

INDEPENDENT SOCIALIST LEAGUE
114 W. 14th Street,
New York, N.Y.

June 11, 1951

TO ALL BRANCHES:
TO ALL MEMBERS:

RE: AMENDMENT TO THE RESOLUTION ON THE
UNITED STATES.

Dear Comrades:

Attached hereto is an amendment to the Resolution on the United States. This amendment was introduced at a meeting of the Political Committee. After a considerable discussion in connection with the adoption of a resolution on this question the following actions occurred.

A. That section on Page 8 beginning with the first paragraph: "the advocacy of and Independent Labor Party...." down to the end of the paragraph, was rejected by the PC, in adopting the resolution as a whole.

B. The attached amendment was proposed to replace that paragraph on page 8. This amendment was not adopted as the vote in the PC ended in a tie vote.

Therefore the matters will come before the NC plenum prior to the convention and will thereafter come before the convention for a vote. It is presented now for discussion and consideration.

Fraternally yours,

Albert Gates,
Sec'y.

1045

AMENDMENT TO THE RESOLUTION: "ON THE SITUATION IN THE UNITED STATES."

Page 8, Beginning with the first paragraph:

The advocacy of an Independent Labor Party remains unequivocally the principal political slogan, the axis of all the political work of the ISL, which reiterates its pledge to give unconditional support to such a party and its candidates even before it has adopted a socialist program and leadership. However, the ISL is aware of the possibility that the labor movement may well pass through one or more transitional stages between its present allegiance to bourgeois political parties and the formation of a political party of its own. The ISL takes no dogmatic position on the question of these transitional stages. On the contrary, at every stage which represents to any degree a breach between the labor movement and the bourgeois parties, or which offers the possibility of sharpening the inherent conflict between the political interests of the working class and those of the bourgeois parties, the ISL will welcome, encourage and stimulate the forward step, no matter how hesitant, partial or even confused it may be at first. Even in those cases where the forward step appears initially in the form of a conflict between the interests and aspirations of the labor officialdom, on the one side, and those of the bourgeois political machines, on the other, the ISL will seek to intervene in order to explain to the workers the deeper and truer meaning of the conflict, to widen it, and by supporting the representatives of the labor movement against those of the bourgeois political parties, help to advance the class consciousness and self-reliance of the workers toward the formation of their own independent party. The fact that the basic conflict between the classes takes the form, at certain stages, of a rivalry between bureaucracies, indicates that the conflict is still at a primitive stage but does not alter the fact of the conflict. Such for example was the motivation of the ISL in urging its friends to enroll in the Liberal Party in New York to educate and work for independent working class politics despite all the shortcomings of that party and despite the fact that it is not at all a Labor Party but a party bureaucratically based upon a narrow section of the union movement linked up with a small number of neighborhood clubs. It was with the aim of moving this party toward independence that the ISL called for an independent candidate for mayor on the Liberal Party ticket. A similar policy would be indicated wherever the labor movement or sections of it moved toward the formation of local independent political parties even if these were not at the outset constituted as labor parties, fully independent and democratic in structure and policy; or wherever the labor movement ran its own candidates in the elections independent of the two old parties. The ISL proposes that such independent candidates enter the field and would support them against their capitalist opponents viewing such steps as the first hesitant moves toward a general separation of labor from the capitalist parties. In all such situations it is the action of the working class for independence with which the ISL is concerned it is the movement for a complete break with bourgeois parties and the establishment of a Labor Party upon which the ISL concentrates its attention.

Where the unions or the labor bureaucrats do not move toward a break from the bourgeois parties (in particular, the Democratic Party) they continue to function within these parties in coalition with one wing of the bourgeois machines against another and in no sense "independently". The labor bureaucracy, at present, collaborates inside the Democratic party with its liberal wing and at some points

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jockeys for greater recognition and fuller "representation" as its price for continued collaboration. In the same way, the labor bureaucracy participates in all government agencies and in the war boards while at the same time it demands a greater voice and more representation in its councils. Thus, even in the course of class collaboration, the antagonisms between the labor bureaucracies on the one hand and the bourgeois state and bourgeois parties on the other remain as a striking symptom of those class conflicts which will finally lead to a rupture between labor and the capitalist class.

Whenever these antagonisms burst out into the open, the ISL, in the interests of an effective program for the labor movement, takes the opportunity to call for an end of the self-defeating policy of class collaboration and the initiation of a program of militant working class independence. During the Wage Stabilization Crisis, for example, the ISL hailed the resignation of labor delegates from the War Boards, argued against their return, and called for the continuation and extension of the move into a break with the Truman Administration and the "Fair Deal" Democrats. Similarly, in the case of any conflict inside the Democratic Party where the malcontent of the labor leaders or of the workers is evidenced, the ISL calls not for greater "representation" of labor within it but for a break from it.

Where the unions are in fact forced into a serious conflict with their Democratic allies, the real tendency that develops is not at all toward primary fights in the Democratic Party or toward demands for greater representation within it but toward a break from it and toward the search for new political forms. So it was in 1947-8 in preparation for the 1948 elections, when the UAW, voicing the mood of the wide sections of the union movement, called for the formation of a new progressive party. So it was during the recent wage crisis, when leading labor officials again voiced their threat of forming a new party. So it was at the 1951 UAW convention where no one proposed a fight to elect labor candidates in Democratic primaries but where the delegates applauded open attacks on the Truman Administration and the "liberal" Democrats, and voted in large numbers for the defeated minority resolution for the formation of an independent labor party.

Where the unions do participate in primary fights, they merely continue their old policy of alliance with a wing of the Democratic party. The convention rejects the proposal that the ISL or its friends advocate or support labor's contesting in the primaries of the bourgeois parties and rejects support to candidates running on the ticket of the bourgeois parties. The position of the National Committee on this question is therefore reversed.

(Then continue on in the resolution with the paragraph on the bottom of page 8 beginning: "If the main task....."