

FOR N.C. INFORMATION:

Los Angeles, Calif.
April 15, 1967

Political Committee

Dear Comrades:

The crisis in higher education in California, which reached a critical point in the first two months of the Reagan administration (Jan., Feb.), quieted down after the unusually widespread opposition to his proposals compelled him to beat a tactical retreat. The matter of providing funds for the university and colleges is now before the legislature. It appears that some curtailment of the system will take place, or lack of funds will prevent further expansion in keeping with the greater demand for higher education.

The events that have taken place here in connection with this question revealed that our movement does not have a special program and transitional demands that are particularly pointed to the young people of this country. Of course, our general program is applicable to young as well as older people. The antiwar program of the movement has an appeal to all ages, as well as other aspects of our program.

My point is that while we have a program for the union movement and one for the civil rights movement, to mention only two, we do not have one that specifically deals with the youth and its problems.

I can think of two reasons why we should have a special program for the youth. First, young people are an increasingly larger proportion of the population as a whole; second, it is among the youth that a certain radicalization is now taking place, alongside of which a large number of young people are simply turning their backs on present day society and trying to find individual solutions to a social problem.

I think it would add something important to our program, if we would work out a series of theses on the youth question. Flowing from these we should have a number of transitional demands.

We should start with the thesis that the youth have a right to demand from society a full preparation for their lives as adults. This includes a complete education in accord with what is needed in modern society, its economic base, its social organization and its political needs. The central demand should be for full college and/or university education for all, paid for by the government, including the living expenses of the students. This demand is a transition from the present consciousness of the youth to the socialist revolution. It is inconceivable that capitalist society will provide this and equally

inconceivable that socialist society will not.

This demand can be counterposed to the draft, as a demand that prepares the youth for a useful and purposeful life rather than a preparation for war. It can be used in the civil rights struggle where minority youth are told they need education to get decent jobs. As things stand now, the minority youth, in great numbers are forced to drop out after a year or two of high school to say nothing of higher education.

Another thesis should deal with the right to vote at the age of 18 and the right to participate in political life.

I would like the Political Committee to discuss the idea of having a special program for the youth and, if in agreement, bring a proposal to the next Plenum that we appoint a commission of youth leaders to prepare such a program for the next convention.

I am of the opinion that the adoption of such a program would be of advantage to us in our youth work. As far as I know none of our rivals in the youth field have a program specifically pointed to the youth. I think this would be something new and would attract attention among the youth where we are working at the present time.

I am reminded that we adopted our Transitional Program in 1938 originally at a time when many of the demands worked out in it had specific reality in a current sense. We were urged then to watch developments from the point of view of adopting new programs to fit new events. If we can work out a program that fits the needs of today's youth, we will have something unique and attractive to them. None of our rivals have much to say to the youth as youth. We should have something.

Fraternally,

S/Milton Alvin

P.S. There is an interesting Resolution on the Youth in the pamphlet, The Founding Conference of the Fourth International. Directed mainly to working class and unemployed youth, it is a comprehensive document for the time it was written. Of course some of the demands are out-dated, such as raising the school age to 16.