

April 18, 1966

Ed,

I've been in Seattle since Friday noon and am leaving this morning for Vancouver.

Here are a few of my observations --

Tom and Debbie are in good spirits and are taking to their assignment here with enthusiasm. They've attended the various anti-war meetings, invited people over for dinner, etc. trying to probe around for contacts and to get a better picture of the situation.

I didn't attempt to meet any of the former SWP members. Tom and Debbie have had long conversations with most of them and it would have been fruitless for me to talk to any of them further.

The whole anti-war movement here has suffered considerably because of the role of the ex-SWPers here. There has been no serious attempt on the part of any of the radicals here to organize the University of Washington Campus. The absence of a strong party branch has lowered the whole level of the movement against the war.

A year ago we noted nationally that the new anti-war movement bypassed the traditional peace groups. The movement here is still in the stage of trying to get around the established peace groups and peacenik leaders. Anarchists and nuts have been allowed to run roughshod over the entire movement.

There are two anti-war organizations in town -- the Seattle CEWV and the Seattle youth for peace in Vietnam. The latter is supposedly a youth group and the former a broader committee including adults. The youth group is apparently the private preserve of the Kirk-Kaye youth here. Tom has been attending meetings of the Seattle CEWV and Debbie has been going to meetings of youth group. The meetings of both committees are a wild orgy of chaos, bickering and petty in-fighting. The tone of the meetings is set by the anarchists who bring their infants to the meetings where they publicly breast feed them. It's enough to drive fresh healthy anti-war activists away at a dead run which of course is what has happened.

Saturday afternoon a demonstration against the Vietnam war was held. About sixty people participated. The leaflet that was passed out is enclosed. The whole tone of the demonstration

called by the CEWV was set by the pacifists and peaceniks. I hadn't been to this kind of anti-war protest since the new anti-war movement was born. There was no chanting, no spirit -- just a limp, lethargic walk. One of the picket captains, a Marcyite, breastfed her child as she ran up and down the line giving orders. The whole thing was disgusting! The composition of the line was composed of Seattle's two Marcyites, two or three SDSers, Quakers, Pacifists, peaceniks, and a handful of Stalinists, several ex-Trotskyists, Tom, Debbie and I, and was headed up by a queer in a large Russian hat.

Larry G. and Lee M. were the only two ex's to participate in the whole march and rally. Lee was a picket captain. Mellina, Larry S., and Frank K., and Dick F. came late and tagged along behind the line. Tom, Debbie and I sold literature -- 24 Newsletters, 10 Vietnam pamphlets, 7 Militants and 3 YS's. The only other salesman was a Marcyite selling Workers World and one person selling People's World. The Stalinists carried signs reading: "Veterans for Peace in Vietnam". I identified their politics when one of them told me that the Militant is "Counter revolutionary."

The speaker at the rally is a liberal-progressive type named Lyle Mercer who is a big wig in the Seattle CEWV.

We found that many people in the demonstration had never seen the Militant or YS.

I was very curious to find out what the situation is with our political opponents in Seattle. Apparently none of them have headquarters, offices, or bookstores. Due to the lack of clarity, assertiveness, and revolutionary perspective of our former members, our opponents are not as sharp and aggressive as in areas where we are strong and carrying out our line correctly.

Tom and I went to the former SWP headquarters to pick up some Vietnam pamphlets to sell at the demonstration. Nobody was there; but the wife of the Anarchist who lives upstairs let us in and we got the pamphlets. She apparently handles the bookstore when nobody is around. She and her husband along with a few others put out the "Seattle Group." The headquarters is dusty and smells moldy. The bookshelves aren't kept up with new stock and there is dust all over the books that are on the shelves.

Tom and Debbie have tried to neutralize a couple of the independents who have signed the call for the April 24 Conference as well as Larry G. They invited them to come over and meet me but none of them did. We are pretty sure the Kirkites got to them.

The evening I was scheduled to give my talk at Tom and Debbie's the former youth held a party at "Magic Mountain" (this is the name given to the snake ranch that Miriam R. owns and in which she allows every Tom, Dick and Harry to live). Most of the former youth and their periphery were there.

I think that several things emerge. First is that there is next to nothing to salvage from the old branch or youth local or their periphery. The best approach is to start from scratch conducting the kind of activities that will bring around fresh, young people. Second, the most important milieu -- the campus -- has scarcely been touched by our former comrades. Consequently there are wide open avenues available that have a minimum amount of corrosion.

Kirk, Kaye and Krasnowky are not going to just sit back and let us take over without a skirmish. We're going to have to confront them and fight them especially in the anti-war formations.

Comradely,
S/ Doug