

For Members Only

INTERNAL BULLETIN

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PRICE
10¢

CALL FOR THE FIFTH NATIONAL CONVENTION
OF THE SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY
-- TENTH NATIONAL CONVENTION OF AMERICAN TROTSKYISTS --

July 24, 1942

To all Locals, Branches and Members
of the Socialist Workers Party:

Dear Comrades:

Pursuant to the provisions of the party constitution, the National Committee hereby calls the Fifth National Convention of the Socialist Workers Party -- the Tenth National Convention of the American Trotskyists -- to convene in New York City on Friday, October 2d, and continue for three days (Friday, Saturday and Sunday, October 2d, 3d and 4th.)

AGENDA

The National Committee proposes the following agenda for the convention:

- (1) Political report.
- (2) Trade Union and Organizational Report
(Practical party work in the present political situation).
- (3) International Report.
- (4) Election of the National Committee.

The political resolution of the National Committee is now being mimeographed and will be ready for distribution in a few days.

PRE-CONVENTION DISCUSSION

The party pre-convention discussion is formally opened with the publication of this call. The Internal Bulletin is open for all party members on the subjects listed in the agenda or others which they may wish to present for the consideration of the party. Branch and membership meetings shall be arranged for discussion of the various subjects on the agenda. Our traditional provisions and safeguards for the adequate and free presentation of all points of view shall govern all discussions.

CONVENTION ASSESSMENT

As authorized by the party constitution, a convention assessment of two dollars per member is hereby levied, the payment of which is obligatory for every employed member.

BASIS OF REPRESENTATION

- (1) Representation from branches shall be as follows:
One delegate for the first 15 members or less,
and one additional delegate for each 15 additional
members or major fraction thereof.
- (2) Each branch having five or more members is entitled
to a voting delegate.
- (3) Delegates are to be elected by branches in accord-
ance with the actual number of members in good
standing who have been admitted to the party prior
to July 24, 1942 (the date of the Convention Call)
and who have paid their convention assessment, as
certified by the branch executive committee on the
day of voting.
- (4) Branches organized after the date of this conven-
tion call are entitled to send fraternal delegates
as provided by the party constitution.
- (5) Members admitted to the party after the date of
this convention call are entitled to voice in the
party discussion but no vote on resolutions or in
the selection of delegates.
- (6) Absentee votes on political resolutions and in
the election of delegates shall not be permitted
except in clearly established cases of occupational
necessity (for example, sailors on ships, regular
night workers, etc.) In all such cases the votes
must be submitted in writing and recognized by
motion at the branch meeting at the time of the
branch voting.
- (7) Members transferring from one branch to another
within the same locality subsequent to July 24,
1942 must vote in the branch from which they
transferred.

PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION

- (1) In case of political differences defined by con-
flicting resolutions, the election of delegates in the branches
is to be on the basis of proportional representation. Delo-
gates shall be elected on the basis of the vote on resolution
or resolutions voted on at the meeting at which the delegates

are elected. Members voting for a given resolution are entitled to designate the delegate or delegates to which they are entitled on the basis of proportional representation laid down in this call, the designations to be ratified by the branch. Abstentions in no case count as votes.

- (a) If a branch is entitled to one delegate, the delegate goes to the majority of those present and voting at the time of the election.
- (b) If two delegates, a minority with 40% gets one.
- (c) If three delegates, a minority with 33% gets one, the majority getting the others.
- (d) If four delegates, a minority with 25% gets one delegate, but a minority with 40% gets half the delegates.
- (e) If five delegates, a minority with 20% gets one.
- (f) If six delegates, a minority with 16-2/3% gets one delegate but a minority with 40% gets half the delegates, etc.

CONVENTION ATTENDANCE

The National Committee proposes that all party members in good standing who present proofs of membership may attend the convention as visitors.

Fraternally yours,

NATIONAL COMMITTEE SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY


National Secretary

JPC:SC

POLITICAL RESOLUTION

(Submitted by the National Committee)

1. The basic position of the Fourth International and the Socialist Workers Party on the imperialist war and the tasks of the proletarian world revolution have been set forth in a series of documents published during the past eight years. Beginning with the fundamental theses on War and the Fourth International (1934), they include the resolutions of the Foundation Congress of the Fourth International (1938); the S.W.P. convention resolution on the Soviet Union (1939); the S.W.P. Conference resolution on Proletarian Military Policy (1940); the Manifesto of the Emergency Conference of the Fourth International on The Imperialist War and the Proletarian Revolution (1940); the Manifesto of the Executive Committee of the Fourth International on the fall of France (1940) and in defense of the Soviet Union (1941); the S.W.P. Manifesto on the Soviet-Nazi war (1941); the Manifesto of the Executive Committee of the Fourth International on American intervention and our defense of China (1941); the statement by J.P. Cannon on the entry of the United States into the war (1942); and the statement of Grace Carlson as a candidate of the party in the St. Paul elections of this year.

2. All these documents contain a consistent line of principle which guides all our activities. We are equipped with a tested program of revolutionary struggle thought out and fought out over a period of many years. Our task today is to hold fast to these principles as the guiding line for all our activities and to apply the program based upon them to events and problems as they arise in the course of the class struggle.

OUR ATTITUDE TO THE WAR

3. This, in Lenin's words, is the epoch of imperialist wars, proletarian revolutions and colonial uprisings. The second world war is a continuation of the first on the part of all the imperialist powers on both sides. By 1914 world capitalism had already outlived its progressive stage. Its wars had become utterly reactionary, an expression of the impasse, stagnation and decay of monopoly capital. Since then, imperialism has assumed an even more reactionary, violent and oppressive character. This is true of both the fascist and "democratic" imperialisms. To support the wars of imperialist powers is to defend the fettering of the productive forces by the outlived frameworks of private property and national states. The claim that this is a war of democracy against fascism is a fraud. Like the first world war, the second is being fought for seizure of colonies, markets, sources of raw material and spheres of influence, except that this time the stakes are even greater, encompassing the entire world. This objective historical meaning of the war, and not the

propaganda of the governments, determines our stand.

4. All these considerations apply in full force to the United States. Long before its advent we warned the workers of the inescapable participation of the United States in this war and stated that such a war could only be an imperialist war. The actual entry of the United States into the conflict has not altered our position, but confirmed it. We do not and cannot give any support to this reactionary war undertaken on behalf of America's monopolists to ensure their world domination of markets, foreign concessions, sources of war materials and spheres of influence. This is Wall Street's war, not ours.

5. Our struggle is the Leninist struggle against the war. We reject all forms of pacifism, including conscientious objection and draft dodging. The death agony of capitalism brings with it a period of uninterrupted wars and universal militarism when all great questions must be solved by military means. A "peace" concluded by imperialists could only be a breathing spell before a new war. Only a revolutionary mass struggle against the imperialism which breeds such wars can secure a real peace. Our task is to win the majority of the American workers and farmers to the program of socialist revolution. That is the only program of peace and progress.

6. That this is the epoch not only of imperialist wars but also of proletarian revolutions was confirmed in 1917 when the Soviets became the state power in Russia, abolished private property and nationalized the means of production, including the land. It then became a class duty for every worker to defend the Soviet Union. That remains our duty today. We remain today as we have been from its birth unconditional defenders and devoted partisans of the Soviet Union. The war of the Soviet Union is our war, the war of the workers everywhere. The Soviet Union remains a workers' state, although degenerated by the rule of the Kremlin bureaucracy. To defend the Soviet Union, in spite of Stalin and against Stalin, is to defend the nationalized property established by the October revolution. Only traitors to the working class can deny support to the workers' state in its war against imperialism, regardless of whether the immediate enemy be a fascist or bourgeois democratic government, and regardless of what temporary military alliances the Soviet Union may make with rival imperialist powers. In war, as in peace, there remains a fundamental distinction between the Soviet Union and its temporary military allies. We are Soviet patriots in war as in peace; we remain irreconcilable opponents of all the imperialists. All Trotskyists are united in this stand. The convention records the fact that Soviet defensism, as against the treacherous policy of "Soviet defeatism", recommended by the Burnham-Shachtman group at the last convention of the party, has prevailed throughout the Fourth International. Thereby the world movement of Trotskyism has demonstrated that it takes its revolutionary program seriously.

7. The war of China for national independence against the Japanese imperialists must likewise be ardently supported by every honest worker, above all by the workers of China whose fate is bound up with the struggle for the independence of the country. That China is compelled by practical considerations to enter into alliances with imperialist allies can present grave dangers for the future but does not alter the fundamental character of China's struggle today. The designs of Anglo-American imperialism to subordinate great China to their own predatory struggle are a long way from realization. In fact, the first results of the war in the Pacific have been to strengthen, not to weaken the independent position of China vis-a-vis her imperialist allies. A victory for China would be a tremendous blow against all imperialism, inspiring all colonial peoples to throw off the imperialist yoke. The bourgeois regime of Chiang Kai-shek, subservient to the "democracies" and oppressing and restraining the Chinese masses, has hampered China's ability to conduct a bold war for independence; but that does not alter the essential fact that China is an oppressed nation fighting against an imperialist oppressor. The struggle of the oppressed peoples for national unification and national independence is doubly progressive because, on the one side this prepares more favorable conditions for their own economic development while, on the other side, this deals blows against imperialism as a world system. The Fourth Internationalists of China, understanding this, are fighting in the front ranks against Japanese imperialism while maintaining their political independence and their irreconcilable opposition to the regime of Chiang Kai-shek. Thus they assure their great future at the head of the Chinese proletariat. Any other course would doom them to political annihilation.

8. The only correct program in this war is the Marxist program which combines revolutionary opposition to all the imperialists with the defense of the Soviet Union and China. Those petty-bourgeois and sectarian phrasemongers who "simplify" matters by renouncing support of the Soviet Union and China are in reality deserting the proletarian world revolution, the furtherance of which is integrally connected to support of the Soviet Union and China, as well as to opposition to all the imperialists in this war.

9. Events have fully confirmed the correctness of the program of the Fourth International. This can be verified by drawing the balance-sheet of the most important developments of the war.

10. Four world-shaking events have taken place since the Manifesto on The Imperialist War and the Proletarian World Revolution was issued by the Emergency Conference of the Fourth International in May 1940. A month later Germany crushed France and with it bourgeois democracy on the European continent. The Third Republic collapsed, giving way to the Bonapartist dictatorship of the senile Petain and servile Laval. A year after France fell, Hitler unleashed his assault upon the Soviet Union. In December

1941 Japan, in answer to Roosevelt's ultimatum, smashed at Pearl Harbor and gave Roosevelt the looked-for occasion to enter the war. By January 1942 all the imperialist powers and all peoples had been drawn into the war arena. In the First World War the countries were divided between actual participants and spectators. Today the whole of humanity has become directly involved in the slaughter. There are no innocent or unaffected bystanders in the Second World War. This applies with full force to the Asiatic colonial peoples who played a relatively passive and insignificant role in the last war. Now they stand in the very center of the conflict and will have a decisive part in determining its course and outcome. This upsurge of national self-confidence of the colonial people of Asia is the fourth great event of the present period.

THE EVENTS IN EUROPE

11. The fall of France not only testified to Germany's economic and military superiority on the European continent; it exposed the rottenness of French bourgeois democracy as well as the inability of the French bourgeoisie to defend their own nation against the fascist invaders. After crushing the workers' bid for power in 1936, the capitalist politicians and their Stalinist, Socialist and Syndicalist lieutenants in the labor movement called upon the French workers to fight for the capitalist fatherland in order to defend democracy and national independence. Duped by the bourgeoisie and betrayed by their leaders, the French workers suffered the loss of their democratic rights and their class organizations together with national unity and independence. The main section of French capitalism has entered into collaboration with the fascist conquerors; another group has gone over into the Anglo-American camp.

12. The fate of France contains a great political lesson for the workers of the whole world. It has again demonstrated that the bourgeoisie puts its profits and privileges above either national independence or democracy. Whenever their social and economic interests and their political predominance are imperiled by the proletariat, the bourgeoisie will give up national independence, destroy democracy, substitute their naked class dictatorship and collaborate with the oppressors. For the sake of preserving private property, privileges and profits, or even in the hope of preserving some of them, the bourgeoisie will turn against their own people. Official patriotism serves simply as a mask to conceal the class interests of the exploiters. The subsequent capitulations of the French bourgeoisie to Hitler have proved this to the hilt.

13. The aspiration of the masses of France and the other occupied countries for national liberation has profound revolutionary implications. But, like the sentiment of anti-fascism, it can be perverted to the uses of imperialism. Such a perversion of the movement is inevitable if it proceeds under the slogans and leadership of bourgeois nationalism. The "democratic" imperialist gangsters are interested only in recovering the property which has been taken away from them by the fascist gangsters.

This is what they mean by national liberation. The interests of the masses are profoundly different. The task of the workers of the occupied countries is to put themselves at the head of the insurgent movement of the people and direct it toward the struggle for the socialist reorganization of Europe. Their allies in this struggle are not the Anglo-American imperialists and their satellites among the native bourgeoisie, but the workers of Germany. Peace, security and prosperity can be assured for the people of Europe only by its economic unification based on the socialist collaboration of the free nations. Only with this perspective is national liberation worth talking about, still less fighting and dying for. The central unifying slogan of the revolutionary fight is "The Socialist United States of Europe" and to it all other slogans must be subordinated.

14. The German proletariat made a revolution in 1918, only to be robbed of its fruits by the bourgeois-Social-Democratic coalition. For fifteen years thereafter the proletariat remained loyal to the parties avowing workers' socialism. A revolutionary situation in 1923 was lost by the incapacity of the German Communist Party leadership disoriented by the Comintern, already then in the first stages of its Stalinist degeneration. In the last regular election (1932) the workers' parties polled 13,000,000 votes. Hitler came to power only by the help of the rottenness, incapacity and treachery of Social Democracy and Stalinism. Betrayed by their own parties the German workers were crushed by Nazism. It may be assumed that Hitler's diplomatic and military victories created a certain amount of chauvinist intoxication among the masses for a time. Now, however, they gaze on the ruin of Europe -- and the ruin of Germany. They mourn millions of dead and wounded, the masses grow hungry as in 1916-18, and the end is far away. Chauvinist intoxication must begin to give way before the grim realities. The fear of a new and worse Versailles is the most potent weapon in Hitler's hands. But that weapon will fall from his hands with the first serious revolutionary developments in the "democracies" or in the occupied countries. The mighty German proletariat will say the most decisive word in the socialist revolution of Europe.

15. The workers of Britain are being impelled toward proletarian revolution by the collapse of the British Empire. The reformism of the British Labor Party and the trade unions was based on the crumbs thrown to a privileged section of the workers by a sated imperialist power; that reformism is losing its foundations. Therewith the road is being cleared for the stormy development of a revolutionary party of the Fourth International. Only the Socialist United States of Europe offers the British proletariat a perspective for hope. All the objective pre-requisites for proletarian revolution are now present in the British Isles. The British Trotskyists stand before their great historic task of organizing and leading the British workers to their revolutionary destiny.

THE SOVIET UNION AT WAR

16. The events affecting the Soviet Union during the last year, as well as previously, are incomprehensible except to those who are guided by the Trotskyist analysis of the character of the Soviet Union. We alone have accurately explained the course of the USSR, we alone do not have to conceal what we said yesterday. While Stalin boasted of the "irrevocable victory" of socialism achieved in the Soviet Union, we warned that Germany had become the spearhead of imperialist assault against the workers' state, and that only successful proletarian revolutions in one or more advanced countries could safeguard the Soviet Union. When the League of Nations expelled the Soviet Union and the entire "democratic" world cheered on Mannerheim's Finnish Army against the Soviet Union, petty-bourgeois deserters turned their backs on the USSR which they suddenly termed "imperialist", but we remained firm defensists of the workers' state, partisans of its victory over the Finnish outpost of world imperialism. We explained that by the seizures of the Finnish, Polish and Baltic territories the Kremlin bureaucracy was not pursuing imperialist aims but was in its own bureaucratic and reactionary way seeking to safeguard the defenses of the Soviet Union. We condemned the Stalinist bureaucracy for these land seizures precisely because the strategic advantages secured by the seizures were far outweighed by the discredit they brought upon the workers' state in the eyes of hundreds of millions of workers and peasants who considered them joint operations of the Nazi and Red Armies.

17. Stalin sought to avoid involvement in this war, first by an alliance with France and England against Germany, and then by an alliance with Germany and Japan against France and England. Neither maneuver succeeded in accomplishing its aim of keeping the Soviet Union out of the war. Stalin's diplomatic maneuvers, and all the deceitful propaganda and treacherous actions flowing from them, served only to disorient the workers in capitalist countries, to alienate them from the USSR, and to leave them unprepared for Hitler's inevitable assault upon the USSR. Stalin's foreign and domestic policies did not strengthen the USSR, but weakened it immeasurably.

18. While Stalin was swearing undying friendship with Hitler, whitewashing the Nazis' crimes, and camouflaging their imperialist aims, Trotsky issued his prophetic warning: "Hitler's war in the West is only a preparation for a gigantic move toward the East -- against the Soviet Union." When that move came on June 22, 1941, the workers under Stalinist influence were caught completely off guard. On the eve of the attack, TASS, the official Stalinist news agency, issued a statement from Moscow, denouncing reports of the impending invasion as false rumors inspired by the Anglo-American war mongers. Thus, after shielding Hitler's crimes from the start of the war, Stalin helped to hide from the working class Hitler's preparations for assaulting the USSR. While the Trotskyists warned the workers in advance of the inevitable attack of German imperialism, the "all-seeing" Stalin led them blindfold to the edge of the abyss.