forthcoming Party congress will do its utmost to point the way to the transformation of the young but active and energetic Party into a genuine mass Party.

Document 46

RGASPI 495–94–41. 30 January 1928, R.W. Robson: letter to Bob Stewart, a member of the ECCI (with covering letter of April 1928). Original: Robson letter, English, typescript; covering letter, Russian, typescript, trans. by KW.

This letter from the Comintern's agent to Australia, Robson, gives a rather dismissive view of the organisation and proceedings of the CPA's Seventh Annual Conference held from December 22 to 27, 1927. The Conference adopted the 'October Resolution' (Document 45, above), but was divided over questions of application of the line to the ALP. It would be remembered, however, as one of the last CPA conferences where opinions were expressed without fear of retribution. Robson would later report directly to the ECCI along with a delegation of Australians in April 1928.

Petrovsky to Heimo
7 April, 1928

Comrade Heimo,¹⁵

Herewith a letter from Robson, addressed to Stewart, containing a brief account of his work in Australia. I presume the contents of this letter should be communicated to the members of the PS.¹⁶

D. Petrovsky

Jan. 30/28

Dear Bob,

I am booked to return on Feb. 18th and expect to arrive in London March 29th.

There has been much difficulty in booking a cheap return as the cheaper berths are booked some time in advance. However, although I would have preferred to get back sooner, I have not overstayed my limit.

It is not possible for me to give anything like a comprehensive report of my work in a letter such as this, particularly as I will be less than three weeks behind your receipt of it.

I met at first some difficulties owing to there being no full time official in the Australian Party, not even a General Secretary.

The EC was divided into two groups and had prepared nothing for the Congress which was due two or three days after my arrival. I was even doubtful whether the CC would meet before the Congress. This it did. I scoured round looking up members and insisting on this, on the night before the Congress, but with an ordinary routine agenda. Only then did I find that no statement of any kind had been considered by the CEC for the Congress, excepting one by the PB¹⁷ which was not submitted to the CC and which was stated to be “uncontroversial”.

I had to insist that the Congress must not tie our hands with resolutions about work in the unions or LP¹⁸—as there was strong probability of “leftist” decisions being reached—as the CEC was bitterly divided on this, as was the Party, and yet no analysis had been prepared. The CC sectarian majority obviously wished the Congress to register decisions about non-party work.

¹⁵ Mauno Heimo (1896–1937) was a Finnish communist; he and his wife were arrested and executed in Russia in 1937.

¹⁶ The reference is not immediately apparent; it may mean ‘Political Secretariat’.

¹⁷ Political Bureau

¹⁸ Labor Party

The Congress lasted a week and was almost entirely taken up with trivial organisational matters. I was unable to stay right through as on the first day I was publicly announced by the chairman but I got almost verbatim reports. I judged it advisable to address the Congress for two reasons:

1. The extreme "isolation" manifested.
2. The seriousness of the need for mass-work and lack of full understanding of it.

Since the Congress I have worked closely with the new CEC and am of opinion that the contact will be one of very great benefit in the future. The first essential in my view was to have an analysis of the Australian situation drafted and thoroughly discussed. This has been done; from this basis it was easier to argue tasks and methods and this latter is being considered now.

It is a pity someone could not be here for a longer period as my brief visit has evidently proved very useful, but twelve months work would have consolidated a better condition of things.

Frat.

R.W.R.

Document 47

RGASPI 495–94–41. April 1928, Robson: report. Typescript.

This is one of the three reports on Australia considered by the Political Secretariat of the ECCI in April 1928. Robson, who had been in Australia briefly toward the end of 1927, concentrates in this report on the organizational weaknesses of the CPA.

[...]

The ALP is a federal body representing TUs and individual *members* organised on an *electoral* basis. Its policy is thoroughly nationalist and "white Australian". In many respects the ALP has served the interests of the growing manufacturing bourgeoisie directly, as on the question of high tariffs, State provision of services, such as railways, industrial arbitration, coercion of strikers, etc. etc.

In Queensland there has been a continuity of Labour Government for more than 12 years and in that period it has conducted itself exactly as an orthodox bourgeois party would have done. The most recent example of its attitude to the workers being that of the South Johnston sugar strike, when following the "blacking" of scab sugar by the Railway Union the Labour Government threatened a lockout of the union membership and assisted actively to break the sugar workers' strike.

This experience has left behind among the Queensland workers a strong feeling of bitterness and disillusionment—but mainly against the Labour

government politicians—not particularly the ALP. Communist Party activity has not been great, but the efforts of the Party to help the workers, and the Party campaign after the strike met with an excellent response.

The Party has good prospects in Queensland and the CEC should pay considerably more attention to the situation in that State.

In New South Wales the ALP is split. On the one hand is a faction led by Lang, Willis and Garden and on the other are AWU officials. Last year the former faction secured control of the State LP machinery altering the rules so as to kill the previous dominance of the AWU. The Lang-Garden crew have been called “Reds” by the other faction with the intention of weakening their support among the workers, but actually, although the alteration of the rules allows for better representation of the TUs [and] destroys the dominance of the Electoral Leagues (Indir. members and petty-bourgeoisie), the change of rules was made as the only way to oust the clique in control. Differences of policy have played practically no part in the struggle, and the new rules specifically lay down that Communists may not be members of the LP or delegates from their union to ALP bodies.

Since the split two LP conferences have been held in NSW under the leadership of Lang & Co. The first was representative of the rural areas in NSW and was held at Young early in February. This conference was so reactionary that there was no evidence of working-class politics to be found in its proceedings and the Party was unable to make its voice heard.

A week or two later a conference of the urban section of the State LP was held in Sydney.

At this conference there were present as delegates two Communists. Under the new rules, however, no communist could act as a delegate. The Party issued a statement above the names of the two comrades to the other delegates, and the capitalist press gave publicity to same, but although non-Party militants put up a good fight on the issue, they were defeated on the vote which went 30% in favour of the Party.

The Party’s weakness in this connection has resulted from the complete lack of activity in connection with the Labour Party. Nothing whatever had been done to secure as many Party members as delegates to the conferences as possible. Although the Party organs campaign against the anti-Communist attitude of the ALP leaders, no activity existed in the Party to mobilise support against these leaders except in Lithgow.

The Party centre has been divided on the question of the Party’s attitude and policy towards the ALP for a considerable time and has therefore done nothing at all.

[...]

THE CP OF AUSTRALIA.

The Party has about 450–500 members. These are mainly placed in Sydney (110), Melbourne (32), N. Queensland groups (200) Brisbane (30) and Lithgow NSW (32).

It will thus be understood that the Party is scattered throughout only the three eastern States in the form of concentrated groups. Nearly half of this entire membership is newly joined. There exists a branch form of local organisation with practically no activity outside paper selling and agitation. Even these are poor. The *WW* circulation is 4,500 and agitational work is weak.

The Central Committee is drawn from the Sydney membership and appears to have largely been interested in NSW and Sydney matters, the questions affecting other states being neglected.

This has acted detrimentally to the growth of the Party in other States.

Central organisation was practically non-existent when I arrived in Sydney, about the middle of December [1927], and although steps were being taken to improve matters, this question will continue to need attention.

The annual Party Congress opened on Dec. 24 and lasted for 5–6 days. No material had been issued to the Party groups on the Congress, but CEC report was distributed among the delegates. The resolutions, of which there were a large number, sent in from local groups, dealt almost entirely with petty organisational matters.

There was no full time Party official in existence when I reached Sydney, three or four days before the Congress opened. Comrade Wright (General Secretary) had not returned from Moscow and arrived on the eve of the Congress, attending the Central Committee held on the 23rd of December.

Here I found that very little had been done to prepare the Congress. There had been no attempt to consider giving the Congress a lead from the CEC on even the most urgent questions facing the Party, but it was insisted that the Congress would decide definitely what policy the Party would pursue in the ALP.

This without any lead whatever from the CE or any section of it.

It was with difficulty that I got the CE to consent to allow Congress to discuss the question fully and refer the matter for immediate and definite decision to the new CE.

I pointed out that we (the CEC) had no time to go exhaustively into such an important and vital issue in the midst of the Congress itself and that the CI draft resolution just to hand would have to be carefully considered in connection with the whole question of Party policy.

As the CE itself could only listen to a part of the Comintern resolution being read to the meeting, and could not seriously discuss its contents, I suggested (owing to the bitter feeling existing among leading members) that it would be wisest for Com. Wright to read the second half of the CI draft to the Congress during his report on his visit to Moscow, explaining the decision of the CEC, i.e., that the whole question of policy for the ALP be considered immediately by the new CEC. To this recommendation the Congress agreed, after a lengthy discussion on the ALP.¹⁹

At the close of the first session the Chairman introduced a fraternal delegate from New Zealand and then surprised me by introducing me also. As I had decided to address the Congress, I was of opinion that my presence would attract police enquiries, I did so in the second session and thereafter kept away from the Congress. I arranged meetings with the various delegations however, and met the North Queensland comrades, the Lithgow (coalfield) and Melbourne delegates.

My impression from conversations with all these delegations was that there was considerable dissatisfaction with the Party's lack of programs, great anxiety to work better. No real Party training had ever been instituted or developed, and no real Party leadership existed at the centre.

Politically and organisationally the Party was and remains extremely weak and inexperienced. The Congress proceedings were of trivial character according to the verbatim report. This was very bulky and I was compelled to get rid of the copy I was bringing to England when the police held me up at Southampton.

My address to the Congress dealt briefly with the work of the CI and the chief Parties, and more fully with the mass work of the CPGB, drawing analogies and making suggestions wherever possible.

After the Congress I met the new CE and it was decided to place the centre organisation on a better basis. Subsequently a presidium of five was appointed in place of a Polit and Org-bureau. Following this, an Agitprop, Industrial and Org Department was set up and given certain preliminary organisational tasks.

I was of opinion, and remain so, that the only way to liquidate the division of opinion on the CE (there are no faction feelings within the Party membership) was for the CE to examine and discuss exhaustively the whole question of the situation in Australia.

This was agreed to and a draft statement drawn up as a basis for a thorough discussion. This draft was discussed at several meetings and was slightly

¹⁹ The last sentence of this paragraph has a few pen strokes obliquely through it, suggesting that it should be deleted.

extended and amended. Finally, it was unanimously accepted by the CEC (copies attached).

Before I left Australia the question of Party organisation was discussed, and faults I have mentioned previously as applying to this CE in Sydney were admitted. It was agreed that efforts should be made to begin to build up State Party organisations under CE direction and control and that the work of the Sydney group and NSW Party must be guided by separate organs instead of by the CE.

The questions of developing activity in Queensland, in the coalfields, and among the “cocky” (small) farmers and in the more important States (particularly paying attention to the group of sympathisers in West Australia) were all fully considered and decisions registered.

The TU work was being developed, and the Agitprop Department was already showing results, bringing out a training syllabus based on that of the CPGB and instituting the formation of training groups amongst the membership throughout the country. It was agreed that it was essential to begin to prepare campaigns for recruiting new members and increasing the circulation of the Party organ, and the departments concerned were instructed to prepare plans for same. Finally, I am of opinion that the possibilities are good for the Party, and that its membership and influence can be extended considerably if the CEC will turn its attention to the development of an accepted policy, and liquidate past differences, instead of constantly tripping over them.

Document 48

RGASPI 495–94–42. April 1928, H. Moxon: Report of the Representative of the CC of the CPA on ‘Party Factions’. Typescript.

This is one of the three reports on Australia considered by the Political Secretariat of the ECCI in April 1928. Moxon’s factional history of the CPA in this document ends by insisting that the ALP—with which the Australian party had had a tortuous relationship because of the ‘united front’ policy—is no longer a working class party. The CPA, he argues, should have nothing more to do with it. He wants the ECCI to rule on the divisions within the Party. This confirms the general point that the relationship with the ALP was an abiding and divisive concern of the CPA. Moxon seems unimpressed by the actions of the Comintern’s representative, Robson, during his brief stay in Australia.

7.4.1928

REPORT OF THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF AUSTRALIA ON “PARTY FACTIONS”.

The Australian Socialist Party adopted the Communist Manifesto and Dictatorship of the Proletariat as its policy in 1919. Early in 1920 [it] called a

unity conference to form CP of A. Disputes arose over property owned by the ASP (Press, furniture, etc.) and ASP section left unity conference, and adopted CP of A as new name for ASP. Balance of Unity conference formed new CP of A and issued *Australian Communist* as official organ. The ex-ASP section (which for convenience we will call ASP) changed the name of the official organ from International Socialist to International Communist.

Unity.

Despite calls for unity by the CI (then the III International) the fight between the two Parties was relentless—the CPA (Garden, Baker, Earsman section) was repeatedly split—re-united and split again, whereas the ASP showed a united front (internally) until the end of 1921 or beginning of 1922 when the united front re the Labour Party and unity of two parties caused a split in the ASP. The “holy trinity” (A. Reardon, Mrs Reardon and Everitt) refused to carry out the wishes of the majority of Sydney Branch re unity and towards the middle of 1922, 20 members of ASP seceded with the furniture, library fittings and plans to the other party—thus killing the ASP including the outside branches in NSW and Queensland.

1922 Split.

In the CP of A we found a struggle being waged in the Sydney Branch between the Communist elements and the extremely opportunist bureaucracy (Garden, Baker, Messrs Smith, Denford & Co). This fight came to a head in connection with the election of Conference delegates to 1922 annual conference. After declining nomination as delegates the CE members learned to their dismay that Sydney Branch had a voting strength of 16 (1–10) to the CE none. At the following meeting the CE ordered a new election of delegates. Sydney branch re-endorsed previous election and passed vote of confidence in comrades elected. Several members of Sydney Branch were then expelled by the CE on frivolous charges, e.g. Mrs. Griffon was charged by Jeffery with accumulated pin-pricks and as being the most unsocial woman in the Party. Comrade Griffon [was criticised] for having made the statement that C.A. Baker was more concerned with a “meal ticket” than the Party (which was proved when Baker misappropriated “Communist” money for personal use, yet exonerated and defended by the balance of CE). Sydney Branch would not uphold the expulsions and two weeks later was expelled en-masse—leaving the Party in the hands of the bureaucracy and a few outside and insignificant branches. Sydney Branch continued to function as a separate Party until the middle of 1923 when “unity” was achieved by a complete capitulation of Sydney Branch (“No vote for six months” was one of the conditions). The proletarian element still fought the corrupt bureaucracy, which at this time passed the infamous resolution that CP members must go into the ALP and when challenged, deny CP identity. Many members, potentially good Communists, were lost to the ALP by this decision.

The Weaver-Thomas conspiracy case did not reflect credit on the Party. Following this came the demand for a general strike in the mining industry (on front page of *Communist*), and, just as the call was being taken up by the miners, a new order “No general strike—but go slow” was adopted, and as a direct result, the whole of the Party influence in the coalfields which had been considerable was lost and has not yet been rebuilt.

In 1924 (after Garden’s and Howie’s expulsion from the ALP executive), the Party conference (still dominated by the bureaucrats) reversed the decision re “ALP concealment” and instructed Party members to get expelled from the ALP; some remained in the ALP and left the Party; others are still in the ALP despite the 1924 resolution, but the best members of the Party carried out the decision and were accordingly expelled. Dozens of ALP branches in New South Wales declined, for quite a time to expel Communists, but eventually all (?) adopted the ALP Executive decision which by this time was “no CP members in ALP branches”. In Queensland some ALP branches were expelled for refusing to operate the Anti-Communist Pledge (although in the majority of cases no CP members were members—just left-wingers). A Minority Movement was commenced in Q. by us, but eventually fizzled out without achieving anything (we neither made nor kept proper contact with expelled militants).

The running of candidates in NSW Elections in 1925 was a total disgrace to the Party—no proper programmes were drawn up, nor was the campaign really worth while—less than 1,000 votes for 5 candidates out of a probable 250,000 (?).

During the Seamen’s Strike on the Coastal Service in 1925, the following “scab” agreement was entered into by the Marine Transport Group of the Sydney Labour Council, upon which Garden is seated, and the Shipping Companies. It is known as the Clarkson Agreement.

And we further agree not to countenance any action of the members of the said union that would be calculated to either delay or hold up the sailing of any ship during the currency of the ship’s articles.

Should the Seamen’s Union flout the agreement under which they sign on any vessel, and persist in preventing the sailing of ships or exercise job control this group will bring all possible pressure to bear on the union to observe the conditions aforesaid, and if the union continues in its attitude, it will be isolated from the group.

In the event of these measures not being successful, the transport group will not oppose any measures affecting the manning of the ships to permit of their continued running.—Signed on Behalf of the Federation Unions.

Higgins was at that time editor of the *WW*. Kavanagh approached Higgins and suggested that the agreement be attacked. He was requested by Higgins to

analyse the agreement and submit a criticism of same. When the *WW* for that week appeared instead of the criticism appearing, an article endorsing the agreement from the pen of Garden appeared instead. This endorsement of the agreement was attacked by Judd in the *Revolutionary Socialist*. The following week the editor of the *WW* replied to Judd again upholding the agreement.

Beginning of New Era 1925.

At the Annual Conference in 1925, a new note was struck. “Into the Unions and on the Offensive” was the slogan. For the first time the Party was beginning to feel itself and its mission. A new policy was drafted and adopted, less time was to be wasted on the Parliamentary side of the ALP and more time [devoted] to the masses. The UF from below was endorsed and preparations made for its fulfilment. The policy on immigration and factory and union groups was drawn up and adopted. A real Left wing (in contradistinction to the fake bodies previously fostered) was to be formed. (See 1925 Draft Programme and Policy attached).

Immediately following the Conference (in 1926) the TUEL²⁰ was formed—*WW* sub-drive campaigns were indulged in and the Party outlook was bright. Garden continually sabotaged the Party decisions. Denford (ex General Secretary) followed Baracchi as a liquidator. Garden was expelled for refusing to publicly associate himself with the Party, after repeated repudiations by him of Party. (Note: on November 26th, Garden as Pol-Sec of CP instructed Lithgow comrades to sign anti-CP pledge at special conference of ALP). During 1926, the anti-TU official job-by-intrigues resolution was carried. Its object was to “stop the rot” in the Party, it having been a common thing for Party members to get TU paid official jobs by intrigue and corrupt practices. (Before expulsion Garden comes out as endorsing new Labour Party.)

1926 Christmas Conference endorsed most of the Central Committee’s work of previous 12 months. It was evident that a faction comprised of the remaining members or associates of the old bureaucracy was steadily working against the new policy of the Party and in the election of the Central Committee the members were 6 (old policy) 4 (new policy). The policy of the 1925 conference had been re-endorsed and more discipline was to be enforced. The CI resolution re agitprop and organisational bureaux was adopted, also the general resolution (See R.Com. Rept. Attached).

[...]

Although completely defeated by two successive conferences the Right wing oppositionists still carry on factional work and are consistently lobbying and generally disrupting the Party, e.g. the org. dept. of which Wright is Secretary

²⁰ Trade Union Educational League.

was instructed to prepare draft reorganisation scheme. Instead of calling Dept. together (4 comrades) Wright prepares draft unaided and takes same to the Presidium for endorsement—the weaknesses of scheme, etc., had to be pointed out at the Presidium which could easily have been done in the Dept. (a deliberate waste of time preventing the Presidium from getting on with Party work proper). (Further quotations from CC Minute book re RW [Right Wing] Actions to hand). Despite this, we have great opportunities to develop into a big Communist Party in Australia. In N.Q. [North Queensland] the only place in which an organiser has operated, we have ten new groups with an approximate membership of 200. The total Party membership is approximately 500–600. The ideological level is extremely low and is but now being raised by compulsory Party training.

[...]

The CC statement which is being brought to Moscow this week does not touch upon the majority of these questions. It is a general political-economic review with suggestions. Your representative (Robson) when in Australia would not hear our case, whilst continually lobbying with the Right wingers who pose as the best Party elements. Your rep. did not attend the Party Conference, excepting at the first session when nothing was done and the second session where he delivered a fine fraternal address. (Wright also reported this session). Other accounts of conference he received per medium of Right wing “runners” and of course the official report which he carried.

At the moment the CC is split, seven being of the Kavanagh-Ross faction and 3 of the Right wing Oppositionists (Wright, Higgins faction) but, unfortunately for the Party, such strategic positions as the general secretaryship and the editorship of the weekly organ are in the hands of Right wingers (Wright secretary and Higgins editor), besides them being chiefs of the agitprop and organisation departments.

Excepting the Melbourne and Lithgow groups there is little or no support for the oppositionists, therefore the split is not in the Party proper, but mainly confined to the CC.

Practically every achievement of the Party from the “into the TU policy” to the Sacco-Vanzetti demonstration and from the anti-TU session policy (anti-Shumakerism) to Party training has been initiated by the now majority section of the CC.

The majority of the Australian Party is looking to the ECCI to give a decisive ruling in connection with the faction fight for, as previously pointed out, the majority decisions of conferences are ignored and the same old fight is waged over every question by this disruptive and retarding element (See CC Minute Book extracts). The oppositionists are Right wingers, but we are far from being “Left”—we have, where the RWs would sanction it, applied the UF from below.

The Rights always consider it as from above (Note CE Report to VII Congress re Melbourne). We are Leninists, we do effective work in the TU movement—the basis of the ALP (note BWC, HOCC, LVA, Anti-Shumakerism), forming new groups (see Organisers' Report to 7th Congress and compare with Jeffery's report to V Congress).

Upon your decision rests the fate of the Australian section—Forward to a mass Bolshevik Party or back to a Garden bureaucratic controlled bastard reformist Party.

H.J. Moxon.

Document 49

RGASPI 495–94–40. 19 April 1928, Moxon and Robson: report: 'The Australian Party'. Typescript.

Given the apparent hostility between Moxon and Robson that became evident at the April 1928 ECCI meeting, it is not surprising that this brief document which appears under their names is merely a statement of facts.

19.4.28. (Moxon and Robson)

THE AUSTRALIAN PARTY

The membership of the CP of A in June 1927²¹ was 296. Party groups were confined to NSW 2, Queensland 2, Victoria 1, with a total membership at large of 41 scattered throughout Australia.

The national organiser appointed in May 1927 enrolled 200 new members into 10 new groups in Queensland in six months making the total membership to date about 500. The chief weaknesses of the Party organisationally are the lack of contact with factory workers (especially in Sydney where the Party is strongest), the lack of permanent working committees in CC and the weakness or non-existence of fractions controlled by the Party. For a country where 800,000 out of a total population of 6,000,000 are organised in the unions, the Party's contact with the masses is very weak.

In Sydney where Party organisation is strongest (125 members) the membership was divided into a territorial group: 8 industrial groups and 2 language groups. Only two of the industrial groups (Building Trades and AWU) ever functioned efficiently—the balance exist on paper only.

The CC has decided to work upon area (concentration) groups and the organising of a few factory nuclei as the basis for the reorganisation of the Party to factory and street nuclei generally.

²¹ This appears to be a typographical error in the original; the date should read June 1926.

The CC has now (Jan. 1928) been departmentalised with Agitprop, Org. and Trade Union Departments and a presidium (Polbureau) of 5 members.

The Party has conducted campaigns against exclusion of Communists from Labour Party when 26 unions and electoral branches supported the Party in NSW and considerably more in Queensland. Recently it has conducted campaigns re Hands off China, formation of Labour's Volunteer Army, a Workers' Defence Corps, Sacco Vanzetti Demonstration (one day strike with march of 11,000 workers in Sydney), International Defence Committee (engaged now on aid for Colorado miners), Anti-TU bill (amendments to Arbitration and conciliation Acts by Federal Government), Organising Italian Immigrants into Anti-Fascist League, etc.

The Party's publications are *Workers Weekly*, (4,500–5,000 circulation) and *Communist* (monthly theoretical organ—1,500 circulation). Since January the *Workers Weekly* has considerably improved, dealing more concretely with issues confronting the Australian Workers.

A series of leaflets and pamphlets dealing with China, USSR, Lenin Anniversary, May Day, Anti-Shumakerism, 10th Anniversary, etc., have been issued. A syllabus for Party training has been worked out and published by the Agitprop Dept.

Document 50

RGASPI 495–94–38. April 1928, ECCI: letter: To CEC of CPA. Typescript.

Having considered the reports above (Documents 46, 47 and 48), the ECCI handed down the decisions communicated in this letter. It had been impressed by Moxon's account of possibilities for work outside the ALP in Queensland, and this would eventually provide the CPA with a let-off, but without a real solution to its continuing ALP dilemma. It allowed the CPA to stand its own candidates in the Queensland state election in May 1929 (a performance that attracted around 3,000 votes between the two candidates).

TO THE CEC OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF AUSTRALIA.

Dear Comrades,

1. We have made a careful study of the reports presented to us by our representative to your Congress, as well as the reports submitted by your representative to the Comintern, and by the delegates to the Profintern Congress.

The reports show that the recent developments in the Labour movement in Australia afford tremendous possibilities for the Party. We have in mind in particular the success of the recruiting campaign in Queensland last year, and the growth of Left Wing activities in Western Australia. These facts coupled with the inner struggle in the Labour movement in Queensland, are indications

that the conditions in Australia today are much more favourable for the growth and development of our Party.

In order to exploit to the greatest extent the new possibilities provided by the present stage of the class struggle in Australia, the Party is called upon, first and foremost, to strengthen and to improve its organisational apparatus, linking up this organisational work with a special campaign directed towards raising the ideological level of the working class of Australia as a whole, and of the Party itself in particular. *Special attention should be paid to the creation of local organisations based upon factory and pit groups.*

We wish to make here some concrete suggestions concerning the organisational tasks with which the Party is now confronted. The proposals contained in this letter should be taken together with our special resolution on the tasks of the Party in Queensland. Both of these documents are based upon the October resolution of the CI, which, according to the reports that have reached us, was unanimously accepted by your last Congress.

The first task of the Party is to improve the work and organisation of all organs of the Party—at the centre, as well as in the districts and in the localities.

For this purpose, the CEC should set up a commission to review the whole situation of the Party organisationally, and report back in detail regarding steps to be taken. In this connection, the decisions of the 3rd. Congress of the CI, the resolutions of the 2nd. Organisation Conference, and the CPGB Handbook on Organisation will serve as a useful basis.

2. The present organisational basis at the Centre (Presidium, with full time Trade Union, Agit-prop, and Org. Depts.) forms a good beginning for the creation of a well-adapted *central* Party apparatus. *The immediate task of the Party is to work out a concrete basis for the local organisation.*

3. The present statutes of the CP of A should be reviewed, and the clauses which allow of plural voting by delegates to Party Congresses, and the Referendum, struck out. The question of the appointment of proxy delegates should be clarified by a provision being inserted in the rules whereby such proxies must first be sanctioned by the CEC.

4. The question of State Party organisation, particularly in Queensland, NSW and Victoria should be settled on the basis of the model Statutes adopted at the *first* Organisation Conference, and made operative. It is imperative that the CEC take immediate steps to appoint capable comrades for organising and instructional work in selected districts, on a full time basis. In this connection it must be borne in mind that new members in hitherto unorganised districts can be immediately organised on the basis of the factory group. Recruiting work should not be of a casual nature, but should be carried on continuously and systematically. In the large centres, such as Sydney, the Party should concentrate all available forces

on the establishment of factory groups in the larger enterprises in the most important industries.

The Party must pay special attention to the task of establishing factory groups wherever possibilities exist, and to the building up of sound local Party organisations. Fraction work must be thoroughly organised in non-party working-class organisations where there are Party members. The CEC must see that the entire Party membership thoroughly understands and actively participates in carrying through these tasks. The Party must also be prepared to defend the principle of communist fractions in non-party bodies.

[...]

7. Trade Union Department—The decisions of the 2nd. Organisational Conference, which explain in detail the functions and methods of work of the Trade Union Dept., should be thoroughly studied and adapted to suit the conditions in Australia.

The winning over of the Trade Unions to the RILU and to the policy of the Party demands from the Party constant attention to the ideological development of the masses within the unions. As an essential part of this task, the Party must take advantage of every opportunity to contest official positions with Party members well suited for this work. All such contests should be under the direction of the CEC, without whose sanction no Party member can stand for an official position in the unions. Further, *as a rule* Party members contesting these positions should not conceal their identity as members of the Communist Party. They should base their claims for support upon a sound Trade Union record, as well as upon a militant class struggle platform.

[...]

10. The Agit-Prop Department. This Department has a particularly important task before it in developing Party training along systematic lines, as has already been commenced. Party training should not merely take the form of lectures. The primary task is to organise training for all members of the Party. Special groups should be formed for the training of active Party workers, functionaries, and so on.

[...]

14. Organisation Department—The primary duty of the Organisation Department is to undertake all measures necessary for the implications [sic] of this letter, to be carried out effectively and intelligently, and not applied in a mechanical manner. With this object in view, the Dept. must popularise, through articles and a special handbook, the decisions of the Third Congress and *both* Organisation Conferences.

[...]

26. Immigration—The importance of the immigration question in Australia, particularly insofar as it is linked up with the bar against coloured immigrants, calls for special attention. The CP of A must conduct careful and well thought out propaganda based upon international solidarity in opposition to the chauvinistic and anti-proletarian so-called “White Australian” policy of the ALP. The prejudices of the backward sections of the workers must not be allowed to cause the Party to weaken its propaganda in this connection. The Party must put forward the policy of unequivocal opposition to all racial barriers in the immigration laws, “championing an internationalist policy, and insisting upon equality in treatment, wages, rights, and free admittance for the workers of all countries.” (See October CI resolution.) This campaign must be a permanent feature not only in the agitation and propaganda work of the Party, but also in its organisational work. The organisation and defence of immigrants, irrespective of colour, must be carried out in the most systematic way possible.

[...]

29. The Differences Within the CEC of the CP of Australia—We have considered very carefully and fully the various accusations and counter-accusations made by the Australian comrades against each other, and we came to the conclusion that there are no serious political differences to justify the existence of different conflicting groups within the Party.

The cause of the conflict is due to the cleavage between the Central Committee and those comrades who concentrate [mainly] upon the work in the trade unions. This cleavage led to [lack] of mutual confidence and to mutual misunderstandings. [The fact] that comrades representing the different groups were able [to] unite with us on the suggestions contained in this letter [is] a convincing proof that in Australia also the two groups [could] and should unite for common and joint work.

With a view to facilitating this joint work, we recommend that Comrades Ryan and Jeffries [sic], *who* were not elected to the CEC by the last Congress (partly as a result of the application of the method of plural voting), should be *drawn into the work of the CEC*.

Mistakes made by active comrades should be overcome through collective work and mutual comradely criticism rather than by devastating accusations. The building up of a strong and united Party leadership is now more essential than ever.

30. In conclusion, we wish to call your attention to the necessity for taking the most effective steps to achieve permanent contact with us, as well as with the Communist Parties of Great Britain and of New Zealand.

Document 51

RGASPI 495–94–38. 18 September 1928, Agitprop Dept of ECCI: letter: To CEC of CPA re *Workers' Weekly*. Typescript.

Having recommended greater attention to the Party's Agitprop activity since at least April 1926 (see Document 38, above), Moscow conducted a review of the *Workers' Weekly*, and in this letter roundly criticizes the CPA's newspaper.

Moscow, September 18, 1928.

To the CEC of the CP of Australia.

Re—*Workers' Weekly*.

Dear Comrades,

We herewith submit to you the findings of a review of your official organ, the *Workers' Weekly*, which are based on a general examination of the issues dating back some years and a closer examination of the issues of the first half of 1928.

At the outset it must be stated that as far as the basic policy of the paper, its contents and its make-up are concerned, there is no fundamental difference whatsoever between the issues of any given period.

In our review we have paid consideration to the many objective difficulties the Party is faced with (such as its youth, its small size, as well as the great distance separating it from other Parties etc.). We have striven to discern the major and basic lines of shortcomings, in order to set their correction as a task to be accomplished, before the Party.

The press is, or should be a reflection of the Party's mass activity. As such it will carry news of all struggles of the workers in every sphere of their life and give it a Communist interpretation. It is, if correctly developed, the voice of the masses, their coordinator, because the Communist Party "has no interest opposed to those of the working class". It must be the unfailing weapon in the struggle of the workers, and the masses must be brought to recognise it as such.

To establish such a press is a process in the course of which the Party itself has to strike roots in the masses. The growth of the press and that of the Party are [...] ²² linked to the one and the same process. With the growth of the Party, and its increased activity in the everyday struggles of the masses, with the intensification of its political life, the press in reflecting this will become a factor of the greatest significance. With this understanding it can be said that the press clearly reflects the state of development the Party in question finds itself in. This is true with particular regard in the case of the *Workers' Weekly*.

²² A word here is indecipherable.

Therefore in a number of major instances it was necessary to reflect on this without, however, making concrete suggestions, since this is not within the scope of the review.

By pointing out the most outstanding and fundamental shortcomings, and by making suggestions for their correction, we attempted to on the one hand give a rough outline for an editorial policy and on the other to supply areas as to the contents of the press and its organisation. We are, however, certain that even a thorough rehauling of the *Workers' Weekly* will show its lasting beneficial effects in the long run only then, when it will mark a step in the general process of the Party's growth, as well as the clarification of its policies and its Bolshevisation.

1. The two basic shortcomings of the *Workers' Weekly* are that it is not written for the masses and that it is not a political organ. Glancing through its pages we find that it tends to speak for "pure and simple" left wing trade unionism with some rather abstract political *articles* strewn in between. Perhaps it is wrong to separate the two shortcomings, for taken fundamentally they are part of one problem. There is a degree of resemblance between the *Workers' Weekly* and the organs of some syndicalists or of those of some isolated socialist groups. The basic problem as indicated by this fact seems to be that of a tendency towards sectarianism. This is the decided impression we gained by examining your paper.

Page after page is filled with material reflecting the inner life of the trade union movement. This lends the paper a predominantly trade union character. The items published are presented in a programmatic form with dogmatic declarations of policy. This is the case with most of the political items too.

[...]

As far as the news section is concerned the *Workers' Weekly* has its given limitations. Within these (the fact of its being a weekly, the lack of telegraphic news etc.), however, it must develop a high degree of efficiency. The review has convinced us that the paper lacks the proper news material. This must be corrected at once.

[...]

With the weekly being written for the masses, filled with material of interest to them and easily digested by them the increase of its circulation will naturally follow. Ever and ever wider masses will come to recognise it as an indispensable weapon in their struggle. The Party's policy, its campaigns and its activity will on the one hand be made know to the masses through the *Workers' Weekly* and on the other receive the inspired support of the workers in an increasing degree. If what has been said is correctly understood and lived up to, the *Workers' Weekly* will become the collective agitator, the collective propagandist and the

collective organiser of the Australian toiling masses in the truest sense of Lenin's words.

*Fraternally yours,
Agitprop Dept ECCI*

Document 52

RGASPI 495–94–43. 24 December 1928, Marushchak:²³ letter to Piatnitsky, ECCI. In Russian, manuscript. Trans. by KW.

In response to Marushchak's question in this letter about Australian representation at the Sixth Congress, it can be said that Esmonde Higgins arrived from Australia in August, in the midst of the Congress, and subsequently prepared the report which forms Document 53, below.

Krasnoe Sormovo
24/12/28

To Comrade Piatnitsky,
ECCI,
Moscow.

Dear Comrade,

So far I have heard nothing from the Anglo-American Secretariat. I am appending herewith all that I have received from one of the best members of the Australian Communist Party. I am also sending his letter (the original), from which you will see that not all appears to be well in the Australian CP and that the ECCI should pay attention to this, as serious work is now beginning for the Party there in view of the sharpened class struggle, and the Party and the CC and the Sydney group in particular are beginning to veer to the right.

By the way, could you kindly let me know if anybody from Australia attended the VI Congress, as Comrade Lominadze²⁴ told me there was nobody, but judging from *The Workers' Weekly* there was a representative. If there was one, I wonder who it was. I am sending you the letter without translating it into Russian, since you have people there who can read and translate it, but if you can't understand it, send it to me and I will translate it and send you the translation. Under separate cover I am sending some newspapers. Perhaps you will receive them, but if not, there are some interesting things there. Please return the letter when you have finished with it. If possible, provide answers to the questions placed at the end

²³ Ivan Marushchak (John Maruschak) lived for some years in Melbourne. He returned to Russia after the revolution.

²⁴ Handwriting not clear.

of Comrade Shelley's letter. Comrade Shelley²⁵ fully deserves our trust. He is a good party worker in every respect.

With communist greetings,

I. E. Marushchak

Address: Locomotive Assembly Shop,
Krasnoe Sormovo, Nizhnii Novgorod province

Document 53

RGASPI 495–94–44. December 1928, Higgins: report to CPA 8th Conference: Report on the 6th world Congress of CI. Typescript.

Esmonde Higgins was the CPA's delegate to the Sixth Comintern Congress, which saw the turn away from the previous (and generally unsuccessful) 'united front' policy towards a policy of 'united front from below'. This change was an attempt to bypass and expose the traditional leaders of the working class; it led ultimately to the doctrine of 'social fascism' which declared the supposed friends of the working class (i.e., the reformist leaderships of social democratic parties and trade unions) to be worse than the fascists. The implications of this policy development would take some time to be revealed in the CPA, as in other communist parties, but they were underpinned by the notion that capitalism had entered its 'Third Period' since the First World War, a time that would be characterized by heightened capitalist crisis, inter-imperialist wars, and threats to the Soviet Union. Higgins' report lays out the development of this new line from Moscow, but is particularly interesting for its direct approach to (and rejection of) the charges that communists were simply following 'orders from Moscow'. Indeed, Higgins resisted—and would continue to resist—the strategic implications of the Third Period line.

3rd Session. 24th. December, 7.30 to 10p.m.

Chairman—Comrade Miles.

1. Message of greetings received from CPNZ
2. Greetings to be sent to ECCI, CPNZ, CPGB, CP of China, CP of Japan, and CP of Indonesia.
3. International Delegates' Report—Comrade E.M. Higgins

Report by Comrade Higgins on the 6th. World Congress of CI

My report will deal primarily with the 6th. World Congress of the Communist International whose discussions sum up and clarify the main international developments of the past four and a half years.

It is necessary first to touch briefly on the work of the previous congresses and on the situation with which the 6th Congress was faced.

Earlier Congresses. It is nearly 10 years now since the Comintern was founded. At the beginning of 1919, at the end of the imperialist war, when there was no

²⁵ Here in Latin script and spelt 'Shelly'.

Workers' International—for the leaders of the old international had linked themselves with the capitalists of their "own" countries—the Russian Communists sent out a call throughout the world to all revolutionary workers' organisations to unite. The First Congress, held in March, 1919, drew up the famous Manifesto of the Communist International and was noteworthy, in particular, for Comrade Lenin's thesis on "Bourgeois Democracy and Proletarian Dictatorship", which still stands as the clearest possible exposition of the differences between revolutionary and reformist theory.

The Second Congress (July, 1920) met when the spirit of the workers throughout Europe was still rising high. As there were many nondescript groups and parties prepared to flock into the International, it was necessary to face the task of checking the entry of elements which were so soaked in reformist ideas that they would obstruct a clear revolutionary line; hence the famous "Twenty One Points", the new conditions of entry. This congress also adopted resolutions on the national, colonial and agrarian questions. At the same time, although not actually decisions of the Congress, appeared Lenin's "Left Wing Communism" and the reply of the Communist International to the queries of the British Independent Labor Party, defining clearly the tasks of revolutionary workers in Anglo-Saxon countries.

By the time of the Third Congress (June, 1921), the capitalist offensive was beginning to be seen quite clearly, and at the same time inside the Soviet Union the end of the period of War Communism had come. The Congress was concerned especially with Trotsky's and Varga's report on the world economic situation, and with the strategy of the Russian Party in connection with the New Economic Policy.

The Fourth Congress (November, 1922) met at a time when the capitalist offensive had spread considerable confusion in the ranks of the world's workers. This Congress defined the principles of the "united front" and discussed the "Workers' Government" slogan. It also dealt for the first time with the Comintern's World Programme.

The 5th. Congress (June, 1924), meeting after the defeat of the workers in Bulgaria and Germany and the coming into office of the MacDonald Government in England and the Herriot Government in France, analysed the "democratic-Pacifist" phase of capitalism and carried further the discussions on the Workers' Government slogan.

There has been no congress since then until this year, but several enlarged executives (Plenums), which really have taken the place of Congresses, have discussed important questions which we must remember when considering the present Congress.

The 5th. Plenum (1925) was particularly concerned with estimating the degree of stabilisation which capitalism had reached at that time, and with formulating the principles of “bolshevisation” for the guidance of the Communist parties in capitalist countries.

The next year saw the rise of the Chinese Nationalist struggle, the revolt in Morocco against Spanish and French imperialism, and in Europe, a marked swing to the left. The 6th Plenum (early 1926) carried further the analysis of capitalist stabilisation, in the light especially of developments in the colonies and semi-colonies, and dealt with the mistakes of the ultra-left opposition in the German and other Western European parties.

The 7th. Plenum (Nov. 1926) met after the General Strike and the miners’ struggle in Britain, and after the new opposition in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union had begun to take an actual anti-Soviet form. It laid down a very clear line with regard to the [Left] Opposition in Russia and Germany, and for the first time defined the policy of the CI towards the Chinese Revolution.

The 8th. Plenum, in May 1927, had to review the policy in China in the light of the Kuomintang counter-revolution. The British Government had broken with the Soviet Union, and the Plenum was particularly concerned with elaborating the Communist policy towards the war danger.

Finally, the 9th. Plenum (Feb. 1928) discussed the lessons of the Vienna and Indonesian insurrections and of the collapse of the Chinese Party’s leadership.

It carried still further the discussion on the [Left] Opposition in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, and in particular laid down a new tactical line for the French and British sections towards Social Democracy.

The 6th. Congress, meeting in the tenth year of the Comintern’s history, had thus a rich experience behind it in dealing with the problems of our world party. The main questions discussed were, firstly, the international situation and the tasks of the Comintern, secondly, the World Programme of the Communist International, thirdly, the war danger, fourthly, the colonial revolutionary movement, and, finally, the position inside the Soviet Union and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

The International Situation. On the first question a report and a thesis were presented by the CPSU delegation, through Comrade Bucharin. Great care was taken to define capitalist development since the war. Three periods were distinguished:

1. In the years immediately after the war—the period of acute revolutionary crises, especially in Europe—capitalism feared for its existence and executed a series of sham retreats. This period was marked, not only by the revolutions in Russia and the Baltic States and the overthrow of the

monarchy in Germany and Austria, but by rice riots in Japan, the Bavarian Soviet, the Hungarian Soviet, and the upheaval in Italy. The climax of those revolutionary movements was reached in 1921, in the famous March rising in Germany, which, although ill-conceived, was an expression of the direct revolutionary urge amongst the German workers. This period came to a close in 1923, with the defeat of the Bulgarian and German workers.

2. The second period was marked by the capitalist offensive and by defensive strikes and resistance of workers, particularly in Gt Britain and other European countries.

This period shows a gradual and partial stabilisation of capitalism, with the restoration of productive forces that had been upset and disorganised during the war. In this period the direct revolutionary movement passed to the colonies—China, India, Morocco, Syria.

3. Now we are in the third period—the period of indisputable stabilisation of capitalism, where production exceeds pre-war in nearly all forms of economy.

It is marked by great improvements in the technique of production (electrification, applied chemistry, light metals, conveyor system, standardisation, mass production, etc.) and by the development of capitalist monopolies, trustification and state capitalism. As a result there is to be observed a great consolidation of capitalism. These changes are clearly set out in Varga's *The Decline of Capitalism*, which was prepared as a handbook for delegates to the 6th Congress.

On the other hand this third period is marked by the continuance and the development of the crisis of the capitalist system. In the USA there has been an absolute decline in the number of workers while output is increasing, a phenomenon that has never happened before. There has never before been such mass unemployment—there are ten million unemployed through the capitalist world.

In spite of the stabilisation of capitalism, all its contradictions are developing under the surface and are increasing in intensity. As a result of changes during the critical period following the war, there has been a fundamental structural change in the whole world economy. While, on the one hand, productive capacity has immensely increased, markets have been greatly contracted, intensifying the disproportion between productive and consumptive possibilities.

The existence of the USSR has meant that the world-wide capitalism has ceased to exist. The development of the colonial revolutionary movement has brought to the forefront tendencies which prevent any real stability of the capitalist system. Imperialist tendencies and imperialist contradictions have been greatly strengthened, and War can be the only possible outcome. (Hence all the

signs of preparations for imperialist war—the changing alliances, “Industrial Peace” stunts, etc, —with, as the fundamental tendency, the grouping of imperialist forces against the Soviet Union.)

Thus the thesis regards the present situation as one of extreme [in]tensity, in which even small strikes [can] easily become political struggles.

The Social Democrats take comfort from the apparent stabilisation and pretend that this has disproved the Communists’ revolutionary contentions. But Communists see that this very stabilisation is only aggravating the contradictions which will bring about capitalism’s decay and downfall. We have in no way changed our aim of world revolution and we have not lost faith in the necessity of revolution. The Communist estimation of the position has been summed up as follows by Comrade Bucharin:-

Capitalism is doomed to perish, not because it is rapidly degenerating into a parasitical organism, not because it is sinking into decrepitude and impotence—but because moribund capitalism has entered into its last stage, in which the inherent contradictions of the capitalist system become extraordinarily intensified and give rise to conflicts which bring about its destruction. The parasitical aspect of capitalism continues to increase, but this is not degeneration proper; it is degeneration which comes as a result of the intensification of the contradictions of capitalism—contradictions arising from the law of unevenness of capitalist development—contradictions between cartelised and non-cartelised spheres of production, antagonisms arising out of the fixing of quotas, the struggle between various imperialist States.

The New Line Towards Social Democracy. The second part of the thesis on the International situation is devoted to the consideration of the role of Social Democracy and of reformism. While the Communist movement is growing on the basis of the contradictions of capitalism, Social Democracy is now growing on the basis of its stabilisation. Social Democracy is now becoming part of the capitalist State, as Hilferding said at the last congress of the Germany Social Democratic Party. The reformists are turning the unions into schools of capitalism. Social Democracy is becoming more and more imperialistic and anti-Soviet, more and more interested in industrial “peace” and in social reaction, and more ready to split the workers’ movement by imposing a rigid social democratic discipline.

In view of these developments, the CI has adopted a new line towards Social Democracy, a new line of intensified struggle against it. Our aim is to capture the leadership of the working class from the reformists; to this end we must lose no opportunity of exposing the leaders as traitors. This does not mean any weakening of the united front, but a more resolute attempt to build a united front from below on the basis of struggle.

As applied to Australia, this means that it is time we abandoned altogether the idea that we can transform the Labor Party into a Workers' Party. We must recognise that the ALP is now simply part of the capitalist machinery. Our line is a struggle against the Social Democratic leadership, and an endeavour as an independent revolutionary force to win away from the existing leadership the masses who are not yet clear as to the part which is being played by reformist leaders.

The thesis went on to deal with our tasks. Great stress was laid on the need for more internationalism. Most sections were severely criticised for not paying more practical attention to such great international issues as the Chinese Revolution and the British strikes of 1926, and also for failing to link up questions of daily life and revolutionary activity in their own countries with questions of international politics.

Within the International the main danger was found to be in "right" danger since the removal of the "left" (Trotsky) opposition. The thesis insists that we must be careful above all not to give ground to Social Democracy.

On this thesis there was a long and animated discussion, in which 90 speakers from practically every country in the world took part. There was not much actual conflict in the discussion except with regard to the tasks of the different sections. Disagreement was expressed to the contention that the "third" post-war period was radically different from the "second", but finally it was agreed that the distinction must be made, as it is necessary to emphasise that the stabilisation of capitalism is now very real and cannot disappear at once.

The Comintern Programme. The next item on the agenda was the Comintern programme. This was the first attempt to formulate concretely the tasks of the Communist movement in connection with the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat on a world scale. It was an immense job to get into one document a comprehensive statement of what are the tasks of the Communists, of "our world plans for the future".

This was the fourth draft of this programme; the first draft had been discussed by the Fourth Congress in 1922, and ever since eager and keen discussion had been carried on throughout the International. At the 6th. Congress 900 amendments were presented opening up a hundred important problems. A section of the Programme Commission had to withdraw from Moscow for a week to digest all these amendments.

The Programme opens with a concrete analysis of imperialism and the main varieties of countries existing to-day. After dealing at length with the proletarian dictatorship (making use of the experiences of the USSR) it considers the strategy and tactics of Communist Parties in capitalist countries and examines the main reformist theories.

On economic questions, discussion centres particularly on the meaning attached to the term “finance capital”, (a Persian comrade insisting that it was a dangerous term because it over-emphasised the role of the banks) and on the theory of crises (Comrade Thalheimer urges that they should be attributed to “disproportion” and not to “over-production”). There was a big fight on the question whether what has come to be known in Russia as the “New Economic Policy” is an inevitable stage of the workers’ dictatorship. There were differences of opinion on the relations between Social Democracy and Fascism and on the division of countries into historical types. In the commission and in the general sessions of the Congress, these questions were thrashed out with great care and frankness.

The final draft was agreed to be the best possible statement of the principles of Communism. It is a very long document. It could not be anything else, because it has to deal concretely with problems which, when—as in 1847—the revolutionary movement was a propagandist society, could be treated abstractly. It is not merely a statement of principle, but outlines the fighting conditions and the aims of the struggles of the workers in countries of different types.

The programme is completely opposed to the assumption of the reformists that capitalism is playing a progressive role, and all the time emphasises that the overthrow of capitalism is the only hope of the workers. It is an essentially international document, the ultimate goal and the immediate demands being treated from the point of view of the world dictatorship.

The adoption of the programme was a solemn moment. Every delegate was conscious that after weeks of discussion at the Congress and years of preliminary discussion amongst the Parties, there had been worked out a magnificent statement of the aims and tasks of the world Communist movement.

Reporting to the Leningrad Party officials, Comrade Molotov said: “The Programme lays down the general and most urgent tasks of the CI for the whole epoch of the revolutionary struggle for the world dictatorship of the proletariat. Its adoption signifies the establishment of our most important perspectives of the whole epoch of international socialist revolution. In the whole history of mankind it has never yet happened that a class has possessed a uniform international programme. There has never been before a class capable of it.”

This programme will be the basis of our training and of our own special programme. As soon as it comes to hand it will be printed, educational courses will be drawn up so that it can be used as textbook, and the whole of the membership of our Party will have the job of digesting it and applying it.

The War Danger. This question of the danger of imperialist war had been discussed in connection with all previous questions, but it was so big and urgent that special attention had to be given to it. The war danger is the central question

of the present period, because the whole international development is proceeding in the direction of war.

The thesis drafted by Comrade Bell brought together in a single document all the important Communist ideas with regard to war and the methods of fighting the war danger. Bell's report and the reports of other comrades, and also the speeches of those who spoke in the discussion, gave a real wealth of information about the colonial wars which are already going on, about the capitalist antagonisms and the grouping of capitalist forces against the Soviet Union, about the armaments and the organisation of capitalist resources, and about the pacifist illusions which are being spread by the League of Nations and the Social Democrats.

Most Parties were criticised for failing to appreciate the war danger sufficiently. Bucharin insisted that "questions concerning the daily policy of sections of the CI must be subordinated to the question of the struggle against war, just as imperialism takes every fresh step from the standpoint of preparation for war." Such things as the Industrial "Peace" Conference and the Arbitration Amendment Act are essentially war measures. "Industrial Peace", said Bucharin, "is the most sharply expressed form of class truce—the best form of preparation for war."

The thesis on the war danger lays down very clearly the great tasks of Communists in the fight against the war danger, stressing the need for an energetic campaign against every form of warlike activity of our own capitalist class and against every form of pacifism. Questions of work amongst the armed forces, and amongst metal and transport workers, women and the youth are discussed in the light of the experience of the international.

This war thesis has already excited the rage of the capitalist press, which says that the CI and the CI alone is seriously fighting imperialism and its aims.

The Colonies. After five weeks, the Congress settled down to discuss the revolutionary movement in the colonies in the light of the experience of the Chinese, Indian and Indonesian struggles since 1920, when the Second Congress for the first time drew up a Colonial Thesis.

Bucharin put the position clearly when he declared that "hitherto the colonies have been the objects of history; now they have become its subjects." The colonial revolutionary movement is now one of the most decisive facts in the world struggle against capitalism.

After noting for a few days the conditions in Hong Kong and Shanghai, I have not yet got over the shock of the tremendous reserve power of the masses in colonial and ...²⁶ If they can be marshalled against capitalism, a tremendous

²⁶ Some words are obscured in the manuscript.

dynamic force is available. The Communist International is the only force trying to organise this wasted strength against capitalism. As one of the reporters on the colonial question declared, “one of the most important characteristic features of the general political orientation of the CI consists in the connection that we have succeeded in establishing between the development of the struggle of the proletariat in big capitalist countries against class oppression and class rule and the development of the struggle for the liberation of people in colonial and semi-colonial countries which are oppressed and exploited by imperialism.”

The thesis provoked a very keen discussion on imperialist policy (with special reference to the question of industrialisation) and on the role of the colonial bourgeoisie in the fight against imperialism. Further elaboration and investigation is necessary before agreement is possible on these extraordinarily complex questions. The work of the 6th. Congress provides an invaluable basis for future discussion.

The Soviet Union. The other main question—the situation in the USSR and in the CPSU—I am not going to deal with here, because time will not permit me to enter into a report on Soviet Russia. The Congress resolutions took particular notice of the facts that industry in the USSR has already passed the pre-war level and is advancing far more rapidly than in the capitalist world; that the socialist sector (and, particularly, heavy industry) is growing more rapidly than private enterprise; that the conditions of the workers and of the poor peasants have greatly improved; and that by effective methods of self-criticism bureaucratic dangers have been decisively checked.

I shall never forget after two months in Russia the inspiring sight of the successful struggle for the construction of Socialism in the USSR. Since 1920, when I was last in Russia, the progress is astonishing.

The Reformists’ Conference. The Brussels Conference of the Second International, which met in August at the same time as the VI World Congress of the CI, provides the best possible contrast with our Congress. It showed that the socialists of every country are lined up behind their own capitalist class. The bitterest discussions at this conference were between French and German Socialists regarding the German evacuation of the Rhine.

We find too at this Conference an utter indifference to the war danger—not a single reference to the whole thing, except a demand for “security and disarmament”. The chairman did not mention the Soviet disarmament proposals, but he gave a blessing to the Kellogg Pact and the Geneva Protocol. The Russian Menshevik, Dan, declared: “We must fight Russian militarism.” Even the foreign trade monopoly of the Soviet Government was denounced. On the colonial question the Conference showed its color by appointing as Chairman of the Colonial Commission an ex-Governor of Jamaica, Lord Olivier. Even the reformist delegates from India, Ceylon and Trinidad, who had been the Conference’s

guests, denounced the colonial resolution as an openly imperialist decision and withdrew in disgust. The Conference welcomed capitalist concentration and rationalisation, suggesting that Socialism will come through capitalist prosperity and the formation of international trusts. The whole Conference was a complete capitulation to imperialism.

On the other hand our Congress, the Communist World Congress, was concerned all through with fighting capitalism through to victory. The Congress Manifesto called on workers, farmers, colonial peoples, soldiers and sailors to struggle against capitalism and to meet the bosses' attack with a counter-attack. A telegram from the German Red Front Fighters' League to the VI World Congress described the Congress as "the most vivid expression of the revolutionary will of the growing international class front of the toilers of the whole world."

On all matters on which the Brussels Conference squibbed it, our Congress adopted a bold fighting anti-capitalist stand. It is significant that colonial parties were flocking to the Communist Congress while delegates from colonial countries were running away from the Brussels Conference.

Our Congress, further, was brutally frank with itself. When I showed a copy of Bucharin's report on the Tasks of the CI to a fellow passenger, he said: "You know, this is a queer report, it must drive people out of your Party to read all this criticism." The CI, however, welcomes vigorous self-criticism, because it is only through such criticism that real clarity on our tasks and organisation can be reached.

Facts about the 6th. Congress. A few facts about the Congress. It lasted six weeks, but you must not think that for six weeks delegates were having a joy ride in the capital of the Workers' Republic. There was very hard work all the time. Several delegates had to give in and go for a rest. Comrade Stalin, who had not had a holiday for four years, had to leave and go to the Caucasus after the Congress had been sitting for about a fortnight. With commission after commission, delegation meetings in between, and plenum after plenum, delegates were tired out, but, satisfied with work they had done, were intensely enthusiastic at the finish.

Soviet workers showed a very keen interest in the Congress. At workers' clubs in Moscow I was asked the most detailed questions on various minor points raised during the Congress discussion. One British comrade, who [was] sent into Central Siberia to report, found that Party members in remote districts had been following the Congress so closely that he was unable to answer all their queries.

There were at the Congress 515 delegates, from 55 countries; 100 came from outside of Europe; 74 from actual colonial countries. Any of you who know the history of the 2nd. International will see the extraordinary change that these figures represent. The 2nd. International even at its best period was a European

organisation. The Comintern is a world party, and to the Comintern the affairs of the colonial countries, of the non-European countries generally, are as important as European affairs. From three affiliated Parties—Korea, Portugal, Cuba—which are forced to work illegally, no delegates were present. Seven new sections were admitted to affiliation at this Congress, including New Zealand, Paraguay, Colombia, Ecuador—parties from the once despised colonial countries which are still treated with contempt by the 2nd. International.

The reformists and the other agents of capitalism are fond of insinuating that the Comintern is simply a “toy of the Russians.” It is interesting to observe that, of the 55 members of the Congress Presidium, only 7 were Russians. Of the 30 candidates for the new Executive, 2 are Russians; one is Australian, Comrade Kavanagh. These figures are enough to show that in contrast with any party that has appeared before the Comintern is a real world party, and to dispose of the silly talk about “Moscow putting it across other parties.”

“Orders from Moscow.” It is just as well to consider what this talk about “orders from Moscow” means. Our International has never paraded as a loose federation of national bodies but has endeavoured to become a world communist party. There is no sense in creating an international organisation if it is not to intervene in the conduct of its national sections, or to use international experiences for the purpose of straightening out the problems of the Labor movement in the various countries. We glory in the fact that we are an international party.

Decisions are come to with regard to the affairs of particular parties, generally at the instance of representatives of those parties and always with their advice. Those decisions are arrived at as the result of the freest possible international discussion; as a result of the collective Marxian analysis and the collective work of the individual delegates. Every national section is a party to the International’s decisions, which once made, are loyally carried out by the sections. There can thus be no sense in the talk of one section “giving orders” to another. The Comintern is an international of workers, all bound together by the common tie of revolutionary struggle against world capitalism.

It is quite true and we glory in the fact that special attention is paid to the opinions of the leaders of the Russian Party, which has made its own revolution. We must not forget what the Russian workers have taught us. Not only do they provide an asylum to the headquarters and the persecuted members of the International, but they have given us the rich revolutionary experience of the victorious workers of the Soviet Union, who fought under the leadership of Comrade Lenin.

Take for instance the habit, which we are beginning to learn here, of prefacing our discussions on strategy and tactics with a careful analysis of economic and political conditions. This was one of the methods of the Russian Bolsheviks, for

which they were looked on as cranks by most socialists in Western Europe. It has been proved that this practice is one of the surest guarantees against the development of opportunism and sectarianism, which are both due to short-sightedness and a lack of faith in the workers and revolutionary process.

The Bolsheviks, too, have taught us to see our own struggles as part of the world process, and so to turn for guidance to the international experience of the working class. The Second International's principle of autonomy for the different sections means only that the leaders of each section must be "free" to sell "their" workers to "their" capitalists as suits them best "in harmony with the national traditions."

They have pointed out, further, the necessity of a powerful Communist Party—a working party, not a talking outfit—which endeavours to win the leadership of the masses by disciplined work in the class struggle. In opposition to the idea of the Social Democrats that a party consists of a number of bureaucratic leaders, with a passive "rank and file" bound blindly to the machine, the Bolsheviks insisted that in a workers' party the "leaders" are only guides and co-ordinators of the work of the entire membership.

Finally, we cannot overestimate our debt to the Bolsheviks for their precepts with regard to parliamentary action (that our purpose is simply to rally the masses to destroy capitalism), to work in the trade unions, co-operatives, etc. (that our business is to develop the political consciousness of the workers by taking part in the daily struggles and showing the need to extend the fight against capitalism along the whole front) and the need for systematic fraction work inside non-party organisations for the purpose of organising our efforts to the best advantage. These precepts we owe to the Communist International and particularly to the Russian section.

We Have a Great Responsibility. The 6th World Congress has given us a clear line of policy. The Programme, in particular, enables us to proclaim where we stand. The Australian section has had the benefit also of special resolutions and letters of advice. On our principal tasks and line of policy we have no reason in the world now to disagree. It is for us now to work out our tactics.

We are faced with a grave responsibility. The allied Australian and British capitalists are carrying on a savage offensive against the workers. The Pacific area is bound to be the main storm centre of the approaching world war. Ours is the only party which can organise and direct the workers of Australia against the capitalist offensive and the danger of imperialist war, and towards the satisfaction of their class needs.

We must therefore act quickly, without delay, to fit ourselves for our tasks. The Government will not hesitate, in a crisis, to mop up the leaders of our Party; we must see to it that our Party is made strong enough to feel no ill effects from

such interference. This can be done only by increasing our membership, strengthening our organisation, tightening our connections with the mass of the workers, and raising our ideological level.