

socialist party and an effective ALP left. There is a necessary and complementary role for both and, beyond that, a pressing need for a more effective and united broad left which brings together all those with a commitment to socialism and progressive issues.

It seems clear to us that an independent party is vital, given the many big issues before us and the current offensive of the Labor right to change ALP policy and contain and defeat the left.

The CPA has often stated, and we reiterate, that we are committed to work with all progressive, democratic and socialist forces to create a more united left to work more effectively for a socialist Australia. We wish to make it clear that our members, working alongside those who have chosen to leave, will continue to work in a comradely way.

### **The Immediate Future**

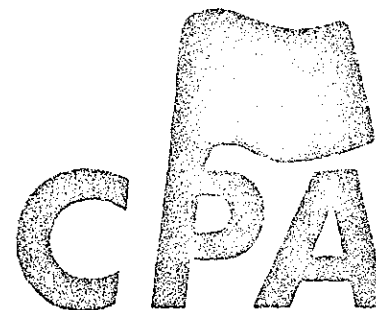
The general meeting of members held last Sunday, April 29, represented a large majority of our membership and was the largest gathering of members for many years. The meeting decided that there was little to gain from dwelling on past events. 15 members volunteered to assist the State Committee in planning the State Conference, which will be held in June.

At the Conference our members will be discussing the prospects for socialism in Australia, and planning the ongoing work of the party in Victoria. We are optimistic that, despite our current difficulties the CPA will continue to make a significant contribution to the struggle for socialism in Australia.

A statement by the CPA's National Executive and the letters of resignation from Queensland and Victorian members are printed in the April 24 edition of *Tribune*. We hope that these statements and this letter of explanation help to clarify the situation.

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# **Statement from a General Meeting of Victorian members of the Communist Party of Australia**



## Statement from a General Meeting of Victorian members of the Communist Party of Australia

There has been considerable speculation in the press in the last fortnight concerning the state of the Communist Party of Australia. Everyone from the *Financial Review* to the National Civic Council's *Newsweekly* has seen fit to speculate.

The facts, as always, are somewhat different. We wish to clarify them.

### The Prospects for Socialism Debate

The CPA committed itself to an open and frank examination of the prospects for socialism in Australia at its 1982 Congress.

We believed that the discussion was necessary because we recognised that the left was experiencing considerable difficulties, not only in Australia, but in many parts of the world. We recognised that there are many differences of opinion amongst marxists regarding 'the way forward', and that marxism itself has been further developed by other progressive forces such as the women's and environment movements. Finally, it was time to re-examine structures that had been developed in much earlier periods, to meet the conditions we currently face.

In November 1983, the National Committee resolved: "The debate should be directed to assist and improve initiatives on current political issues and our contribution to the work of the broad left. There is a common orientation in our party and its programme which should continue to form the basis of our work. In particular there is an orientation towards building a more effective and united left that can challenge conservative ideas and practices in the community". In this context there have been quite a number of proposals put forward on a wide variety of issues.

### The Resignations

On April 17, 23 members of the Victorian State Committee resigned from the CPA. Their considerable experience and standing in the trade union and social movements is indeed a loss to the party in Victoria. However, press speculation that the resignations have crippled the party are wildly untrue. Nor is it true that mass resignations have followed. To date, only 5 resignations have been received. In Queensland, 14 members have resigned. There have been no resignations elsewhere.

While the resignations are a setback for the party, particularly in the trade union movement, the majority of our activists continue their membership and the breadth of our industrial base remains. As well in all areas covered by the social movements, the CPA is well represented. The party is, and will continue to be, an important centre for activists in many different arenas of struggle.

In the letter of resignation there were no complaints about the conduct of the prospects debate. Indeed, many of the 23 members who resigned played a central role in initiating the prospects for socialism debate. The only reason they gave for leaving before the debate was concluded (at our next National Congress) was that it was clear to them that their proposal to replace the CPA with a 'broad socialist organisation', would not win majority support, and they felt that further discussions would be useless.

The resignations of the 23 members were announced without prior discussion with either the Victorian or national party bodies. We were disturbed by the timing and manner of the resignations, the selective lobbying of party members and the selective issuing of invitations to members to attend a meeting to explain their actions.

Those who have left the party in Victoria and Queensland say they will work to establish a 'new, broad, socialist organisation' and that they no longer agree with the concept of an independent socialist party. We cannot comment on the policies of the proposed organisation because they have not been spelt out.

We state our firm belief that the effectiveness of the socialist movement in Australia requires both an independent, democratic,