INTRODUCTION

The document which follows is a report to the Central Executive of the Communist Party on the activities of the Third Congress of the Communist International which met in Moscow in June-July 1921. W. P. Earsman, who compiled the report, was a central figure, if not the central figure, in the formation of the originally united Communist Party. He was appointed the party secretary at the founding conference.

After the secession of the Australian Socialist Party in December 1920 and the adoption by it of the name of Communist Party, a principal preoccupation of Australian communists was the division in the Australian revolutionary movement. Both sets of communists were represented at the Third Congress with the aim of securing the recognition of the Comintern. Earsman went as the representative of the official party.

Earsman was an Edinburgh Scot who had been in Australasia for about ten years, first in New Zealand then in Australia. An engineering tradesman, he had been active for several years in the socialist and industrial movements. During the First World War he had been secretary of the Melbourne District of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers. Later, he started the Victorian Labor College; in this, and in his general activities, he worked with other radicals including a few left-wing intellectuals. In 1919, he shifted to Sydney with Christian Jollie-Smith and collaborated with J. S. (Jock) Garden, the radical secretary of the N.S.W. Labor Council, in forming the N.S.W. Labor College. From this activity came one strand of the three pronged movement to form a communist party; the other two were the Socialist Party and a section of the I.W.W. (Industrial Workers of the World.)

The report is the most important document on the early history of the Communist Party. Probably the most remark-
able aspect is the light it throws on the concern Trotsky showed for the interests of the communists of far-off Australia and his role in seeing their particular problems were recognised and looked after.

The unity proposals of the Small Bureau were complied with in February 1922. Although one or two groups attended the conference and merged, the A.S.P. refused to comply with the Comintern instructions. So the United Communist Party which emerged from this conference did not have the support it was intended to have. The unity question was finally disposed of later in 1922 when a significant section of the A.S.P. joined the C.P. leaving a rump of the A.S.P. which had little further significance.

Roger Coates

REPORT OF W. P. EARSMAN TO CENTRAL EXECUTIVE ON 3rd CONGRESS OF COMINTERN¹

—December, 1921

Dear Comrades,

In this report I am presenting to you there is everything contained in it which is of any importance; therefore I ask all comrades to treat it as confidential at this time. In fact at no time should it be discussed outside of the Central Executive.

I arrived in Moscow on the 13th of June, 1921, after eleven weeks very difficult travelling. I am leaving out all the preliminaries which had to be gone through before I could get to work.

While in England I had got letters from friends to Comrade Bell, leader of the English Delegation. Comrade Bell I saw the day of my arrival and, after a short talk, he suggested that I should see the Executive Committee. This I readily agreed with and it was decided that I should accompany Bell the following day, the 14th. In the meantime I found out whether anybody else had been doing

¹ The Comintern, Communist International or Third International was formed in 1919. Due to the failure of the Second International, Lenin had proposed the formation of a new revolutionary socialist international in the April Theses (1917) and the Russian Communist Party initiated the moves to implement this proposal.

Roger Coates is a secondary school teacher. Besides the introduction he has supplied the annotations to the report.
any work, but found so far that nothing had been done. Comrade Rees\(^2\) of the ASP had been here two days before me and I had not forgotten the conduct of Comrade Freeman\(^3\) while he had been in Australia. Comrade Rees informed me that he did not intend to do anything and that he would be prepared to work with me. Just then I did not take any notice of the suggestion until I had found out the lay of the land. I had made up my mind to make a fight for full recognition. I might add here that Comrade Quinton was really the credentialed delegate of the ASP who had power to act. But he had been out of action by being arrested in England as a suspicious character found loitering around the Hull Docks. For this he had received three months in gaol.

On the 14th I accompanied Comrade Bell to the Comintern, where we learn that the E.C. were not meeting, but we met Comrade Skobetsky\(^4\), Secretary to the E.C.\(^5\). After listening to me he instructed me to write a full report of the position in Australia supported by any evidence that I might have; further that all the Commissions or Committees had been set up (about ten in all) and that I could select the ones I desired to sit on and help to draft the thesis. This I thought was good and set to work full of hope.

**Women’s Congress**

The Women’s Congress was in session at this time and I received an invitation to attend. This was a large order, but I put in an appearance and gave a report of the position of women in the revolutionary movement in Australia and the difficulties we were confronted with. This was acceptable to them and they already realised the failings of women’s movements in any of the Anglo Saxon countries. I promised that I would try and do what I could to get the interest of women in the country. Further than this I could not undertake. I also received copies of the different theses.

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2 A representative of the Australian Socialist Party or Goulburn Street communists (after the location of the Sydney headquarters).

3 Paul Freeman, whose death is described in the document was one of the most enigmatic figures of the Australian left. His nationality is in doubt, but he belonged to the Australian IWW during the First World War. Subsequently he was arrested and deported to the US where American immigration officials refused him admission. Returned to Australia on the *Sonoma*, he became a *cause celebre*. Finally, he disembarked in Germany and attended the Second Congress of the Comintern, nominally as an IWW delegate. He returned to Australia in 1920 to promote Australian trade union representation in the Red International of Trade Unions and then became an ASP delegate to the Third Congress, meeting his death in the manner described here, after making things very difficult for Earsman.

4 Skobetsky (Kobetsky), a Russian member of the ECCI from the Second Congress.

5 The Executive Committee of the Comintern, commonly the ECCI.
I might say that the women's part of the organisation is a very important one in Europe and they have their own papers and carry out their own propaganda work, etc.

**The Executive Committee**

The E.C. met every evening or in the late afternoons and sat on as a rule to the early hours of the morning. The Commissions which had already been set up and which I decided to sit on were — The World's Economic Situation: Trotsky Chairman; Tactics: Radeck Chairman; Tactics in Russia: Lenin Chairman; Organisation: Koenin\(^6\) Chairman; Trade Unions: Zinoviev Chairman.

These I attended and did my best to place the colonial position before these Comrades and by the way to place Australia on the Revolutionary map. This was not light work because everything had to be done in writing, and being alone I had to carry it out by myself.

During those few days I had been continually on the enquiry about Comrade Freeman because I was not at all satisfied about his position. This was done so that I could better judge what kind of man I had to contend with.

During this period I was able to make a little progress in getting some recognition of Australia and the Colonies generally from the International point, and when my papers were read they were surprised at the progress made in revolutionary tactics and in particular in the trade unions. I found also that the Germans were looked upon as the most important party in the world by the Russian Revolutionaries and the 3rd International because of the important position they had in relation to the Russian situation and also in the world situation. Recognising my own position I decided if possible to attach myself to the German Delegation instead of the English. I found this easier than I expected mainly because I was looked upon with favour because of the work I had done while in Germany. My objective, the recognition of our Party, had to be obtained at all costs and I was prepared to do anything to attain it. My attachment to the Germans was of great assistance in other directions in so far that it kept me well informed of all that was going on and when all meetings would be held. This was important because rarely anyone knew when the meetings were held till the last moment.

The executive meetings at this time were fully taken up with European affairs in attempting to straighten out the many difficulties

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\(^6\) Koenin (Koenen, W.), a German delegate to the Third Congress and a member of the Small Bureau (presidium).
that they were confronted with. In Germany there were two parties
that had recognition and one had to go. France had three or four
parties all claiming allegiance to the revolutionary movement and
none of them Communist parties. Italy was in a similar position,
but here the masses were good, but they were tied up by a clever
band of leaders, with Turatti and Serrati at their head, while the
revolutionary leaders were an ordinary lot and really not leaders
in the true sense of the word. Spain was in a similar position and
the English movement was in a very unsatisfactory state. Then
there were a host of the new European States all clamouring to
have attention. It was all good for me, but tied up our affairs
awfully. These things had all to be dealt with before the Congress
could open so as that the Executive report could be complete and
that they would have some concrete suggestions to lay before the
Congress for the uplifting of the movement throughout the world.

On June 17 a public holiday was declared to celebrate the
opening of the 3rd Congress of the 3rd International, and this
gave me an opportunity to obtain the sympathy of Comrade Trotsky
on behalf of Australia. I had met him on several occasions before
this, but this day he seemed specially interested. It was at the parade
of the Red Army in the Red Square where Trotsky and his staff
had an inspection of the troops and an invitation had been issued
for one member of each delegation to accompany the General Staff.
I got the invitation for Australia and here Trotsky spoke with me
about Australia and the position as a whole. On leaving he informed
that if I struck any difficulties I had to come to him and that he
would assist me. I mention this because it is important later. I
also had a conversation with General Brussiloff this day.

June 20 it was decided by the E.C. that the official opening of
the Congress should be held on June 22 in the Imperial Court
Theatre. This was a public function because of its value as a
propaganda display. Also at this meeting of the E.C. it was decided
that all matters of all other countries would have to stand over
and be attended to by the new E.C. I was opposed to this, but
I was defeated in the vote.

The morning of June 22 arrived and with it Comrade Freeman
who had travelled through the East, giving me no less than 10 days
start from him. Still I had not been able to find out his position.

I soon found after this that he had friends somewhere about
because in the issuing of the Mandates, which were of two kinds
— Blue of Decisive vote and Orange a Consultative vote. I was
given a Consultative vote, which made me furious, and immediately
set about to demand the reason. I saw Comrade Radeck, Chairman
of the Credentials Committee, but got little satisfaction from him. In fact we had some very hot words. I then went straight to Trotsky, who advised me to state my case in writing and supply each member of the Committee with a copy. This was done, but no results were forthcoming in the first 24 hours. Back I went to Trotsky, who then accompanied me to see Radeck, and on my behalf demanded why I was being treated in this manner. Radeck made some very weak reply, which Trotsky would not accept, but it finished by Radeck promising to have the matter rectified, which was within two hours. I got my Decisive vote, which meant full recognition of our Party.

I also learnt that Comrades Freeman and Rees had received decisive votes and I immediately lodged a protest and again asked for an enquiry. I got little satisfaction at the time, but kept worrying Radeck everyday. Several friends advised me to let the matter drop and not to push the objection too far in case that I might prejudice my own case. I accepted this advice after consulting with a few others. Freeman then learned of the trouble I was making and of some of my work, and asked me to discuss things with him. At the same time he was twitting me with being the leader of the Australian delegation. We started discussing matters there and then and he commenced by telling me of matters he had been informed of by our members in Australia. Such as that we were an IWW outfit and we were only camouflaging the real issue, that I was an anarchist, etc. I found that he had wormed himself into the confidence of members in Adelaide, Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane. All this was rather astonishing to me and I finished with him by saying that he was not telling the truth. We had a few minutes hot at one another and then I fully realised what kind of man I had against me. Everything that he had picked up in Australia he was prepared to use against us. In fact it was a declaration of war. This was going to make my task very much more difficult, but that could not be helped.

The Congress

The first business of the Congress was the report of the Credentials Committee, who reported that up to date they had examined the mandates of delegates from 50 different countries and that they had issued 293 Decisive votes, 218 Consultative votes and issued 150 visitors' tickets. They graded the countries into five sections, each section carrying with it the number of votes which each delegation would be able to record. Australia was placed in the lowest section with five votes, which meant that they were divided equally between the others and myself. There was no occasion when it was necessary to split the vote, except on one
issue when a motion was moved to close the discussion on the Russian position. I was very much opposed to this, because I was down to speak and had been requested to do so by the German delegation, and I was keen on it. Anyhow, I was defeated, both Rees and Freeman voting against me.

The Congress proceeded daily after this and I was fully occupied on an average of 16 hours a day. This because of the number of Commissions I was on and then arrangements were being made for the Trade Union Congress. In this matter I agreed that Comrade Howie\(^7\) should be the responsible comrade, which would guarantee that all matters were being attended to, but I had always to remember that Comrade Howie was not a member of our Party, which meant that I had to keep a close watch on all that was being done.

About this time I was at the Comintern and while there I had a bundle of letters handed to me. I should here explain that each delegation has a leader in which all business is transacted, and all correspondence coming and going passes through his hands. Though I never was appointed as leader of the Australian delegation, nevertheless, I was accepted as such at Headquarters. This meant that all official announcements were made through me and all correspondence passed through my hands. I received on the 23rd of June some letters, and amongst them one signed by Comrade T. Walsh\(^8\) of the Seamen's Union, transferring the credentials of Comrade Quinton to Rees. I was amazed at this, because I had been doing everything to keep Rees out of the Trade Union Congress, but this furnished him without doubt with credentials. I was simply sick to find that whatever I did it seemed that there was someone always undoing my work. I cannot find any justification for this act, especially when I realise the whole circumstances, that Comrade Howie and myself were more justified to have that credential than Rees because of the fact that both of us had been working for years in the trade union movement while Rees had never taken any part in it at all. Again the fact that Comrade Rees belonged to another party ought to have been sufficient to stop the transfer. The only reason that I can conceive why Comrade Walsh did this was that he fails to grasp that those who are not with us are against us, or that he thought it was not important.

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7. J. Howie, a leading NSW trade unionist, president of the NSW Labor Council in 1919, elected Australian delegate to the Red International of Trade Unions' Congress held in Moscow concurrently with the Comintern Congress. He travelled with Earsman to Moscow.

8. T. Walsh, president of the Australian Seamen's Union; a Communist but apparently here acting independently.
These matters all will have to be dealt with later. It is to the credit of Comrade Rees that he refused to use this credential.

After this things went smoothly for a while, but my tactics I decided had to be ones of always acting first and committing Comrades Freeman and Rees or forcing them to repudiate what I did or said. Further, that by these tactics I was always compelling them to be on the defensive, defending their own position and thus stopping them from breaking any fresh ground. I should say that neither of them were ever present at any of the Commissions or lent any assistance to draft the theses.

I took part in the debates on the theses, but was very unfortunate to be always cut out by motions of closure. On July 4th I got the floor on the question of The Relationship of the Trade Unions and the Communist International. I agreed with the thesis which I had assisted to draw up and gave a report of what had been done in Australia. The following day Comrade Rees informed me that he intended to speak on the question and repudiate the things I had said. I also learned that he was not in favour of speaking, but that Freeman was pushing him. By this time they were both at loggerheads. On July 7th Rees spoke and repudiated my statements and left a very bad impression on himself and his Party. The Congress proceeded daily and nothing particular happened. Very little alteration was made from the previous theses, except in that of The World Situation by Trotsky. Special attention should be given to this, because it is the base of all the other theses.

On July 12th the Communist Congress finished and it was voted on all sides that it was the most successful Congress which had yet been held. A number of important decisions had been arrived at, mainly dealing with the internal affairs of the European countries, but showing how our affairs would be dealt with when our turn came.

On this date an article of mine appeared in the Moscow which was simply a record of fact. Rees agreed with it, but informed me that Freeman was against it and had asked him to assist in replying to it. This Rees refused to do. On this date Comrade Lamb of the ASP turned up and he assisted Freeman to write a reply, but the editor of the Moscow informed me that he would not print it. Freeman performed over this and told me I had polluted all the channels against him.

9 The Theses on the Comintern and the RITU were introduced at the Congress on July 3, the same day the RITU Congress opened — by Zinoviev.

10 Pat Lamb, ASP delegate to Third Congress.
The Trade Union Congress

The Communist Congress being over I had now more time to attend to the T.U. Congress, which had commenced on July 3rd, 1921. I had so far as I was able attended to the business of the T.U., but it was difficult because of the other work and I considered the Communist International more important than this. But the work had been in the safe hands of Comrade Howie. I attended the meetings of the Commissions on Aims and Objects, Workshop Control, Workshop Committees, Constitution, etc. In this Congress you had no homogeneous body to deal with, but an awful collection of divergent views. There were the syndicalists of France, Germany, Sweden, Italy, etc., who stood definitely against any recognition of the political weapon and for absolute freedom of the trade unions. Then came the IWW element from the States, South America and Germany who were non-political or sat on the fence on this question. Then came the simple trade unionists who demanded no politics in the unions. Then the Italian group who believed in being affiliated to both the 2nd and the 3rd Internationals. With this conglomeration of views it was apparent the task before the Congress was a much bigger one than in the Communist International, and for those who accepted the position as laid down by the 3rd International we would have to work hard to accomplish our mission.

The first business was the election of the Presidium of five, which had to be as representative as possible. Comrade Mann\textsuperscript{11} was elected to represent England along with the Colonies. Then came the election of the Council, which was composed of one delegate from each country. I agreed that Comrade Howie should be our representative, but this did not debar me from attending any of the meetings which I might desire to attend. Comrade Howie did the work well and his efforts brought fruit in so far that Australia had been placed in the 4th section with eight votes, and Comrade Howie, with the assistance of Comrade Bill Haywood\textsuperscript{12}, was successful in having Australia lifted to the 2nd section with 16 votes.

The Credential Committee reported that there were 38 countries represented with 380 delegates with decisive votes and 30 with consultative votes along with 111 guests.

Then came the report of the Provincial Council which had been working for the past year in building up the International. This

\textsuperscript{11} Tom Mann, veteran English working class leader.

\textsuperscript{12} Bill Haywood, American IWW leader.
The report was submitted by Comrade Rosmer of France. The report in itself was of little importance but the discussion developed into one on tactics and principles. In this discussion Comrade Howie spoke and put the position of the Unions in Australia and endorsed the principles as laid down by the 3rd International that the unions would have absolute freedom but by the activities of the Communists they would be kept to those principles.

Then we passed to tactics in which discussion I took part and endorsed the thesis as drawn up. I showed that as far as Australia was concerned they were correct and that we had tested them.

By this time it was apparent to all that there was a better understanding existing and that only a few irreconcilables would be on the outside, such as KAPD of Germany who were pure industrialists. It also transpired that the IWW at its last convention had endorsed the Dictatorship of the Proletariat which was recognised as very important.

In looking over the work of the International and remembering that this was the 1st Congress I feel well pleased with the work done and that this International will succeed. I believe it would have been better if more time had been given to all sections for the discussions when we might have arrived at a more unanimous decision. In my opinion the theses were rushed through which gave the small minority ample opportunity of feeling aggrieved. They have now formed what is known as the 4th International.

On July 14th Comrade Lamb ASP turned up too late for any of the congresses. That day I met him but we had nothing to say to one another but it gave the ASP three delegates while I was still on my own. Since my disagreement with Freeman I had absolutely refused to talk about my affairs. I was approached by an agent of the Small Bureau to hold a combined meeting but I refused until such time as the Executive or the Small Bureau took the matter up. I was still standing for the recognition of our party as the only party in Australia.

While attending to those matters I was continuing my enquiries about Freeman and the ASP. On July 14th I learned from Comrade

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13 A. Rosmer, French member of the ECCI from the Second Congress, a member of the Small Bureau at the Third Congress and a joint chairman of the trade union commission.

14 Drafted by the Russian delegation in consultation with the German delegation, and introduced by Radek. He argued in favour of agitation, organisation and mass activity. The crucial matter involved was the failure of the March 1921 insurrection in Germany.

15 Not the Fourth International of Trotsky but the International movement of the syndicalists and anarchists who met outside the Leninist framework of the Comintern.
Skobetsky Secretary to the Comintern that the only party which had been recognised was the CP of A and the only correspondence ever received in Russia from Australia was my own letter asking for affiliation. I also found by an examination of the records of all papers received that, the only Australian revolutionary papers received were our own\(^{16}\) and \textbf{The Proletariat}.\(^{17}\) In fact they knew nothing of the ASP and its organ. This is absolutely authentic and at no time have the ASP been recognised or communicated with.

July 14th saw the opening of the Youth Congress which I was requested to attend and give a report. This I did being the only Australian delegate present. At this time I was anything but well. This was my fourth congress in 5 weeks and had only averaged 4 hours sleep per night with practically no food. The inevitable collapse took place and I had to take to bed. With the doctor's care I was soon about again and from this I was able to get food which agreed with me.

The Young Communist Congress was very interesting and it showed how the movement was being developed. To watch these youths of 18 to 25 years of age conducting unaided all the functions of an International organisation and one which is the largest in the world, was an amazing sight and would do the youth of Australia a wonderful lot of good and force them to recognise how backward they are in revolutionary political thought and action. There were 31 countries with decisive votes, 7 with consultative votes making a total of 150 delegates.

The Congress lasted about 10 days. A similar program was gone through as at the other Congresses. The theses were good but few of them were applicable to Australia, because most of the immediate aims suggested with the object of training the youth for action were in being. Even on the question of education that is revolutionary education Britain and Australia are in advance having already established schools for the purpose — Labour Colleges.\(^{18}\) In the future the party must give very much more attention to this work and give assistance to persuading the unions to spend more money in the building up of Independent Working Class Educational Institutions.

While on this subject I might report that an attempt was made while I was in Moscow to build up an Educational International

\(^{16}\) \textit{Australian Communist} and \textit{Communist}.

\(^{17}\) Almost certainly \textit{Proletarian Review}.

\(^{18}\) Earsman had been a central figure in the formation of Labor Colleges, following the British model, in both Melbourne and Sydney. He is distinguished, in the Australian context, by his concern for working class political education; in this respect he acted like a proto-communist, well before the Communist Party was thought of.
or Educational International Bureau which I assisted in but it was a miserable failure owing to the misunderstanding amongst advanced European Revolutionaries who have not been able to throw off their bourgeois conceptions regarding education.

This is an error I have noticed in the movement. They have a sound knowledge of fundamentals but don't realise that they apply to every walk of life and all bourgeois institutions. The idea of independent working class education appears to them unnecessary, even Comrade Lunacharsky\(^1\) the Commissar for Education is weak on the point. Comrade Clunie of the Scottish Labour College agreed with me and we were forced to cross swords with Lunacharsky on the question. The attitude we took up was the means of stopping the Bureau as we decided to withdraw.

Returning to the Young Peoples movement I made all arrangements for their literature to be forwarded to us, and that we would endeavour to do something with the young people. I did not forget to point out the many difficulties in our way and asked them to remember the apathy of the anglo saxon regards political thought. Britain is in a similar position and America is making big efforts to build up a strong youth movement. They are seriously handicapped by the fact that their organisation is illegal.

The next incident I have to report is, that in the early morning of July 18th at 2.00 a.m. I was arrested while returning home in the motor car. I had just left the Kremlin where I had been in consultation with one of the Soviet Commissars on matters regarding the International position and was returning home when the car was suddenly stopped and a soldier stepped into the car, flashed a torch in my face and held a revolver at my head. I had to submit and was taken to the Vatcheka and held there for a few hours. Then I was released. Very soon afterwards an apology was forthcoming from the Government with an explanation attached. This incident I only give to show and try to convey to you how careful the Soviet Government have to be and how they have to take precautions against their enemies. I fully appreciate the position and believe they acted rightly in arresting me. The details I will give to you verbally.

July 25th I was informed of an awful train accident which had occurred on July 24th about 70 miles from Moscow in which Comrades Freeman, Lamb and Rees of the ASP were in.\(^2\) The three

\(^1\) Lunacharsky, Soviet Commissar of Education, and outstanding man-of-letters. Earsman had no compunction in taking him to task. In fact, the lack of the later submissiveness of foreign communists to the Russian party is noticeably evident throughout the document.

\(^2\) This is the famous crash of the experimental train which looked like a large bathing box on wheels. It was driven by an aeroplane engine, propeller
were badly injured Freeman in particular. Later I learned that Rees and Lamb were able to return to their hotel and Freeman had to be taken to the hospital. There were 30 delegates in the train all being injured, 6 being killed outright: 2 Russians, 2 Germans, 1 Englishman and 1 Rumanian. Freeman was by this time reported dead but it proved to be a rumour. He had had an operation performed to amputate his leg and was suffering awful agony. On July 28th at the funeral of the 6 victims I was officially informed that Freeman had died early that morning. Blood poisoning set in after the operation and he died in terrible agony which had lasted 3 days. Comrade Freeman died well standing up to it like a hero. His last words were a message of farewell to all Comrades in Australia. On July 30th he was buried with full military honours under the shade of the Kremlin walls. I acted as chief mourner, Comrades Rees and Lamb still being confined to bed. This accident is one of the most appalling I have ever known and draws the curtain over many things that my lips must be closed to.

On July 30th Comrades Smith, Casey and Kelly along with Comrade Marks from New Zealand arrived. They all reported fit and in good health. I decided that I would see Comrade Smith because I knew him to be a member of our party and he confirmed it. I asked him why he had not got credentials before leaving and he informed me that he had not the time or he would have done so. I asked him his opinion on several matters and finding him alright and believing that he would be of some use to me I granted his request and issued credentials to him. I reported the matter to the Secretary of the Comintern and he approved of my action. I gave Smith strict instructions that all matters were confidential and that he must treat as such.

Comrade Marks then requested me to endorse him as a member of the CP of NZ.

This I refused to do because I did not know him and he had no credentials with him. Casey, Kelly and Marks were accepted by the Red Trade Union and given permission to attend the Transport Workers International.

On August 2nd I learned the true position of Freeman. He had turned up in 1920 in time for the 2nd Congress and stated that he and all. The most important person killed was F. A. Sergeiv (Artem), a leading Bolshevik who had spent several years in exile in Australia. Although there is little direct evidence (it is striking that Earsman does not mention him), circumstantially there seems to be a strong link between Sergeiv and the ASP of which he had been a member for five years.

21 Some, if not all, trade union representatives: Casey, probably W. (Bill) Casey of the Seamen’s Union.

22 It is doubtful if Smith was actually a CPA member.
had come to represent the IWW of Australia. I denounced this and stated this was an absolute falsehood because the IWW had died in 1917. After the 2nd Congress he worried several of the Russian party officials for recognition but he was refused because he belonged to no party which claimed to be Communist. His next move was to turn to the Red Trade Unions and persuaded them to give him money to return to Australia so as he might act as their agent to invite the workers of this country to send one or two delegates to the Congress at Moscow. He had no special credentials but simply had to try to get a couple of delegates for the Red Trade Union International. He had no authority whatever to invite as many delegates as possible and that all their expenses would be paid. His real reason for coming to Australia was that he might join one of the parties there and by that means he would be able to join to the Russian CP.23

On August 3rd I interviewed the Small Bureau and they agreed that they would have our affairs dealt with as soon as possible. At that meeting I was requested to remain in Russia. I then placed my position before them and the mission that I had come for and asked them to decide what I should do. If I thought I should then I would be quite prepared to do so. After hearing what I had to say they decided that I should have a free hand and I decided to return.

On August 4th the Small Bureau informed me that a sub-Commission had been appointed to deal with the preliminaries of our affair and that the meeting would take place the next day.

Comrades Lamb, Rees, Smith and myself attended and Comrade Borodean24 opened the meeting by stating that it was a preliminary meeting to find out the cause of the trouble. I put up Comrade Smith to tell our story believing that it would be better for me to sit back and watch. Comrade Smith carried out this work very well. Lamb stated that he had very little to say because he did not know all the facts but had always believed that the ASP were affiliated. Rees followed and stated that he was not concerned about any of the bickering but that he was prepared to assist in any way that would bring about unity. Comrade Borodean then asked if there were any fundamental differences. To this I replied and there were serious differences in the fact that the ASP did not carry out the principles of the 3rd and were actually opposed to the theory of the mass party. In reality they were a sect who surrounded them-

23 Freeman’s acceptability in Moscow and his mission to Australia in 1920-21 was probably underwritten by Sergeiv.

24 Borodin, a prominent Comintern official who is most famous for his work in China.
selves with a halo arising from the Marxian platitudes which they give lip service to.

Comrade Borodean then moved the following resolution: “In view of the fact that there is no difference in principles, program or tactics, except differences arising out of local troubles this meeting today proposes to the Commission of the Small Bureau to recommend an immediate unity of the two parties to take effect before the end of January 1922. This unity to take place at a general conference representing the two parties.” Smith and myself opposed this resolution and stated that we were out for the recognition of one party and that the other party should be compelled to join it. This the Commission refused to entertain. Lamb stated that he had no instructions therefore was not in a position to act. Rees stated that the resolution suited him, then Smith and myself withdrew our opposition and accepted the resolution which was carried by 3-1 Lamb voting against.

The next resolution was: “In order to facilitate the business of unity in Australia the two delegations agree to unite and to submit to the Small Bureau of the Executive Committee the following requests on: Communications, Literature, Unity with Britain, Representation and Finance.”

This was carried unanimously and it was agreed that we meet on August 5th to draft our requests.

On August 5th Comrades Lamb, Rees, Smith and myself met with the object of completing our task. We had a general talk for some time in which Lamb informed us that he would not do anything because he had always been of the opinion that the ASP were affiliated and now they were receiving no consideration. The first question was representation at the Unity Conference. In this matter I insisted on equal representation. Smith, Rees and myself agreed to this, Lamb refusing to do anything. Communications and Literature we decided to fix up later. Next it was decided to ask £500 for unity expenses. I was opposed to this but Lamb moved it so I agreed. This finished our business and it was agreed that I should draft the resolutions and submit them to the Small Bureau, along with a minority report from Lamb.

This is the draft of Lamb’s report: “That the parties in Australia draft the scheme for unity, and they failing to agree that the Comintern scheme be put into operation.” signed Lamb.

25 Although Earsman opposed Borodin’s resolution, the CPA on his return accepted the Comintern directive on unity and a conference held in February 1922 formed the United Communist Party which was noteworthy for the acceptance of the Industrial Union Propaganda League as an affiliated body. The ASP, however, refused to participate.
These discussions were very bitter between Smith and Lamb but Rees and I got on very well together.

I submitted our proposals to the Secretary of the Small Bureau the same afternoon. Late that evening I received a telephone message from the Small Bureau requesting me to attend a meeting at once. I did so and was asked to give the reasons for our proposals. After hearing me they decided that they could not accept them especially on the representation proposal. They believed that by the experience they had had in England, America and other countries that if they accepted our suggestions that only failure would be the result. The Small Bureau then drew up suggestions and requested me to place them before my other Comrades. See copy of official letter attached. The financial question was then sent along to the finance committee.

On August 6th I called a meeting of the others and informed them of what had taken place and laid before them the proposals of the Small Bureau for confirmation.

All Comrades Lamb, Rees, Smith and myself signed the proposals as drawn up and the same day I returned them to the Small Bureau for confirmation. I might mention here that it was also decided that in all future conferences the representation from Australia should be 3 delegates from the CP and 1 for the Red Trade Union.

At this time the famine\textsuperscript{26} was beginning to make itself felt and we all had to lend what aid we could by doing the necessary propaganda work. I was also requested to think about remaining in Russia for some little time but this I thought was unfair to the movement here. I therefore placed the matter before the S.M. and requested them to decide. They decided that I should have a free hand and I thought it was better to return as soon as possible.

I then turned my attention to the RTUI to see what had to be done there. The first thing was the procuring of money to carry on the propaganda work. This was difficult because all monies were being used to assist in the famine area. I agreed that Comrade Howie should be the representative of the RTUI in Australia and that I would act as advisor. The sum of £220 was made available for that purpose.

My business being completed I made the necessary arrangements for my return. Before leaving I was given a Commission to carry out in Germany which required my attendance at this party's conference. I may say that I was successful in the commission which I was given.

\textsuperscript{26} Following the end of the civil war, there was a severe famine in Russia in 1921.
I arrived in Berlin on the 22nd of August and the next day travelled to Jena to attend the Germany party congress.

On September 2nd I left Germany for London arriving there on September 3rd. On reporting to the party in London I was informed that Lamb had been arrested on his arrival and been put through the third degree for two days by about 40 detectives. He had some very suspicious documents in his possession and one in particular which was in Rees’ hand writing. After he had sailed Comrade McManus brought me a bundle of letters addressed to Lamb but I refused to touch them.

The party then decided to open those letters. On this being done the reason for Lamb’s arrest was not hard to find. One of the letters from Broken Hill was stating the number of rifles etc. that they had been able to procure, along with a lot more rubbish of that kind. The contents of those letters was enough to hang him let alone being arrested.

After this it was decided that I should keep out of the way for awhile until such time as this might blow over. Later I did propaganda work in most of the main industrial centres.

Then I met Rees and because of the developments we decided that we would destroy all official documents.

The rest of my time was fully taken up in doing party work. I made all arrangements for all papers and literature to be sent here from the different countries I was in. I sailed from England on the 21st of October. While in South Africa I met the leaders of the party there and arranged for all exchanges.

I have only one recommendation to make and that is that in future that no one should be allowed to leave for Russia on workers business unless they are members of the party. I worked with Comrade Howie a good deal but there was business that I could not consult him on and it was often difficult for me to get him passed through.

I am glad to be home again though the journey was rough the experience has been of great service to me. I now place myself in the hands of the party to act and work as they think fit for me to do.

27 McManus, a prominent founder of the Communist Party of Great Britain.