

April 22, 1966
New York, N.Y.

To Majority Members of the National Committee


Dear Comrades:

Enclosed for your information are two recently received communications from Seattle.

The first is a letter from Clara Kaye which was accompanied by a "Statement of Resignation from the SWP." (The "Statement" had been received from another source earlier and was appended to the PC minutes of April 14.)

The second is a report from Tom L. on relations with members of the Kirk-Kaye group immediately preceding and following the split.

Comradely


Ed Shaw

Seattle, Washington

Ed Shaw

National Office, S.W.P.,
New York, N.Y.

Dear Comrade Shaw:

Since we have received no acknowledgement of or response to our letter asking you to call off the investigation, and no answer to my letter to you assuring you the previous letter was real, and since Comrade A.H. took the floor at a public Northwest Anti-War Conference here last weekend to publically and scandalously denounce the Seattle Branch, S.W.P. and our spokesmen at the Conference who explained and defended the National Liberation Front, we met in emergency session on Monday, April 4th to discuss and then proceed to adopt the enclosed statement of resignation from the party.

As you know, present and participating in our discussion, as invited guests, were Tom and Debby L. and AH and Kipp D., of the majority faction, all sent here to investigate the situation. Their only response to hearing the enclosed statement was that anybody who voted for it was an ignorant dupe of the local leadership, and that nobody who voted for it, except youth, would ever be allowed back in the party again, and that Tom and Debbie would stay here to represent the SWP and crush us.

After three hours of discussion, in which almost every Seattle Branch member spoke, the resignation was adopted by unanimous vote of all those present who are resident members of the Seattle Branch, as well as by three youth who are not SWPers but are resigning from the youth.

The statement is also signed by three SWP members from Connecticut.

Every signature is individually signed.

On the question of finances, we consider ourselves responsible to you for all back sustaining fund through March, 1966, for all outstanding literature bills, and for all dues payments through March, 1966.

Please reduce our Militant bundle order to 6 and keep the ISR bundle the same; also, please keep us informed of literature publications. We shall not accept the quota assigned to us on the current national fund drive. We prefer to pay up our back debts instead, and as quickly as possible.

Comradely,
S/Clara Kaye
Organizer, Seattle Branch

April 19, 1966
Seattle, Washington

Dear Ed,

My first contact with Clara was at the conclusion of the final session of the Northwest Anti-War Conference - the only one I attended - at which time I let her know that Debbie and I were formally transferring into the branch. I asked her when the next branch meeting would be so that we could attend and she told me that there was a meeting the next night, Monday April 4, at the party headquarters.

We then met with Asher and Kipp who informed us that they had made an extraordinary effort to consult and discuss with SWP members on matters relating to both the Anti-War Conference, role of the party and youth in the anti-war movement, etc. In the course of these discussions my impression from Asher and Kipp's remarks was that the Kirk-Kaye tendency was definitely planning to split from the party and the youth and that the meeting to which I had been invited would undoubtedly take up this question. Asher had consulted with both Kirk and Kaye for over six hours when he first arrived in town and he and Kipp had managed to talk to most of the branch and youth members during the course of the Conference. Following the conclusion of the Conference on April 3, I together with Asher and Kipp, went to Frank Krasnowsky's where they had been staying. I spent nearly three hours discussing with Frank what the relationship of the Kirk-Kaye tendency was, and would be to the party. In the course of discussion, he told me that the tendency would probably leave the party the following night. I made a special point to spell out for him that in leaving the party they were leaving also the world movement and the revolutionary socialist movement, I also informed him that even if the branch decided to split from the SWP the SWP would remain in Seattle and henceforth we would confront each other as political opponents.

On Monday, April 4, I spent together with Kipp and Debbie, five hours discussing with Mellina Jones the seriousness of leaving the party, as well as the differences she had with us. She finally said that she would never have joined the SWP if it hadn't been for the Kirk-Kaye tendency, that she in fact joined them and not the SWP. She said, however, she would be willing to continue discussion with us and we agreed to leave the door open for such discussion.

In general, the reactions I got from both Frank and Mellina were substantially the same as those Kipp and Asher got in their discussion with other ex-comrades. There was no recourse for us but to discuss among ourselves, as loyal party members, what

our action should be toward the Kirk-Kaye tendency at the meeting that evening. As members of the National Committee, Asher and I agreed that we should do whatever necessary to direct our criticisms and actions at the leadership of the Kirk-Kaye tendency and not place responsibility for their actions on the rank-and-file branch members.

At the branch meeting, as I have reported to you, Clara refused to accept my and Debbie's transfer into the Seattle branch. Following the reading of their resignation resolution of the Kirk-Kaye tendency, I took the floor in the discussion period first and made two central points. The first was to urge the branch membership not to support the resignation statement. I pointed out that we would be willing to discuss with anyone who disagreed with the Kirk-Kaye resignation and gave our address from the speaker's platform. I pointed out the seriousness of leaving the party and that for those of them who considered themselves socialists, they were not only leaving the party but were in all likelihood leaving the revolutionary movement if they followed the Kirk-Kaye lead. I then proposed, briefly, that if the branch split from the party, we should like to take over the headquarters and all the assets of the local which had been accumulated under the name of the Socialist Workers Party. Asher took the floor and explained how he was personally hurt, especially by Kirk's resignation, since it had been Kirk who had recruited him in the past and he felt badly about his leaving, although in questions like this the party came first. He urged the party and youth members present not to resign. He pointed out the party and the youth would both continue in Seattle and they should make every effort to contact Debbie and Tom to continue discussions with them and to work with them. Kipp also spoke, directing her remarks primarily to the youth, along similar lines. This was the extent of the participation in the formal proceedings of the meeting of all party and youth members present, exclusive of the Kirk-Kaye tendency. The next, nearly three hours, were spent in reminiscences by the branch of their years of travail in both the CP and SWP. After listening to them speak, my comradely opening remarks certainly sounded naive, especially since it came out in the discussion that although the document had been drafted by Kirk and Krasnowsky and read by Clara at the meeting it had actually been discussed in the branch for a period of from two to six months depending on who you talked to. In addition, in her opening remarks, Clara reported that local branch activity, including the local Militant Labor Forum, had been suspended because of this discussion.

Subsequent to the resignation, Debbie went out of her way

to talk to youth in an effort to establish communication and restore activity. Her results culminated in the meeting for Doug to which three former youth members showed up, none of whom appear promising in any way. For my part, I had given Frank and Clara my address and phone number, which they never used. I also attended a Militant Labor Forum which was called on the Saturday following the Peace Conference. The purpose of the forum was to evaluate said Conference. Debbie and I had made a previous commitment to meet with two leaders of local anti-war work who turned out to be the only two Marcyites in town and I was unable to attend the forum. I did, however, get there for part of the discussion at about 10:30 pm and stayed until after 3:00 am. I left but the affair kept going. During this time, I discussed with Kirk and asked him what his plans were regarding the groups' relationship to the SWP. He seemed rather vague and said that he thought they would keep the party name for awhile but would "probably" change it later. I really felt sorry for the man because his whole attitude on this question seemed so pathetic. It was at this time that Clara gave me the groups' document resigning from the SWP, and I attempted to find out from her what they plan to do, but could not make any sense out of my conversation with her. She reminded me, for example, that some ten years ago I had come up to her after she had spoken at a meeting in New York and told her that she was the greatest woman leader in the party. I said that I not only could not recall the meeting but also the remarks and that furthermore it was neither in my personal tradition nor the tradition of our party to toss around these kind of accolades even when true. She made a point of implying that my memory was failing for not recalling the alleged praise in the presence of ex-members and contacts.

I also talked with several other ex-members and contacts and made it clear to all that the SWP was continuing in the area despite the resignations of the Kirk-Kaye people. The last two I talked to were Waymon Ware and Mellina J. to whom I defended the party's position on black nationalism and civil rights as opposed to the Kirk-Kaye position. This discussion turned out to be a little forum within the forum and lasted over an hour with most of the people present at one time or another listening in. When I finally left, after 3 am, and was out in front starting the car, both Mellina and Waymon said they wanted to continue the discussion. I invited them to come over to my house then and continue the discussion as long as they wanted to. They refused but left open the question of future discussion.

In addition to our association with former members and some of their contacts, Debbie and I are attending meetings of two separate anti-war groups. In addition, when Doug was in town,

the three of us participated in an anti-war parade in downtown Seattle called to coincide with the national demonstrations on Sat. April 16. The demonstration was on a very low level, as is the entire anti-war movement here. Nonetheless, we managed to sell some 45 pieces of literature, although there were only 60 people participating in the demonstration.

I mention all these experiences only to make clear that contrary to what Clara said in her letter to you we did not threaten to crush anybody, nor did any of us in any way act as political hatchetmen. The reality is that four loyal party comrades came to Seattle and several disloyal and some very confused members left the movement. It was as simple as that.

Debbie is currently attempting to keep abreast of the Kirk·Kaye youth conference called for April 24. There have been no proclamations or further public political activity that we are aware of to build this conference. Instead it appears that it is being organized, if at all, through personal contact work. We will nonetheless plan to be at the scheduled meeting place and intervene with literature, etc.

When the new reinforcements arrive in Seattle, we will resume branch meetings and start sending you copies of the minutes.

Comradely,
S/ Tom L.