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INTERNATIONAL DISCUSSION BULLETIN

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FURTHER EXCHANGES ON ITALY

**Spartacist
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Introductory Note

While the translations contained in this bulletin are accurate to the best of our knowledge, given our inadequate capacity in translating Italian into English, the style and tone of the translations may not correspond precisely to the original.

The exchanges of letters between comrades Sharpe, Federico and Fosco have been arranged in the order in which they were received in New York, which is not necessarily the order in which they were written.

--John Sharpe
for the I.S.

GBL TO WV

Editorial Board
 Workers Vanguard
 Box 1377, G.P.O.
 New York, N.Y. 10001

Milan
 22 December 1976

Dear Comrades,

We have received your letter of November 30, 1976. We unfortunately have to realize that you didn't absolutely understand the very sense of our position regarding the problem of publishing our June letter. In your last letter, you are charging us [with] having an "open tribune" concept of the paper of a revolutionary organization. We firmly reject this charge, as lacking any actual basis. Indeed, we perfectly agree with your characterization of the attitude held by the organizations you quoted, namely OCI, LO, LCR, as centrist; we feel, in fact, that it depends exclusively on the will of an organization to publish or not in its own paper letters or documents from other groupings or individual comrades. In our opinion, one is compelled to publish a letter from other political organizations or militants, as a duty of proletarian democracy, in a single case, that is, when said letters represent mises-à-point or rectifications concerning the specific evaluations made by the paper to which the letter is being sent about the author(s) of the same letter (provided, obviously, that the letter to be published isn't too diffuse!). This was clearly the case with our own letter. If, for instance, we had sent you a letter on Lebanon, or even on the article on Italian elections published in the issue No. 133 of WV, it would have been your right to let this letter appear in your paper or not. But actually we didn't send you a similar letter: we sent a mere letter, of normal length, devoted to clarification with respect to your specific statement according to which we have an attitude "even more capitulationist" than Pabloites themselves on the electoral question. It was, therefore, your duty to publish such a letter.

As regards the problem of a reply, we agree that it is absolutely necessary. We find, however, inconceivable that a Bolshevik organization wasn't able to promptly reply to such a specific letter. As far as we know, you first laboriously worked up a reply of more than twenty (typewritten) pages (which, by the by, seems absolutely disproportioned with respect to our letter, dealing only with few points in one-and-half pages). In all cases, an abstract of such reply had [i.e., was supposed] to appear in the issue No. 124 of WV, but subsequently (as it was reported to us), you had to cancel this decision, due to the criticism that document underwent during your international summer camp.

We think that the basis for such failure to reply--or rather, for such toilsome attempts to draw a reply altogether--is to be found in the actual difficulty, not to say impossibility, of giving a response likely to convince your own co-thinkers and readers, to

our orthodox Trotskyist positions on the question of electoral tactics toward workers parties involved, or projecting to participate, in open class collaboration with bourgeoisie (People's Front). We stress, indeed, that your positions on this matter are actually anti-Trotskyist and sectarian ones.

However, as we feel we must prevent similar "accidents" from hindering relationships between our organizations, and wish that such relationships continue in an atmosphere of political friendliness, we temporarily give up the projected measures (i.e., sending copies of our June letter for publication to TOC [Trotskyist Organizing Committee]/U.S. and RWP/Sri Lanka). But, as we confirm our previous estimates on the affair, we will wait for publication of the same June letter in WV (because it was in this paper that statements on our electoral position were published), together with your reply, up to the issue No. 144 (included). In the case of further failure to publish our letter, we will carry on the announced measures. On behalf of EC [Executive Committee], GBL(I)

Most fraternal Trotskyist
greetings,

Fernando

SHARPE TO GBL

international
Spartacist
tendency

Box 1377, G.P.O.
New York, N.Y. 10001

26 January 1977

Gruppo Bolscevico-Leninista
Genova,
Milano

Dear Comrades,

We received your letter of 22 December 1976, which states that your original letter (of 29 June) to Workers Vanguard represented merely a "mise-à-point" or correction "with respect to [our] specific statement according to which [you] have an attitude 'even more capitulationist' than the Pabloites themselves on the electoral question" of voting in the June 1976 elections in Italy.

Your original letter [see International Discussion Bulletin, No. 6] centrally raised general questions related to the electoral policy of Trotskyists toward the candidates of workers parties in a popular-front formation. Thus your letter represented a general political polemic of the type which, according to your 22 December letter, "it would [be] your right to let this letter appear in your paper or not." You now claim, however, that our political characterization of your attitude concerning the June 1976 Italian elections is in fact not a political characterization, but a mere question of fact, a "correction," or mise-à-point. For our part, as Trotskyists, we consider that characterizing an organization's attitude toward the popular front (i.e., whether your position represented a greater or lesser capitulation than that of the GCR) is above all a political question, not simply of fact. You, of course, have a perfect right to hold a different opinion.

What you now present as a factual "correction" is a different political line (which of course you have a perfect right to hold). Thus your 22 December letter amounts again to the claim that you have the "right" to "correct" our political line in our press, and that we have the "duty" to publish your divergent political line, even without replying to it. This is the same question with which we dealt in our 30 November letter, and we therefore do not believe that we misunderstood your original letter.

In the framework of our reply to your original letter we plan to adduce some of the evidence which led us to the political conclusion that in the case of the 1976 Italian elections your position was even more capitulatory than that of Livio Maitan.

Trotskyist greetings,

John Sharpe,
for the Editorial Board of WV

SHARPE TO IL MILITANTE

international
Spartacist
tendency

Box 1377, G.P.O.
New York, N.Y. 10001

13 April 1977

Il Militante
Genova, Italy

Dear Comrades:

The most recent issue of Il Militante (first quarter, 1977) contains a gross political falsification of our position on Lebanon. You quote an article from Kommunistische Korrespondenz in the following translation:

"i marxisti rivoluzionari debbono sostenere il disfattismo rivoluzionario da ambo i lati, al contempo riconoscendo il diritto di autodeterminazione per tutte le comunità (maroniti compresi), ed opponendosi ad ogni intervento straniero" (our emphasis).

The original article, which appeared in Kommunistische Korrespondenz No. 16, December 1976, stated in fact:

"revolutionäre Marxisten [müssen] den revolutionären Defätismus auf allen Seiten verfechten, während sie gleichzeitig das Recht der Selbstverteidigung für alle Gemeinschaften, einschliesslich der Maroniten, anerkennen und gegen jede ausländische Intervention sind" (our emphasis).

In your desire to polemicize against the Trotskyist positions upheld by the international Spartacist tendency, you have "translated" self-defense by the much different term self-determination, thus grossly falsifying the political meaning of the entire passage! Even linguistically, these terms are quite different: how could such an "error" have been made?

Based on this fundamental distortion of our position, you proceed to build a house of cards to justify your support of the "Moslem-left alliance." Thus you even bring up the Saint Barthélémy massacre of French Huguenots by Catholics in 1572 and demagogically claim that we would not have defended the besieged Palestinians of Tall el Zaatar against their Christian attackers. In fact, our position is for the military defense of all besieged communities against their attackers: for Tall el Zaatar and Karantina as well as Damour. But the policies of both sides are such that no support, even "military," can be given to them in their communal massacres, which we amply document in our article. I quote from the French version [*]:

"...bloodthirsty Christian militiamen stormed the Palestinian areas of Dbaiye and Karantina, savagely slaughtering hundreds of men, women and children. At that very moment, however, the

'progressive forces' of the 'Muslim-Left alliance' were wiping out hundreds of innocent Christians in the town of Jiyeh and the hamlet of Haret el Rouss. Then two days after the fall of Karantina, these 'progressive' Muslim gangs ended the weeks long siege of Damour by overrunning the town killing 500 Christians and burning all the homes. More recently while Christian gangs butchered the inhabitants of the Palestinian refugee camp of Tel Zaatar, Muslim forces staged 'diversionary' attacks on Christian villages which can have no relation to the defence of Tel Zaatar except for those whose strategy is reciprocal communal violence."

You, however, dismiss the massive and well-documented reciprocal communal terrorism with an airy wave of the hand:

"Questi errori, che comunque appaiono estremamente secondari e marginali...non cambiano minimamente i termini del problema. [These errors, which however appear extremely secondary and marginal...do not in the least change the terms of the problem.]"

It is significant that you do not refer to the testimony of the spokesman of the FPLP, quoted in our article, concerning these "secondary...errors"[*]:

"When the battles resumed in August [1975] they took on a different character: they were primarily of a confessional character. The battles started as a fight between reactionary and progressive forces and ended up as a fight between Muslims and Christians, principally Maronites. Whether or not we like to admit it, it is a fact.... A bomb cannot differentiate between a progressive and a reactionary Christian."(our emphasis)

Even the Pabloites have been forced to recognize this fact, at least in passing, speaking of the "domination du confessionnalisme," in the fighting. Denying reality and mistranslating passages to make them fit your distorted view of the "problem" does not change that reality, comrades. Your readers may be interested in how the Yugoslav Stalinists dealt with a closely related problem in fighting the Ustashi fascists during World War II: in order to fight the fascists effectively, they were forced to break with the Serbian nationalists, as we documented in two articles in Workers Vanguard, Nos. 106 and 110 (23 April and 21 May, 1976).

You claim that the "problem" is that of a Popular Front fighting "fascist reaction." But this is not the problem at all: there are right-wing reactionaries on the side of the Moslems (as even the term "Moslem-left alliance" tends to indicate) and the Christian forces are not all "fascists." The real question is that Lebanon is not a nation as such, and that behind the political mask the essential character of the warfare is that of inter-communal terror.

We would recommend to your readers the article from which you misquote, available in the French edition of Spartacist (No. 13,

April 1977), as well as in German.

Fraternally,

John Sharpe
international Spartacist
tendency

bcc: Federico, Fosco, Paris, Alexandre,
OTR, Bln, Lond., P-O, Tor., Van.,
Chi., WCCC, Syd., Melb.

[*These passages were quoted in French in Sharpe's original letter.
For clarity we are using the English versions--ed.]

SHARPE TO GBL

international
Spartacist
tendency

Box 1377, G.P.O.
New York, N.Y. 10001

18 April 1977

Gruppo Bolscevico-Leninista
Genova, Italy

Dear Comrades,

Our comrades in Italy have informed us that you consider your "Primo Bilancio della discussione fra International Spartacist Tendency e GBL per la IV Internazionale" ["First Balance Sheet of the Discussions between the iSt and the GBL for the Fourth International"] as an application for membership in the iSt, and that you "demand" a written reply.

In the absence of any letter from you on this subject, we cannot take this report very seriously (although we have no reason to doubt its veracity).

As far as we know, the "Primo Bilancio" is a public document. When it first appeared, in late August 1976, you did not even bother to send it to us directly (not to mention writing us concerning your supposed "application")--and the copy you gave comrades to send to us even had two pages missing! This is hardly a serious way to proceed.

Further, in the "Bilancio" you explicitly link your "proposal" of membership in the iSt to that of the Revolutionary Workers Party of Ceylon [original in Italian, translated here]:

"the relations between the GBL and the iSt cannot be separated from those between the iSt and the RWP (about which we would like to receive future documents)."

Surely you do not presume to speak on behalf of the RWP? When a delegation from the RWP visited North America and Europe for political discussions with the iSt, it became clear to both of us that their differences with the iSt, in particular on the national question and their electoral support to the reformist workers parties in popular-front formations--many of which you centrally share--were of such a nature as to preclude membership. As a mature political formation, the RWP recognized this fact: to our knowledge, it has no desire to join the iSt at this time. We do, however, continue to maintain cordial fraternal relations with the RWP and occasionally publish articles by comrade Samarakkody on questions where we are in agreement.

Rather than writing to us privately proposing discussions with a fusion perspective (since we had already had several exchanges), you issue what is to all appearances a public document, without sending us a copy directly, which, after some 20 pages of criticisms of the

iSt for its principled positions on two of the central programmatic questions of the day--the attitude revolutionists should adopt toward petty-bourgeois nationalist movements and toward electoral support to bourgeois workers parties in a popular front--nevertheless concludes by "applying" for membership (along with the RWP, which to our knowledge does not want to join the iSt)! How are we to take this seriously, comrades?

As we have repeatedly pointed out to you, the iSt seeks principled regroupments and a cohesive (though certainly not monolithic) international tendency based on programmatic confluence. You are already aware that your positions on voting for reformist workers parties in popular front formations and on support to petty-bourgeois nationalist movements (such as in Lebanon and Angola) are considered by us to preclude such a principled fusion at this point. Your refusal to recognize this fact appears to indicate a serious difference on the organization question as well.

It is disingenuous in the extreme for you to profess indignation at your supposedly not having received an "answer" to your so-called "application." For you to insinuate ignorance as to our attitude toward a fusion perspective at this juncture betrays a desire to score cheap debaters' points rather than confront the programmatic disparity between our organizations--a maneuverist method which if anything only increases our pessimistic evaluation of the likelihood of the GBL undertaking any significant motion in the direction of authentic Trotskyism.

However, we do not rule out the possibility that you comrades--whom we have considered centrist--may undergo political motion in the direction of our program and in an attempt to confront and resolve the contradictions between some of your professed political position (e.g., opposition to popular fronts) and your actual practice (e.g., support of popular fronts). We of course therefore remain interested in pursuing a political discussion with you on these and other points.

Fraternally,

John Sharpe
for the iSt

cc: all sections, iSt
RWP, Ceylon

FEDERICO TO I.S.

Lemoglio
1 January 1977

I.S.

cc: Nucleo, Alexandre, London

Dear Comrade Sharpe,

I am in receipt of your letter to comrade Fosco of December 20, 1976 [see IDB No. 6, January 1977], and will try to formulate my views on the situation of the Nucleo and our perspective in Italy at this point.

1. You write: "We do believe that (1) the situation in the Nucleo is very bad and (2) we do have serious doubts concerning the comrades' ability to forge a collective leadership and therefore also a viable organization."

I completely agree with this assessment of the present situation, as well as with the emphasis given to the need for concentration, reflected in the I.S. motion.

This is necessarily related to an understanding of why the Nucleo could arrive [at] such "a very bad situation," on which a thorough discussion is necessary.

2. It is again very true that "centralization in itself is no panacea, and does not guarantee [the] successful resolution" of our differences and that the essential need is the "resolution of the tensions between them" (Fosco and Federico).

On the question of tensions, I can only express my complete willingness to overcome the situation, but I have also to remind all comrades that: a) my opening statements at the May (Milano) meeting, reaffirmed subsequently at the 30 June (Genova) meeting, were precisely centered on this point; b) comrade Sharpe's answer in Milano was, at best, evasive; comrade Black's intervention in Genova was slightly better; c) I don't know of any statement by Fosco, by far going in this direction. On the contrary, for the sake of openness and clarity, I should also say that expressions like the following samples--"Federico's letter is confused, unpolitical and the expression of an individualistic (and idealistic) conception of militancy"; "Fed. expressed a clearly social-democratic conception of the national independence of an organization"; "In the immediate alignment of Fed. with Sharpe's letter of 30 April there were two elements. The first: a simple operation of 'captatio benevolentiae'"; "individualistic and deraciné conceptions of comrade Fed's"; "capitulation to the PCI, lack of positions on the Democrazia Proletaria bloc, subordination to the GBL coexisted with the 'theoretical' revolutionarism";--or the opinion conveyed to Alexandre by Fosco that I had actually written a section of Giulli's letter of application, can be hardly considered as part of an effort to overcome tensions!

Regarding the pre-conditional character of centralization, it

is true that the I.S. didn't explore the possibilities for the Italian comrades at the time of the September '76 discussion. That doesn't reduce our (the Italian comrades') responsibility for not providing the necessary input. However, I have to say that I did raise at the September (Genova) meeting with Alexandre the hypothesis of comrade Fosco's professionalization, albeit in a very abstract and totally non-operational fashion. The fact that neither comrade Fosco, nor comrade Alexandre commented on that at the meeting, nor reported [it] in their letters to the I.S., again expresses that nobody--myself included--was actually taking the Nucleo's dispersion as a life or death question. (By the way, it has been this understanding, after discussions with comrade Alexandre and with comrade David in London, that allowed me to realize that I can actually find another job, either in Milano or in Torino, looking hard for some months.)

3. On the article on Italy in WV No. 131, I wrote [on] 30 November, the draft of a letter, which I didn't send in to you [because of] my wrong attitude toward the I.S. at that time. I showed it to Alexandre, and I'm sending it to you, with only minor editorial changes. (I will refer to comrade Fosco's letter to WV of 16 December and to the discussions on this at the meeting with Alexandre and Lesueur in a subsequent letter.)

My criticism of the article is quite sharp, based on the conception you taught me of "think of what Massari or the GBL will say," and still more so, because this is an article published in WV.

However, it is deadly true that you "do not get enough information/articles" from the Nucleo. To overcome this, we have to work out some solutions: one may be that the Nucleo as such and its members write regularly letters to the I.S., with short comments on the situation, reporting about main strikes/political discussions in the Italian press/books published, etc.

This input will surely be beneficial for WV, and will also lay a very minimal basis for the political life of the Nucleo itself.

4. I don't know enough about the history of the iSt's attempts to win a section of the FMR in Italy, successfully ended with the acquisition of the Belluno group (Fosco, Pino and Giulio). (It is regrettable that I have never read the exchange with Massari, nor the undoubtedly rich correspondence between the iSt and the Belluno group in spring of 1975.) However, one question which at this point I can raise only in a highly tentative manner is: How far did the iSt investigate the depth and thoroughness of these comrades' break with Bordigism?

Of course, an element which added confusion was the fact that formally the Belluno group were members of the left Pabloite FMR, and it was obviously necessary to be sure of their break with Pabloism. But one has certainly to notice the disturbing fact that both Pino and Giulio left the iSt stating their basic agreement with Bordigism.

At the present time, that's all I can say, but both the I.S.

and Fosco are in a position to formulate some useful considerations.

5. The Russian question is a main point of separation between Trotskyism, the only revolutionary current, and the various forms of reformism, centrism and ultra-left opportunism.

Our present polemics with the OCRFI--and their accusation that we capitulate to Stalinism--as well as the Vietnam pamphlets (the SL and ours) will make the discussion extremely necessary and urgent within the Nucleo.

In an informal discussion, Fosco refused to admit that the working class is the ruling class in the Soviet Union. I pointed out to him Trotsky's article "Not a Workers and not a Bourgeois State?" (November 25, 1937), but this seems still a controversial point. Notice that Massari has the same position on Vietnam, and we are going to conduct further polemics against him, initiated in our Vietnam pamphlet.

At this point, I think it is appropriate to say something about your repeated reference to "certain political problems" with me. I will refer here only to your two main corrections to my presentation article on Vietnam.

Our telegram to Ho Chi Minh (Spartacist, No. 4, reprinted in the SL Vietnam pamphlet), can hardly be used to support your criticism of my phrase: "Only a Vietnamese Trotskyist Party...will be able to reinforce the Vietnamese workers state, overthrowing the anti-working-class regime through a political revolution..." You object to "reinforce the Vietnamese workers state," but the phrase must be taken as a whole, in Italian and I think also in English, thus making clear that the way of "reinforcing the Vietnamese workers state" is overthrowing the bureaucracy." Now, the reason why I put into dispute the telegram is that it appears a lot more uncritical than my phrase, but you don't object to it fundamentally; otherwise, you wouldn't have reproduced it in the newest pamphlet!

However, I accept your other main remark, as my phrase regarding the "revolutionary dynamics" of the struggle in Vietnam is Pabloite bla-bla-bla. However, the 1st position on Vietnam--concentrated in the slogan "All Indochina Must Go Communist"--is based on the recognition that the struggle going on in Indochina put in motion social forces which, in the presence of a revolutionary party, could be led to the seizure of power. "Dynamics" obscures the role of the party, implying an objective unfolding of the revolution. But, to simply eliminate my phrase left a hole in the introduction.

6. The Nucleo will show whether it is viable through the process of building a collective leadership. This leadership has to be national (national different from indigenous) and integrated into the international leadership. Thus, Sharpe's letter insists on the need for a qualitative leap by Fosco and Federico. No reference to new people coming in. Now, Fosco expressed several times his willingness of some leading cadre from the SL/U.S. to be in Italy. Given the present situation, I think that if Fosco agrees that his task of building the Italian Nucleo is essentially our task (his and mine), we can look forward toward a solution; otherwise the only possibility is for the I.S. to put the Nucleo into receivership

(including, by definition, the possibility of its dissolution, and the international transfers of its members, à la Israélienne, to be the least euphemistic possible.

7. On the GBL, comrade Fosco should write soon on his present positions, and on his assessment of our activities toward them. This will allow the Nucleo and the 1st as a whole, to have a wider and thorough discussion on this subject.

Now, I limit myself to state my agreement with Sharpe's characterization of the GBL as "rather classical London-Bureau style centrists," which is opposed to Fosco's statement that they "are not organically centrist."

8. Finally, I hope that comrade Fosco will not resort to comments on my alleged attempts to "get the support of some I.S. member" (against Fosco), but deal with the actual political content of this letter.

An open, frank and honest confrontation is strongly needed, and everybody must take his/her responsibility for it.

Best comradely greetings,

Federico

[translation]

FOSCO TO I.S.[Belluno
6 January 1977]1st-New York
Alexandre-LTF
Federico

Dear Comrades,

I won't deal at great length with the Moneglia meeting which added very little new to the previous situation. The meeting took place under the worst organizational conditions and more than half the discussion points were dropped from the agenda. There was no discussion about the Bulletin, nothing about Diddi-Meri, nothing about the Vietnam pamphlet, almost nothing on the GBL, etc. In my opinion, however, the most negative element of the meeting was concessions Alexandre made to eventually transferring Federico to Milano. All this came about in the course of a very long private discussion between Federico and Alexandre (at this meeting, the private discussions lasted more than twice as long as the official meeting). On the basis of these private agreements Federico was able to state in the official meeting that "the I.S. is considering concentrating in Milano instead of Torino." These "commitments of Alexandre's for Italy were "naturally" made without even consulting me and confirm Federico's inclination for sudden hit-and-run actions --a very short time after having moved to a new house without consulting anyone and with complete impudence. Jean intervened well on this question and afterwards he appeared to share my concerns about Alexandre's "concessions." I'll take up this question later in this letter, which takes on great importance now because of things that have arisen.

I met Fernando of the GBL in Milano on 24 December. In the meeting we agreed that:

1) Meetings between the Nucleo and the GBL will be more frequent and will mean leaving aside the exchange of written documents. The next meeting, for which we have not yet set a date, will have Lebanon, Ireland, and Italy as discussion points on the agenda.

2) The GBL will invite Federico to its open meetings in Genova. The Nucleo had already agreed on both these points in Moneglia. At the [Milano] meeting Fernando seemed to me to be less aggressive than Grisolia, and in general more concerned not to jeopardize their links with us. At the end of the meeting (which had to end before the last night train left Milano for Venezia) Fernando gave me a copy of the letter sent to N.Y. dated 22 December, and showed me an open letter against the FMR. As for me, I thought it would not be harmful, but in fact advisable, to show him the draft of WV's reply to the GBL which I had with me, as proof of the 1st's concrete commitment of answering. Naturally I told him that I could not leave him the document inasmuch as the 1st did not consider it adequate.

Fernando told me several times that he thinks that there are many misunderstandings in interpreting our respective positions in our discussion, in addition to some real differences.

On 28 December the possibility of transferring next year was definitively confirmed (the final deadline to request a transfer is 26 January). The trade-union comrades in Torino (Avanguardia Operaia) provided me with all the necessary information so that implantation in Torino can be put into practice within a few months. On the basis of the operative Paris agreements, confirmed by the IEC in New York, the steps in the implantation will be:

1) Mid-April: Bart arrives in Torino and we begin looking for an apartment/office to rent for early May (I seriously doubt that two weeks will be enough time to find one).

2) In May Fosco will begin looking for his own apartment and will increase his presence in Torino (Saturday/Sunday) taking advantage of Bart's apartment/office (which will immediately become the office for Nucleo meetings).

3) End of June: Fosco's final transfer to Torino.

Needless to say Federico and Diddi (in the unlikely event that we get him back) must plan to concentrate in Torino. A second concentration in Milano could be realized only after the Nucleo's center has been consolidated in Torino. However, in the long term perspective of an Italian section with at least 500 comrades and a regular press, it is my opinion that the Center would have to move to Roma, the only political center that can guarantee a link with the south of Italy. I repeat that to see Torino/Milano as Detroit/New York is simple nonsense which ignores the essential facts of the history of the workers movement and the political/economic situation in Italy. In fact:

1) It ignores that Roma (which is as large as Torino and Milano combined) is not only Washington, but the only real possibility for a national political center. It ignores the question of the south in Italy. It ignores that Roma is the headquarters for the major parties and groups.

2) Anyone who bothers to sketch a historical outline of the major anti-reformist movements in Italy would note they originate from the juncture of the political/working-class vanguard at Fiat (the only huge concentration of workers in Italy--150 thousand in Torino alone): be it in 1920 or in 1962 (even though the latter was far less significant).

3) Contacts which the Nucleo has established through the press present the following scale:

Napoli region--3	Firenze region--1	Milano region--0 (even though
Torino region--3	Roma region--1	this was the center in which
Taranto region--2	Venezia region--1	we distributed the greatest
		amount of material)

As for the distribution of the Trotskyist family in these two cities:

Torino: GCR (it's strongest section being in Rome), Rivoluzione Permanente, Falcemartello I (Scaruffi), FMR, GBL (Grisolia), Lega Socialista Rivoluzionaria [PST]

Milano: GCR, GBL (Central Office), Falcemartello II, Lotta di Classe.

Certainly these observations are not meant to deny the importance of Milano, but simply to prevent the Torino/Milano question from becoming a pretext for Federico's habitual free-lancing behavior. It must be very clear that the problem we are facing is that of building a center for the organization and compared to this goal the discussion of particular shadings between Torino and Milano becomes completely secondary. In terms of my personal needs Torino and Milano were the same thing. I chose Torino because in spite of superficial appearances I consider it more congenial to the development of a very small group. Furthermore I recall that none of the 1st representatives (neither Sharpe, Black, Alexandre or Mordechai) had any objections to my suggestion of Torino at the European summer camp two years ago. What is certain is that Federico cannot think that he can continue his personal guerrilla warfare next year too: alternating ambiguous political silences (the most recent example: our politics toward the GBL) with sudden organizational coups de main. At the Moneglia meeting, after Federico's statement that the I.S. would have preferred Milano as the center for the Nucleo, and my reaction, what followed was a timid retreat by Alexandre and Federico's subsequent reply to Alexandre in which he insisted on the seriousness of the commitments made in the discussion before the meeting began. The question was not clarified at all.

My position on the practical perspectives for the Nucleo are clear and are those which were openly agreed on with the I.S. but it would be very useful if either Federico or Alexandre (but Lesueur too) could make statements to clarify things.

I'm aware of Sharpe's trip to Europe at the end of January. I insist that this be the time in which we make the decisions for the organization of the Nucleo and settle (first among ourselves and then with them) our relations with the GBL.

Fraternal greetings,

Fosco

Belluno, 6.1.77

[translation]

FOSCO TO BART[Belluno
undated]

Bart--London Station
for information: iSt--N.Y.
Alexandre--LTF
Federico

Dear Bart,

I think I should inform you right away that it is henceforth certain that I can request a transfer to Torino. The pro-Avanguardia Operaia comrades in the union helped in giving me good information so that all the conditions now exist to plan our implantation in Torino. Before the official confirmation (95 percent) of my new post (August), I will begin looking for a new house in Torino and will liquidate the house in Belluno.

It is clear that your prior implantation in Torino will constitute a good base camp and in addition will allow me to come to Torino a couple of months early. In addition to all this which is already extremely important, there is the added convenience of a base camp in Torino for Federico, Guillia and Diddi (even if we can't count on him at the moment).

I have two recommendations for matters which concern you directly:

- 1) that you learn Italian. In Torino our tasks will increase both externally (other groups) and internally (iSt). Because the pile of work I'm swamped with is preventing me from making progress in learning English, I will absolutely need you to act as an "intermediary."
- 2) that you send me an outline of your assignments in England (school, the organization, etc.) by the end of the month. Naturally you should speak to Strachan about it beforehand--in fact I'm very doubtful that you will be able to find an apartment in Torino within two weeks (something tells me it may take months). Therefore, if it is possible, that is, if it doesn't create complications in London, I think it would be best to expect you to come in early April.

For more than a month now I've heard talk of a document on Ireland. Is it possible to have two copies or xerox copies of it (one for me and one for Federico)???

Fraternal greetings to
you and the comrades,

Fosco

P.S. Please inform the comrades (Hunter, I believe) [of my precise address]. The London Station takes first prize for bungling my address. Could this be some Freudian slip?

[translation]

FOSCO TO FEDERICO[Belluno
9 January 1977]

Federico
for information: iSt--N.Y.
Alexandre--LTF

Dear Federico,

I would like to comment on your six letters which I received yesterday all in a single envelope. I want to make clear that it seems absurd to me that you waited until 7 January to send me copies of a letter to Sharpe from London dated 24 December, or the other letter to Sharpe dated 1 January. I would hope that it is not a question of the 170 lire for a stamp: particularly because you know you will be reimbursed.

Your letters confirm both the negative and the positive aspects of your work in the Nucleo. The negative aspects are those which I already expressed in my letter of 6 September 1976, and which I note you quoted. This is certainly not a question of serious programmatic distortions, so much as a specific method of confronting certain subjects in a superficial and haphazard way. While it is true that one does not have to know what one is talking about in order to talk, I am sure you would agree with me that it is the worst methodological criterion, especially for a political leadership! I will deal primarily with your letter of 30 November, in which you attempt to correct WV's idiocy on Italy and in so doing commit five yourself--and not minor ones either--in barely a page and a half. I'll list them for you:

1) It is incredible, even for an American comrade, to think that "Longo is in fact worried about the possibility of the CP losing votes (in favor of the radicals)...." According to you, it seems that Longo, president of the PCI, would be frightened of a minuscule group of "new left" radicals, who by their own admission are as yet unable to define their economic program (all this in a full-blown economic-political crisis, no less).

2) Another gem: "The sharpening crisis of the left social democrats and centrists--due to a combination of their electoral defeat and of the Chairman's death..." The electoral defeat of 20 June is mainly a result which aggravated the crisis in these groups but is certainly not the cause of it. Mao's death has nothing at all to do with it (the Italian centrist groups are all Maoists sui generis).

In my humble opinion the crisis in the groups is instead essentially due to their inability to oppose the Popular Front, as expressed in their slogan "For a Government of the Left." The crisis was sharpened after the PCI abandoned even the appearance of formal opposition [to the Government] and switched to abstentionism [in Parliament].

3) "The lack of a left alternative (to the PCI)...is something new with respect to the last 7/8 years." Really? Who then is

supposed to have constituted this alternative??

4) "It is true that there has been a certain opposition to the 'stangata,' but this has not been directed to the CP, but to the government..." How can you so rigidly separate the government from the PCI today?

Today there are doubts in certain sectors of the PCI and protests in certain trade union categories (especially public employees). If what you say were true then the DC and the bourgeoisie would be in ever greater crisis, but this is not true: the DC is "holding on" and the bourgeoisie is attacking on the economic front and reorganizing on the political front (which naturally happens in Popular Front situations--as Trotsky teaches).

5) "Lama is a close ally of Amendola, and his positions are normally an expression of their combination, naturally with Lama appearing with a more bread-and-butter language, but nothing more." Here we have a series of factual errors topped with the absence of a concrete perception of the political situation. However, WV's position ("Berlinguer and Amendola" vs. "Longo and Lama") was not as bad as yours. Let's look at the questions in detail:

a) Lama has never been a "close ally" of Amendola.

b) Amendola remains a historical leader of the PCI, but he is not a current leader. You for sure certainly didn't take the trouble to read for yourself the already famous report of the CC of the PCI about Unità, but if you had done so, you would have noted that even several of Amendola's open supporters like Napolitano and Minucci abandoned him to line up with Berlinguer.

c) It is absurd to say that Lama is "appearing with a more bread-and-butter language, but nothing more." It is rather the opposite that is true. Today the trade unions protest against the government more than the PCI does (because they are more subject to pressures from the workers), and for that reason WV is not incorrect to put Longo with Lama.

Certainly none of this is a question of intelligence, or loyalty to Marxism-Leninism or any other extraordinary quality, but simply of information. I read, essentially, four newspapers per day (the three groups and L'Unità) to keep up with the Italian situation. I have a subscription to two weeklies (Rinascita and Espresso), I glance at the press of a number of other groups, and use the information from at least the intermediate sector [low-level bureaucrats] of the trade unions. You, on the other hand, admit to reading practically no dailies; you are not in any mass political organization, and you naturally pay a price for this. Of course, given this, no one forbids you to speak, but allow me to say that you have no right to get offended at the less than flattering judgments you receive.

I spoke to Fernando for a few minutes about the article in WV and my letter when I met him. We agreed that: the content of the

article was no doubt not as bad as the headline (and therefore not "basically wrong" as you wrote). Moreover we shared the same point of view concerning the internal situation of the CP and the trade unions, while on the other groups his information is a little better than mine, because in spite of reading newspapers (which I do by myself, and the GBL divides up among themselves), the GBL is politically active in a much broader field. But certainly to think that one is doing political work, while not only having no existence in the [working-class] movement, but not even reading the press, is to border on charlatanry. It is thus quite amusing that in your 1 January letter to Sharpe you write that "My criticisms of the article are quite sharp, based on the conception you taught me of 'think of what Massari or the GBL will say'."!!!

Furthermore, I am not interested in politically debating a comrade who doesn't even bother to inform himself. Frankly the only thing I can say to you is that I am ready to consider seriously your participation in the task of analyzing the Italian situation when- ever you propose a minimal, limited program and for which the documentation you intend to use is made perfectly clear. The rest can come only from concentration, and the possibility of dividing the work with other comrades.

The work in which you appear at your best is in the area of research and systematizing material, which seen in perspective should be useful for the projected series of meetings on the history of the ISt. In fact it is in this area that your language skills and your interest in the Anglo-Saxon labor movement can be productive. There is a nexus of questions of considerable importance, central for an organization like ours which has its own future in Europe but its origin in the U.S., and potentially of vital importance in fighting all forms of Italian parochialism. From this point of view, I fully support your letter of 24 December to Sharpe; and I wish you the best of luck in order that you will have more success than me in getting your hands on the archives of the SL/U.S.

Lastly, a few miscellaneous organizational remarks:

1) I formally request that you stop sending your letters addressed to the I.S. to Station London. I already brought this up in my letter of 6 November. At the next meeting in Genova, Alexandre, in a conversation with me (in Bart's presence) justified your previously sending correspondence to London, explaining that what you really wanted was to send the letters to Jim (who was in London at the time) and not Station London. Alexandre acknowledged however, that it would be otherwise incorrect for you to correspond with Station London. I don't know if Alexandre told you this. Copies of letters may be sent only to Alexandre/Lesueur. This was established with Sharpe and clearly holds for all comrades. Furthermore, sending your letters to London creates a situation which is unilateral, to say the least, in that the comrades receive only your letters concerning the Nucleo, and not for example, mine or the I.S.'s. If you disagree, then you should address yourself to the I.S. but in the meantime, stop sending copies to London.

2) You must tell Diddi that his plan to go to South America (what's more, made known to us by his mother) breaks off his relations with the Nucleo. The Nucleo has no intention of supporting what is essentially no more than his curiosity to travel, with a political cover. Furthermore, for the Nucleo his status as a sympathizer is unstable and therefore we should consider his status reduced to that of a simple contact.

3) This brings to mind that the responsibility for contacts between us falls essentially upon you. I cannot bear the burden for your free-lancing choice to go live in Lemoglio in a house without a telephone. From now on you should plan to call me not once a week, but twice (as I had originally proposed). As for the meetings (in anticipation of Torino), I insist that they should take place in Milano, because it is not as far from Belluno, although it implies that you too must make a small sacrifice.

Fraternal Greetings,

Fosco

Belluno, 9.1.77

P.S. The I.S. should please make a copy of this letter to send to Station London.

FEDERICO TO I.S.

Federico,
Lemoglio, 11 January 1977

I.S.
Nucleo
cc: Paris, London

Dear Comrades:

Fosco's letter of January 6 on the meeting of the Nucleo of 18-19 December 1976, is unfortunately so partial and distorting, that one cannot let it go without trying to set things straight.

The meeting did introduce some new elements in the situation. For instance, it approved the I.S. motion which says:

"The I.S. accepts the operational conclusions of the above [Paris] motion while noting that the I.S.'s acquiescence to the Italian comrades' obsessive concern with their job security has led to a situation in which the lack of concentration calls into question the very existence of the Nucleo."

with three votes in favor (Alexandre, Federico, Lesueur), one abstention (Fosco) and one consultative not voting (Giulli). The Nucleo will make some use of this motion, that it did approve.

The bad organization of the meeting was worsened by both Lesueur and Fosco arriving late (not their fault: the trains were late) and by Fosco's refusal to postpone their departure. (Lesueur, who had to catch a plane, proposed to leave a bit later, but Fosco refused; he even refused to leave on his own, after Lesueur: but Fosco had no plane to catch).

The meeting was held from 5-11 p.m. (with an interruption for dinner, in the same house and table) on the 18th, when we discussed an international report by Alexandre-Lesueur; and from 8-11:30 a.m. on the 19th, when we discussed on Italy and the Nucleo.

The informal discussion between Federico and Alexandre took place on 17 December. (Alexandre's arrival had been arranged a day before, precisely to have time to talk, without reducing the time for the meeting). Fosco arrived the 18th at 11 or 12 a.m. and discussed with Alexandre and Lesueur for about 3-4 hours, before the beginning of the meeting.

The total time dedicated to "private conversations" was probably more or less the same as that of the official meeting. In any case, Sharpe noted in his letter to Federico of 10 September 1976 the crucial role of informal discussions and wrote: "Part of the difficulties with the Nucleo is that for a variety of reasons we have not achieved the ratio of 3 or 4 to 1 of informal to formal discussions."

If Fosco had been "increasingly suspicious" toward the I.S., this persistent mistrustful attitude toward his comrades is bordering on paranoia in the representation of the "concessions" made by

Alexandre to Federico, and of the intervention in the meeting.

I didn't say that "The I.S. thinks of concentrating in Milano instead of Torino." I could not say that, simply because it was--in fact still is--unclear to me why the question of "Milano or Torino" was brought up in Sharpe's letter of 15 November 1976. The discussions with Alexandre were not clarifying, because she too didn't know precisely whether the I.S. wants to clarify how the decision to go to Torino had been taken, or if there was also a concrete worry of some possible distortion if the Nucleo would concentrate in Torino. I don't know.

Thus, in the meeting what I did say was that the I.S. should clarify whether it wants to go to Torino or to Milano, and I added that my doubts came from the long exploration that Alexandre did with me on my concrete possibilities of getting a job in Milano.

As all comrades know, it was I who insisted that "I have to go to Torino when (whether) Fosco goes there," in my letter to Sharpe of 26 November 1976. Fosco should also remember that we had various informal discussions, in which it was always me who made proposals regarding my move from Genova, not to Milano--as was considered logical for a long time--but to Torino.

In the conversations with Alexandre, we talked also about my early attitude--in the conflict between the I.S. and Fosco--of fears of a purge. She began to convince me that nobody in our Bolshevik organization would think of purging or scapegoating a comrade. But in the meeting of the Nucleo I was still wavering, thus, I said at some point: "It would be easy to scapegoat Fosco--one should simply put the question of Milano in an ultimativistic way, and he of course can't go by now." One could think that I "suggested" or "demanded" from the I.S. precisely that, but in the meeting I had already made clear my position on this question.

In fact, when we were discussing the I.S. motion, Alexandre criticized my not-hard support to it, saying: "Federico, you should not pretend [sic: demand] that the motion vindicate you against Fosco, in order to support it." My reply was that my doubts on the motion--at that point diminishing--were based on the suspicion that there could be an attempt to scapegoat Fosco, and that I would have strongly opposed such an attempt.

But we read in the letter by Fosco--who could employ better his imagination, writing police novels to make money--the following:

"after Federico's statement that the I.S. would have preferred Milano as the center for the Nucleo, and after my reaction, there was a timid retreat by Alexandre and Federico's subsequent reply to Alexandre in which he reaffirmed the seriousness of the commitments taken in the discussion before the meeting. The question was not clarified"!!

As is clear from my position on "Torino or Milano" Alexandre could not make any "concession" to me, but...Fosco is surrounded by

vicious enemies even in his own party!!

On the GBL, it's true that we didn't discuss enough about what to do; however Fosco could have mentioned in his letter what we discussed, and particularly, his own position--"It is wrong to qualify the GBL as 'centrists'"--because it is of course problematic to decide what to do with them, when within the 1st there is disagreement on their characterization, and, furthermore, confusion on the disagreement. For instance, does Fosco agree with Fernando's remark that "in our discussion there are, besides some actual differences, a lot of misunderstandings in the interpretation of the respective positions"?

Regarding the decisions taken by Fosco and Fernando, is it really doubtful the extent to which a decision on them could have been taken at the meeting of the Nucleo. I know that Alexandre's position was that I should in fact intervene more with the GBL in Genova (the second decision), because she discussed that with me informally. I may suppose that she did so also with Fosco, informally. But if this point would have been discussed at the December meeting--and it wasn't--I would have said that I am opposed to increasing my intervention, given the confusion at this point!

Two minor points:

Regarding the pamphlet on Vietnam, I wonder what we should have discussed at the meeting? In Belluno, the 23rd of November, Fosco and I took the final steps to produce the pamphlet: I wrote a letter to Sharpe 3 December 1976, to ask him to intervene, if he had objections to the selection of materials (he had already received a partial information at the summer camp). On 19 December I gave Fosco a box with 40 stencils, with the understanding that he would mimeograph them. It still has to be defined with New York the title and the layout of the cover--which should be prepared by Giulli and me, afterwards--and the pamphlet will come out.

On the question of Roma vs. Milano-Torino mentioned by Fosco, it's useless to discuss it at this stage, but there is a factual mistake in Fosco's letter. Roma is not "as large as Milano and Torino taken together." In 1973 Roma had a population of 3,503,000 and Milano of 3,892,000. (See in "Politica Comunista," the organ of the CC of Avanguardia Operaia, No. 3, June-July 1973, the article "Roma: l'esperienza dei collettivi di quartiere," which gives much other useful information about Roma.)

Finally, regarding the alleged "personal guerrilla warfare" (against "imperialist Fosco," one should ask?) that I should stop waging, it's useful to make two clarifications:

1) I am opposed to this non-proletarian method of struggle--actually, I bear no responsibility for the cover of "Il Programma Trotskysta," do I?--

2) Within the Spartacist tendency--which I think is the embodiment of Bolshevism today--I'm acting and will do so in the future on

the basis of Leninism, to politically prepare myself as a complete Communist, and contribute to the reforging of the Fourth International, waging an uncompromising struggle against any non-revolutionary deviation: from Posadism to Bordigism!

* * * * *

At this point, I wonder why Fosco chose to wage this unrestrained attack on Federico, after having received Sharpe's letter of 20 December 1976. Thus, Fosco has nothing to say on the whole letter, and in particular makes no comment on the "most important need": "a resolution of the tensions between them"; instead he picks up Sharpe's remark on Federico's "apparently incurably freelancing" to center around it his latest crusade.

In this situation, I can reconfirm my complete willingness to overcome the tensions--my jokes are a mild retaliation for the slanders I have been subjected to--but there is obviously no such thing as a "unilateral resolution of the tensions."

It is true that only time--in the framework of concentration--will provide the ultimate test; however, concentration is only a precondition, and a serious effort to overcome the tensions is a crucial need.

The I.S. and the Italian comrades have to discuss these problems quite frankly; otherwise we are building on sand.

Comradely greetings,

Federico

[translation]

FOSCO TO I.S.

12 January 1977

iSt--New York
 Alexandre--LTF
 Federico

Dear comrades,

I will be available for the Paris meeting around 4/5 February. It is possible for me to arrange (through an exchange) to get a Friday off from school, along with Saturday and Sunday (days when I'm free). Unfortunately, it doesn't seem possible for Federico to get any weekend off (neither the 5th/6th nor 12th/13th), due to his recent long leave from work. Not having the meeting when we are all together poses great difficulties. In fact, to meet separately (first one and then the other) poses political problems. I see two alternatives:

1. if it is decided to meet with Federico first and then me, it must be clear that the final decisions will be made with me.
2. if it is decided to meet with me first and then Federico, it must be clear that the discussions with Federico are in line with the decisions made with me.

I think these clarifications are indispensable. Naturally you should set the date for the meeting with me at your convenience. I think it would even be possible to change my arrival to the 11th/12th. At the same time, I am trying to arrange for it to be possible to meet with Federico at least one Friday evening in Milano. Clearly, the fact that the comrade has no free weekends creates further complications in our relations.

This evening I had a long phone conversation with Federico in reference to my letter of 6 January 1977 (my letter of 9 January has not yet arrived in Moneglia). I note that comrade Federico maintains that he has nothing against carrying out the concentration in Torino. The comrade stated that it was essentially Alexandre who expressed doubts about Torino or Milano, and inquired as to Federico's possibilities of finding work in Milano. (However, according to what he said on the phone, it seems easier for Federico to find work in Torino.) Obviously I'm asking Alexandre what the exact meaning of this initiative of hers is.

I'll repeat just what I said to Federico: it seems to me that the harsh tone of the letters is perfectly justified by the difficulty in bringing to light the comrades' exact positions on questions of decisive importance. A "softer" tone would be appropriate only if positions had already been clear and free from ambiguities.

On the question of the GBL. It seems that there is a misunderstanding. I had understood that there was unanimous agreement on two points:

1. that we would begin meeting with the GBL again before the written reply appeared in WV.

2. that Federico would attend the GBL's meetings in Genoa without consulting with me beforehand.

Now it seems, from the explanation Federico gave over the phone, that the second point was brought up at Alexandre's initiative, while Federico was opposed to it (and had told Alexandre so). Indeed, Alexandre asked me about this in our discussion before the beginning of the meeting and I had thought that Federico was in agreement with her. During the meeting, when we talked about our relations with the GBL Federico says he did not intervene because there wasn't enough time, and therefore I thought that everyone was in favor.

As far as I'm concerned, these misunderstandings demonstrate that personal initiatives and silence carried out in very unclear ways make it more difficult to understand the problems and are an obstacle to any form of collaboration. If things actually happened this way, I think it is serious that the European representative of the 1st would allow herself to initiate something toward comrades of a national organization, leaving the national political chairman in the dark (before as well as after).

Still on the GBL: comrade Federico has said that he is writing a critique of the political positions of this organization. As far as I'm concerned, I explained that while I think this work is useful, I think that a project such as this must not fail to deal with the pros and cons of our concrete political activity toward the GBL. A purely theoretical study of a minuscule group with little history frankly seems to me absurd. As far as I'm concerned, it would be at least as useful for comrade Federico to clarify the ways in which he disagrees with how the political chairman of the Nucleo and the I.S. have worked in the past year in their approach toward the GBL (a statement made at the meeting before last in Moneglia), instead of restricting himself to saying that he is in agreement with the I.S. in labeling the GBL "centrist." The label "centrist" can mean very little and above all cannot become the cover for the absence of an active political line in dealing with them. ("Therefore, if you want to make a sport out of the struggle against the right [the Italian socialist centrists--ed. note] as Terracini does, we must say 'Enough!' Otherwise the danger becomes too serious!" Lenin, 1 July 1921).

On the GBL again, I note lastly that it is unbelievable that the fact that I supposedly defined the GBL as "revolutionary not centrist" (Sharpe's letter of 20 December 1976) at the Moneglia meeting was reported to Sharpe. Fortunately, in this case the "speculation" was given the lie in Federico's letter of 1 January 1977, which, regarding this question, speaks of "Fosco's statement that they 'are not organically centrist'." Perhaps it is the same thing for our perspicacious comrades?

I apologize to the comrades in advance for being "pedantic" in wanting almost everything put in writing; however, considering the linguistic difficulties and the geographical distance, a written document is a sure polemical point of reference, aside from the fact that "verba volant et scripta manent" ["words fly and writing re-

mains"]. I would find it useful for example if Alexandre would write more in a "collaborative" way naturally.

On other scattered points:

1. I propose to the I.S. to evaluate the timeliness of having Bart attend the February Paris meeting (my opinion is favorable).

2. A few days ago I sent New York the "Proceedings of the National Assembly of Lotta Continua-Roma 26/27/28 July 1976" and the Proceedings of the "Second Congress of Lotta Continua-Rimini 31 October-4 November 1976" along with other material on the centrist groups. I haven't yet started my article on the centrist groups and frankly I would like to wait until the Congress of AO (mid-February). It seems to me that for the moment, your publishing my letter to WV would be enough.

3. I would like to receive at least five copies of "Stalinism and Trotskyism in Vietnam" by air mail in case we are not able to meet in Paris or if I can't find copies there. The 30 copies that Weller shipped me will not arrive until May. I received a phone call requesting these by Grisolia.

4. I would like to have the list of Italian subscribers to WV for 1977 and in addition a list of the Italian press you receive (Lotta Continua, L'Espresso(?), newspapers that you get in exchange, etc.).

Fraternal greetings,

Fosco

P.S. As I said before, I've enclosed a copy for you of my paycheck for December. I put in my request to transfer to Torino today.

SHARPE TO FEDERICO AND FOSCO

New York
21 January 1977

Fosco
Federico

Dear Comrades,

We have received a number of letters in the past week, in particular Fosco's letter on the December meeting, Federico's reply to it, and Fosco's answer to Federico, as well as Fosco's letter of "instructions" to Bart. Not only do I not have the time to answer all these letters in detail before I leave, but I believe it would be more useful to discuss the points under dispute when all comrades are present, as currently planned. I have also asked London to make sure that Bart comes to the meeting.

Here I merely want to make one point and outline the topics which I feel need to be discussed when we meet. Even making liberal allowance for Latin hyperbole, I find Fosco's letter of 9 January to Federico gratuitously insulting, petty and bureaucratic. Despite the fact that some of the central points (re: moving and reading papers) are true, the tone is such that, given that the actual questions in dispute--the Italy article in WV--are relatively secondary, I find it difficult to interpret the letter other than as an attempt to drive Federico out of our movement. We will resist any such effort, whether conscious or unconscious.

Now concerning the particular point of Federico sending copies of his letters to London. Fosco appears to have forgotten that the November motion, whose conclusions were later adopted by the I.S., explicitly stated (at Fosco's initiative and insistence) that while Bart was in London, "copies of correspondence concerning Italy will be sent to the station London leadership" so that it could keep Bart informed of what was going on in Italy. Therefore, Federico must in fact continue to send copies of correspondence to London, and Fosco must again begin to do so. We will send copies of letters received so far. Ordering Federico not to send copies of his letters was not only a bureaucratic act, but in direct contravention of motion which he had proposed and which had been formally adopted.

As far as I can see, the following topics need to be discussed at our meeting:

1. The Bart question. The current recommendation both of the leading comrades in Station London and comrade Hannah of the SL/ANZ PB, who has recently spent two weeks in London, is that Bart's return to Italy be delayed for at least several months after the projected time, as it would be harmful to the comrade to return to Italy as scheduled.

2. The situation in the Nucleo. Given the failure to concentrate in particular, I believe we must discuss suspending the May motion giving Fosco ultimate authority in the Nucleo, recognizing that the systematic and harmonious collaboration which we hoped would

develop based on the May motion has not come about, and that at the present time neither comrade has a decisive claim to the leadership of a group in Italy. Obviously this means putting the comrades of the Nucleo into receivership to the I.S. until the situation is clarified one way or another. This proposal would have the advantage of bringing an artificial situation in line with reality.

3. The GBL. From Fosco's last letter (and the fact that he showed Fernando--apparently only physically--a draft document on the GBL as a demonstration of "good faith") he would appear to have an attitude toward the GBL analogous to that of the conciliators vis-à-vis the Bolshevik-Menshevik split. (In addition, what was the content of his "discussion" with Fernando and their common appreciation of the WV article?)

4. The situation in Italy generally, the WV article and letters concerning it.

5. Other differences and points of dispute, in particular,
 a) the Russian question
 b) the workers government (call for CP/SP etc. government)
 However, I am a bit doubtful that we will get as far as this point.

The Italy bulletin is now being mimeographed, and you should receive copies by mail before the meeting.

Comradely greetings,

Sharpe

[A French version of this letter was also enclosed, "given the importance of avoiding misunderstandings" as I said in a superscript to the French version.--J.S.]

cc: Alexandre/Lesueur
 London

[translation]

FOSCO TO FEDERICO[Belluno
15 January 1977]

Federico
for information: 1St--New York
Alexandre/LTF
Strachan/Bart

Dear Federico,

While translating the Paris motion (between Sharpe/Alexandre and me) for Circular No. 2, I noticed that the motion, referring to Bart, says that "copies of correspondence concerning Italy will be sent to the Station London leadership...." Unfortunately, I don't find the text of the motion in Italian in my notes (it could be that I simply got Sharpe's English text). However, we discussed the relations with Bart somewhat at the Paris meeting. As I recall, the comrades did not agree to accept Bart's "conditions," namely that he receive all correspondence on Italy and participate in the meetings of the Nucleo. Also there were disagreements on Bart's status: for Sharpe/Alexandre he would become a member of London Station with a perspective of returning to Italy, while for me he would remain a member of the Nucleo attached to London Station for a brief period.

Given the complexity of the problems being discussed and given that I do indeed admit that comrade Bart committed a serious mistake by not staying in London for J.R.'s public meeting (although I think it more than likely that there was an ambiguity/misunderstanding on the question), I gave in somewhat on this specific point, according to which, as I recall, it was agreed that Bart would be informed (with a much more limited sense therefore, which did not include sending copies of all correspondence but rather only a synthesis--the circulars--which would get passed on to him from me via Strachan), while his attendance at meetings of the Nucleo would be agreed to as an exception (the next meeting in Paris should come under this heading).

Now I notice that the motion, while quite restrictive concerning attendance at meetings of the Nucleo, is on the contrary more open than I understood concerning correspondence. So I note that my formal request that you should stop sending your correspondence to London Station (that is, to Bart) is in obvious contradiction and you should therefore ignore it. I apologize to you for this misunderstanding.

On the other hand the proof that I did not consciously want to strike a blow against your legitimate rights lies in the fact that from November to today, I never sent copies of my letters to London (in the coming days I will make up for this by sending a big packet). However, I hope that you agree with me on the necessity of discipline in sending correspondence.

In addition, I received your letter of 11 January 1977. I won't go into the question of your sarcasm, which is truly in bad taste and thus characterizes you more than me. The information contained in

the letter repeated what you said on the phone, namely expressing your positions on some questions of decisive importance for the development of the Nucleo with a clarity which certainly did not come out of the meeting.

Finally, I am obliged to tell you that the figures you gave the I.S. for Roma and Milano are mistaken: you confuse the province with the urban center. I quote the data given by the 1975 Yearbook of the Central Statistical Institute:

	<u>Urban center/ capital</u>	<u>Province</u> (capital plus other centers)
ROMA	<u>2,781,993</u>	3,490,337
MILANO	<u>1,732,000</u>	3,903,685
TORINO	1,167,968	2,287,016

As you can see, Roma is as big as Milano and Torino together. For the non-Italian comrades, I note that the province is an administrative unit much larger than the urban center; its limits may be over 100 km. from the capital city. Some examples: Moneglia is in the province of Genova, Belluno has 34,484 inhabitants as a city, but 221,155 as province. In regard to this I am sending the New York comrades a photocopy of Table 9 of the Statistical Yearbook, with the population of the capital cities and the provinces (the present population refers to the province).

Fraternal greetings,

Fosco

P.S. I am sending directly to London copies of my letters of 6 January and 9 January.

[translation]

FOSCO TO I.S.

[Belluno
30 January 1977]

I.S.--New York
for information: Alexandre/LTF
Lesueur/LTF
Federico
Strachan/Bart

Dear comrades,

Your letter of 21 January is of such seriousness that it demands an immediate and thorough clarification.

You use the latest polemical exchange between Federico and me as a pretext, not to clarify or refocus the questions, but to intervene in authoritarian fashion and...dissolve the Nucleo. The part of pretext in this is barely covered for by your accusation against me of trying to expel Federico from the organization. I certainly have differences with comrade Federico which are not minor (his evaluation of the USSR, put forth polemically toward me: "in an informal discussion, Fosco refused to admit that the working class is the ruling class in the Soviet Union," 1 January 1977. I am very far from that. Faced with these formulations my "refusal" is and will remain total). Certainly for me it is nonsense to say that in this period the PCI fears the Radical Party above all (Federico, 30 November 1976).

But the rather harsh, voluminous correspondence did not prevent us from clarifying the respective positions of the misunderstanding in a long phone conversation; it did not prevent me from sending a letter of apology no sooner had I realized (by myself) that I had formulated an unfounded accusation against the comrade, nor did it prevent a meeting in Genova the evening of 22 January, at which comrade Federico confirmed his firm intention of preventing me from becoming the convenient scapegoat for the I.S. on the Italian situation, while for my part, noting that on the question of Torino/Milano, I had heard Federico's explanation but not that of the I.S. or of the European Representative, I was cautious in formulating any global indictment of the comrade (which I ruled out even in moments of considerably more heated arguments--see the last part of my letter dated 6 September 1976), instead postponing an examination of the specific questions (articles on the Italian situation) to the Paris meeting.

You use this initial polemical exchange (what is more my second letter to Federico, of 9 January, cannot be considered as "Fosco's answer to Federico," for the simple reason that "Federico's reply" dates only from 11 January), which was put in another perspective in later phone conversations and in the Genova meeting, as a pretext for taking the most serious and entirely exceptional measures toward the Nucleo.

But permit me, dear comrades, at this point to ask you one ques-

tion: do you want to attack "latin hyperbole" or do you want to attack the fact that both myself and Federico, although in varying degrees and forms, are not inclined to accept the I.S. positions on Italy 100 percent?

In the original English text of your letter, you say: "obviously this means putting the comrades of the Nucleo into receivership to the I.S. until the situation is clarified one way or another."

In my dictionary "receivership" is translated as "ufficio di curatore fallimentare" [receivership here defined in terms of a bankruptcy]. This means at least two things:

1) that you dissolve or liquidate the Nucleo as a section. Such a proposal was hypothesized, lightmindedly, in my opinion, by comrade Federico in his letter of 1 January 1977: "...otherwise the only possibility is for the I.S. to put the Nucleo into receivership (including, by definition, the possibility of its dissolution, and the international transfers of its membership, à la Israélienne, to be the least euphemistic possible)."

The solution "à la Israélienne" has already demonstrated all of its absurd impulsiveness through the loss of all the comrades in little more than a year. Moreover I categorically refuse any recourse to a solution that in the history of the labor movement has generally been imposed only because of particular difficulties created by fascist, and in certain instances Stalinist, regimes. Moreover, I am not prepared to recognize such a right of decision to an I.S. of three members who can adopt the most hare-brained measures, without ever having to be answerable to an International Congress.

2) that you put into "receivership" not only the Nucleo, but surely "the comrades" as well, means, if I understand correctly, that you take away our rights as full members of the organization. It is almost unbelievable, and under other circumstances I would have thought there was a misunderstanding, on the other hand you are quite careful not to explain precisely the exact scope of this measure. Yet the great care with which you have drawn up this letter ("vue l'importance d'éviter des malentendus"--you write in the French version) and your usual linguistic precision, persuade me to discard the hypothesis of a misformulation and rather to view the question within the framework of the ambiguity that has characterized your behavior toward the Nucleo in the recent period.

Now the act of putting these same comrades into "bankruptcy," not to mention the aplomb with which, with the stroke of a pen, you liquidate a political analysis and balance sheet that, at least to my knowledge, you have never made, constitutes nothing short of a full scale disciplinary measure. This might constitute grounds for an inquiry, but cannot be reduced to a subject for mere discussion in Paris.

Permit me to say, dear comrades, that coming to Paris to find myself faced with a short motion, four lines long, already decided upon in New York, with the only alternative consisting in seeing if

we accept the penance or if we vote against it (and thus pass into the ranks of the sinners), frankly does not interest me.

But there is more. With regard to the meeting with Fernando of the GBL, to which I referred extensively in two letters (6 and 9 January 1977), you slyly insinuate that perhaps I could have done some double-dealing, all of which I myself then presumably stupidly informed you of. What else would the quotation marks that you place around the word discussion have meant (...his "discussion" with Fernando...)?

Why, on the question of the GBL, should you give the primary importance to having shown "apparently only physically" the draft reply for WV, regarding which I myself told you that it had been earlier approved at the summer camp and which therefore the GBL had been told about. You yourselves have always judged the draft to be not politically incorrect but only insufficient, and besides I allowed comrade Fernando no possibility of making use of it politically, and--eight months later--you bear the main responsibility for its not being published (except on the origins themselves of the episode).

What could be the point behind this bureaucratic maneuver if not of avoiding having to deal correctly and straightforwardly with this question on its merits, which is that I have the perspective (adopting a concrete united front tactic) that the GBL could be integrated into a Trotskyist organization, while in fact you consider that it is to be destroyed, simply by slamming the door in its face, relying above all on the weight of a greater international organizational presence so as possibly to win a pair of demoralized militants in the future?

In Italy, this tactic has already demonstrated its bankruptcy: not only did we not gain anything from the GBL, but not even from the crises of Il Soviet or Falcemartello either. The Nucleo--and myself in the first place as the political chairman--no doubt share in the responsibility for this failure, but it is also true that when I began to recognize the difficulties, and the need for a greater elaboration of our tactical line and a more precise definition of the tactical/strategical contents with which to verify the convergence with political formations that were programmatically homogeneous with us, you were only able to distort the positions and resort to the easy name calling of menshevik, conciliator, etc.; names which are rich in political content of an entirely different sort, but which are gutted in your hands to become instruments for a stupid, sectarian and verbose aggressiveness.

On the other hand, these tactical questions have come up not only in the Italian situation, but in others as well, and with the OTR in particular.

Why didn't the I.S. ever consider using the national leaderships to open an international debate in Internal Bulletins on relations with the GBL in Italy, with our faction and with the Spartacusbund in Germany, with the OTR in France, with the RCG in England, and with the Ergatiki Protoporia in Greece (assuming that relations have

reached a sufficient level of intensity) and, one would hope, a first balance sheet of our relations with Samarakkody?

Why doesn't the I.S. find a way, within its financial resources, to organize an International Conference at which these tactical-strategical questions, written and documented in advance, would be one of the points on the agenda?

In conclusion, dear comrades, even with all the sadness of the prospect of separation from an organization to which I dedicated nearly two years of work, and in which I had placed serious hopes, I'm afraid that your letter opens up a process leading toward an organizational break. The problems and misunderstandings that separate us have become so acute and bitter that it is inconceivable that a chitchat would be enough to resolve them.

In the first place there is a series of non-negotiable conditions concerning the immediate and total retraction of any insinuation of disloyal collaboration with the GBL and the reintegration of full rights to the Nucleo and the comrades. (I care little, if at all, about the May motion, as I have already pointed out when I said that in light of disagreements concerning tactics I was ready to step down as political leader of the Nucleo, leaving the task to Federico, given that you recognized a convergence of positions with those of the comrade.)

But beyond these minimal, but essential questions there are the no longer postponable questions of relations between a sympathizing section and the I.S.; the concrete practice of the right to criticize in the organization that must be guaranteed in its concrete aspects (documentation, translations, expenses, etc.); the protection of members on the basis of at least a draft of an international statute, whose existence I have been unaware of up to now.

On other occasions, I have heard comrades from other European sections raise the same questions; I did not hear the answers, and if these were given, this took place in restricted circles.

These questions are too essential and important to be resolved verbally. At this point there is little room for games of diplomatic skill; these questions must be dealt with in front of the entire organization, written and distributed through International Internal Bulletins.

Nevertheless the maneuvers which you have resorted to in the recent period, which culminated in the improper attack by J.R., and in the ambiguity of formally maintaining the concentration of the Nucleo in Torino (about which I fully agree with you), while unknown to me, you push Federico toward Milano, make me pessimistic about your real political desire to profit from this recent, limited, but linear crack that remains open.

As to the general scope of the problems confronted, this letter is also an appeal to comrades who are "depressed" at various levels, in the LTF, the TLD, and surely, although very few people know about

them, the SL/USA, Station London and the SL/ANZ.

Not only will the liquidation of the Nucleo and my possible expulsion from the iSt (however it may occur) eliminate a section and a comrade (each of us as communists must take a responsible position on this fact, however little importance I and the Nucleo may have*), but this will not diminish their "depression" and above all will constitute a lost occasion to accomplish even the smallest step forward to strengthen the iSt in its struggle for the rebirth of the Fourth International.

Therefore, I hope, dear comrades, that you should like to promptly send this letter to comrades of the various sections of the iSt.

Trotskyist greetings,

Fosco, NSd'I

Belluno, 30.1.77

*The original translation read "however little we have in common." A letter from comrade Fosco called our attention to the fact that this is misleading. He states: "Now, 'however little we have in common' distorts the meaning of 'per quanto poca cosa entrambi siamo,' since your translation suggests that there is little in common between me and the sections of the iSt while my phrase means 'however little importance I and the Nucleo may have.' Please circulate this correction."

SHARPE TO FOSCO

Paris
5 February 1977

Fosco,
Federico

Dear Comrades,

We received Fosco's letter of 30 January 1977. We will translate and circulate it from New York, although not before I can check the translation when I return to N.Y., that is, about February 20. I will of course reply to Fosco's letter, but given the production of a new French Spartacist and another internal bulletin (concerning the discussion with Samarakkody) immediately on my return, it will undoubtedly be at least several weeks before I have time to answer it.

As a result of discussions between myself, Alexandre, Lesueur and Federico, we have agreed to recommend that the I.S. pass a motion along the following lines:

"Comrade Fosco has been unable and unwilling to establish a collaborative relation with comrade Federico, in line with the spirit and the letter of the May motions. The I.S. further notes that comrade Fosco's refusal to meet with comrades Federico and Bart, together with comrades Sharpe, Alexandre, and Lesueur in Paris, represents a central abdication of a leadership role in the Nucleo. Given comrade Fosco's refusal to come to Paris, the I.S. can consider him only as a rank-and-file member of the iSt. "At the present time, therefore, neither comrade Fosco nor comrade Federico are capable of playing a clear leadership role in Italy. The I.S. therefore suspends the May motion giving comrade Fosco ultimate authority in the Nucleo. At the present time both comrades in Italy are members-at-large of the iSt and the NSd'I is functionally in receivership to the I.S. This means that decisions concerning the comrades' intervention in the Italian left, and against the GBL in particular, will be made by the I.S."

In addition, given that there is no leadership in what formally remains the Nucleo vis-à-vis other groups, both comrades must send copies of all correspondence with contacts; other groups, etc. in Italy to New York as well as to each other. Please send us also all the current contact addresses that you have.

Finally, we agreed to approach the GBL for some kind of joint meeting, forum, debate, discussion, etc. In light of Fosco's stated reluctance to debate Fernando of the GBL, we have charged comrade Federico with arranging and conducting such a meeting or debate. Hopefully you will be able to attend the meeting when a date is set.

Comrade Federico has seen this letter and will be taking his copy back to Italy with him from Paris.

Comradely greetings,
Sharpe

cc: Paris
London
I.S.

SHARPE TO FOSCO

New York
18 March 1977

Dear Comrade Fosco,

We mailed the translation of your letter of 30 January, together with a copy of my letter from Paris of 5 February, to all sections on 24 February (one week after my return from Europe). Your refusal to come to Paris to meet with myself and Comrade Alexandre, I.S. European representative, consistent as it is with the tone and content of your letter, obliges us to note the serious questions raised concerning your continued membership in the international Spartacist tendency. In particular, your refusal to take part in the discussion projected for Paris invalidates all your protestations concerning the need for guaranteeing the right of discussion within the iSt, since, as you put it in your letter, you are "not interested" in fulfilling the elementary duty of any serious comrade to conduct such a discussion. In addition, as is amply demonstrated by your statement that you "are not prepared to recognize such a right of decision [concerning the Nucleo] to an I.S. of three members who can adopt the most hare-brained measures, without ever having to be answerable to an International Congress," you have a federalist conception of an international, since you do not "recognize the right" of the I.S. to make political and organizational decisions whenever you happen to object to them! Thus our reply to the political points you raise or which are implied by your letter must necessarily be placed under a question mark: are you willing to state unambiguously that you will uphold the line of the organization to all those outside it? Do you intend to respect the discipline and carry out the decisions of the iSt? Political debate in the iSt takes place in the context of a common Leninist commitment to actively building our international organization. We are not so naive as to be drawn into a "political" debate over the positions you profess if these are a smokescreen for indiscipline.

"Receivership"

What we originally considered might be misconceptions or misunderstandings on the organization question have in fact been emerging for at least six months (21 January) as systematic differences and your organizational pique at the fact that the iSt leadership demands the systematic and disciplined implementation of the decisions it arrives at after full discussion. These differences and resentments have frequently been expressed over apparently secondary areas. A good example is the question of receivership.

When the Nucleo was formed in the summer of 1975, we did so with the projection that the comrades would concentrate in a central city in the industrial triangle, that there would be reinforcement, recruitment, publication of literature, etc. That is, that the Nucleo would take on an organizational reality. However, especially in the absence of the necessary concentration (and, if I understand correctly, there was a period of about 10 days in August 1976 when it would still have been possible to move to Torino in September 1976), the Nucleo as such has no national center and therefore no real existence.

You wax indignant about the possibility of a liquidation "à la israélienne." But in a tendency as small and weak as ours, it can well happen that for one reason or another a national group is or becomes nonviable. At that point, we have a responsibility to consider a variety of possible solutions, one of which is liquidating--at least temporarily--that group and dispersing its membership so that their talents may more productively be put to use in the construction of an international party. Thus we reject the way in which you pose the question. But you are inventing a straw man when you suggest that we ever envisaged moving all the comrades in Italy permanently to other countries (liquidation "à la israélienne"). We did (and still do) plan to send Federico to England or the U.S. for a period of time to integrate him fully into the tendency.

You have by now received (and presumably read) enough of our internal material to know that receivership does not involve "taking away [your] rights as full members of the organization." It does mean that the Nucleo does not have the power to make policy decisions on its own, any more than locals or fractions which are in receivership do. And the "rights" that you claim have no foundation in the first place. Contact with members of opponent organizations by our comrades must always be under the control of the appropriate local, national, or in this case international body. While this does not mean that the I.S. simply imposes its opinions, it does mean that it retains ultimate political authority to make decisions. As members at large of the iSt, the rights of the Italian comrades are a straightforward extension of those defined in our organization's rules: "Members-at-large shall be directly responsible to the PB for the conduct of their political work." The comrades in Italy become directly responsible to the I.S. for the conduct of their political work. They continue to have full rights to participation in the internal political life of the iSt, as you certainly know.

Where the CC (or in this case the I.S.) concludes that a local or fraction is incapable of performing adequately and responsibly within the norms of the iSt, or of publicly upholding its line, it may change the subordinate body's status from that of a full local to an organizing committee, or put fractions into receivership. The members of these groups retain all their rights as individual members, but the groups as such are directly responsible to the appropriate body and cannot take significant decisions without prior consultation and approval. While we have in practice granted somewhat more latitude to sympathizing sections developing toward full section capacity, the same political methodology applies here, and in fact this is not the first time a sympathizing section has been put into receivership. Putting a subordinate body into receivership is not an arbitrary act: it is based on much historically evolved prior and tested practice within our tendency. You and Federico, as individuals, retain all the rights of, say, an iSt comrade in Sweden.

Another example of an apparently inexplicable misunderstanding is your question concerning the relation of a sympathizing section to the iSt--a question we have already dealt with at length: see my letter of 14 April 1976, printed in the 70-page internal bulletin devoted essentially to the problems you have raised about Italy. This is

fundamentally a simple question, although its application can be rather complex in practice. Put very simply, a sympathizing section is a national group which has not yet sufficiently demonstrated organizational and political stability, usually through stabilizing a regular paper and consolidating a leadership collective. As a sympathizing group develops politically, and demonstrates its ability to put the line of the iSt into practice on its own national terrain, it moves toward becoming a full section. A crucial part of the task of the I.S. is the training of sympathizing groups through sustained political collaboration and consultation. Our sympathizing sections have been extremely valuable in the development of the iSt--witness the history of the TLD and the development of the LTF, which is still a sympathizing section. As we have pointed out in previous letters, the high level of consultation between the I.S. and sympathizing sections is aimed both at the transformation of those sections into full sections, and the familiarizing of the I.S. and other IEC members with sometimes very different national situations. As a general rule of the thumb, one can say that while we always try to consult extensively with sympathizing groups, the more responsible and politically stable a group shows itself to be, the more willing we are to trust its judgment concerning points about which we might otherwise have questions.

We stand by our record of consultation and collaboration with our sympathizing groups. A crucial aspect of this collaboration has been the frequent travel of both U.S. and European comrades to sections other than their own. Your trip to North America was an example. We view this as a crucial part of the development of leading cadre, the forging of national sections and the crystallization of an authoritative international leadership.

Our efforts at consultation and collaboration with the Nucleo have been similarly extensive. In addition to your trip to North America and your presence at two summer camps, at which you had completely free access to our international leadership, we have sent international delegations to Italy seven times in the 22 months since we first began a correspondence. In addition, we have brought you to Paris three times for crucial meetings: in November 1975--at which you played a significant role in political discussion with the German comrades, in May 1976 for extensive meetings of the European leaderships, and in November 1976, where you sat in on meetings with the OTR. In addition, we placed you on the Commission on Canada established at the 1976 summer camp. The imputation that you have not been able to exercise full membership rights is particularly egregious in your own case, since we have gone to considerable trouble and expense to involve you in important decision-making processes, with the aim of familiarizing you with work outside Italy and assuring that your often divergent views and style could be represented. You, however, have systematically drawn back and refused to take an active part in this crucial process at most international meetings. Only after consistent pressure have you agreed to informal dinner discussions or gatherings with leading European and other IEC comrades. Your isolation has been overwhelmingly self-imposed. Finally, you recently refused to come to Paris to consult with the I.S. European representative and the iSt secretary about Italy,

despite the fact that we phoned you twice, once from New York and once from Paris, to urge you to change your mind. This is flatly impermissible.

Relations with the GBL

Another issue which is of secondary importance when seen in the overall context of your letter, is nevertheless symptomatic of what it reveals of your political positions. For the first time in the almost two years of our contact with the GBL you articulate a clear difference concerning our approach to them. Namely, you consider that the GBL "could be integrated into a Trotskyist organization." In the past, however, you have said that you agreed with our approach and method of contacting them. Now, from the fact that you counterpose your conception of this process to ours, we must conclude that you mean the GBL can be integrated into the 1st as it currently is, or at best with a gradual evolution of its present political positions--whereas we feel it must be broken from central positions as a precondition to even considering the question of fusion. Clearly, this is not a minor difference simply with regard to the GBL, since you explicitly generalize it to include our relations (or non-relations) with Il Soviet and Falcemartello as well. That is, you generalize it to the point of rejecting our conception of revolutionary regroupment based on firm programmatic agreement.

This is clearest in the cases of Il Soviet and Falcemartello. Both of these groups were politically quite distant from us. I would remind you of your evaluation of Corrado ("his tendency to deception"; "his bombastic and prattling character") in your report of 11 October 1975, in which you note that the "Coordinating Committee" (which publishes Falcemartello) "has no Trotskyist basis," is not sure of the class nature of the USSR, reproduces a "bad copy of Mandel's methodology" and all this "in the tone of a discussion club." At that time, you noted that you, Lesueur and Black "were in full agreement" on this evaluation. Il Soviet, although in motion at that time, never broke from Bordigism in relation to the nature of the Soviet state and the Transitional Program, which it considers rightist (i.e., two crucial programmatic questions).

In February 1976, after several meetings with the GBL, you stated your agreement with our method and manner of proceeding toward them. Now, however, you claim that the GBL, with its position on voting for the workers parties in a popular front and support to petty-bourgeois nationalist groups (to name only the two most obvious differences) could be "integrated" into the 1st "by adopting a concrete united front tactic." What has caused you to change your mind and what does this mean politically?

In our view it means two things. First, possibly under the pressure of the situation in Italy, you have substituted the criteria of empirical success for that of principled programmatic unity. Because we have not succeeded in bringing about a regroupment in several cases--where, given the political differences, success was very unlikely in any event--you conclude that the general political approach is incorrect. You must therefore attempt to revise your view

of events ex post facto. This is rank empiricism.

Second, the political conception of the organization which would result from the "integration" of these various groups is, as you put it, a "united front." The Italian group of the 1st would then include state capitalists who reject the Transitional Program as being opportunist and rightist (Il Soviet); dilettantes who want to build a "discussion club" and profess agnosticism on the Leninist conception of the party and the Transitional Program (Falcemartello); would-be "orthodox" Trotskyists who, however, capitulate to the popular front and to petty-bourgeois nationalism (the GBL), and yourself and Federico. This is a series of groupings with counterposed programs on crucial issues of the class struggle: it is not even a united front, it is a rotten bloc! If this is your idea of a Leninist, democratic-centralist party which breaks from the federalism of the Second International, it is certainly not ours!

An Italian group dominated by the politics of the ex-GBL could have only two possible relations to an I.S.: either the I.S. would have to directly oversee in minute detail everything it published and did, since on most important issues--elections, approach to Lotta Continua, "mass agitational" papers, no doubt trade-union work, etc., etc.--it would be counterposed to the policies and practice of the 1st; or, we would have a federalist structure where, like the USec, we would let the GBL be "independent" and "national exceptionalist." We would never permit either of these solutions, and the first has the additional (though secondary) disadvantage that it would never work even if we were foolish enough to attempt it. Both these "solutions" would be an open invitation to a split at the first occasion. Despite the GBL's protestations, I find it difficult to imagine that in fact they would subordinate their line in practice to ours--and we consequently would have to expect a split over the first major question that arose. In this sense, we would simply be repeating in a slightly different form the disastrous fusion in Italy with a Bordighist group after World War II, which resulted in the expulsion of the Italian section by the Second World Congress of the Fourth International in 1948 and which was probably at least partly responsible for the rise of Livio Maitan.

I can see you now, indignantly protesting that this is not what you mean, and that I am distorting (no doubt demagogically) what you say. But am I? What specific issues would we form a "united front" with the GBL on? Not the Italian elections, where they called for a vote for Democrazia Proletaria. Not the national question, where they support the MPLA in Angola from the beginning or the "Moslem-left" alliance in Lebanon. Not on an appeal to dissidents in Lotta Continua to form faction within it to "reform" it. Not university work, where they want to bring out a "mass agitational" paper. In fact, the "united front" you propose would be merely a left version of the Democrazia Proletaria bloc, or the LCR-LO-OCT electoral bloc in France. Any possible "united front" with the GBL would in fact be at best a propaganda bloc around a minimum basis of "spreading orthodox Trotskyism," and we oppose such blocs. On the concrete, immediate programmatic questions facing Italian Trotskyists, we do

not have any principled basis for common work with the GBL.

The same criticism holds for your other "alternative" --an "international conference" to discuss the political differences with various groups. The groups you propose are not interchangeable, however. We have already fused with the Trotskyist Faction of the Spartacusbund, who from the beginning felt they had essential programmatic agreement with us. We are formally politically very close to the OTR: what we need to do is to test their organizational practice and see whether they can make the leap from mass agitational leaders to a hard propaganda group. Our relations with Samarakkody's RWP are cordial but distant and unlikely to change; the same is true of the Greek Ergatiki Protoporia. As for the GBL...

We do in fact extensively involve the national leaderships in discussions with groups we are in contact with: witness the OTR's presence at last year's summer camp and numerous meetings with them involving a number of leading European cadre; witness the fact that the Greek group has agreed to send representatives to this year's summer camp; witness the fact that we arranged extensive meetings between our European membership and the RWP delegation in 1974; etc., etc. However, the conference you seem to be proposing would in no way be qualitatively different from the international confabs of Lutte Ouvrière or the "Necessary International Initiative" of the Spartacusbund and Massari. What you are proposing would inevitably be a left version of those blocs. What we propose is something qualitatively different: hard discussions to reach formal programmatic agreement. This of course includes a period of time during which the different organizations engage in united fronts, common work on specific questions, and much discussion and testing in practice by both sides of each other. Normally, this process involves a political break with the line and past practices of the groups involved (and whatever organizational consequences that entails with respect to the previous membership). Only after this process takes place is it really possible--given the present state of our tendency--to fully integrate groups or individuals into the iSt.

The history of the Nucleo is a case in point. Only because we thought there was programmatic agreement on central issues did we feel we could integrate you into the iSt on the assumption that "secondary" issues could be resolved. As it turns out, we were overly optimistic. We feel that the experience of the Nucleo has taught us something.

Thus in our view, and despite your fervent avowals of stringent democratic-centralist views, the political positions which underlie your approach to the GBL and your proposal for separate and parallel "international" discussions in given national sections in preparation for an international conference, are in fact federalist. I do not believe that what separates us at this point are simply "problems and misunderstandings"--for however "acute and bitter" those might be, we could hope to resolve them if we had basic programmatic unity--but rather your rejection of the importance of programmatic unity in the process of regroupment and the construction of a truly homogeneous, democratic-centralist, international Trotskyist party.

In Struggle for a Proletarian Party, Comrade Cannon incisively contrasted a principled orientation and attitude toward the question of programmatic homogeneity with an approach typical of the GBL--as well as of the course you seem to be proposing vis-à-vis the GBL:

"Marxists always begin with the program. They rally supporters around the program and educate them in its meaning in the process of the struggle. The political victories of the Marxists are always in the first place victories for their program. The organizational phase of the victory in every case, from the election of a definite slate of candidates in a party faction fight up to and including the seizure of power in an armed struggle, always has one and the same significance: to provide the means and the instrument for carrying out the political program. Marxist politics is principled politics. This explains, among other things, the homogeneity of the Marxist formation, regardless of whether it is a faction in a party on a small scale, or a full-fledged and fully developed party directly facing the parties of the class enemy. It is this homogeneity of the Marxist organization which makes possible its firm discipline, its centralization and its striking power. "Petty-bourgeois politics is always a hodge-podge. It never attains to a fully developed and consistent program. Every petty-bourgeois formation, whether faction or independent party, has this characteristic feature. It fights at best for partial aims, and slurs over contradictions and differences within its ranks in order to preserve a formal unity. Petty-bourgeois groupings struggle, not in the name of great principles, but for organizational objectives. To this end, they almost invariably unite people of different views and tendencies, and subordinate the clarification of their differences to success in the organizational struggle. This explains their lack of internal discipline, and their aversion to centralism which is incompatible with a heterogeneous political composition. This determines their tendency to fall apart in the course of a severe struggle, or soon after it, even though they may have gained a momentary organizational victory."

If it is true that virtually the only thing by or about Cannon you have read is Banda's pamphlet, I would strongly recommend that you remedy your ignorance on this subject.

Once Again: the Organization Question

In the past, we have hesitated--perhaps too much--to draw conclusions this sharply. Now, however, you oblige us to do so. Running through your letter there is an explanation for your increasing suspicions of and stridency toward the I.S. You state in your letter that you are "not prepared to recognize such a right of decision [concerning the Nucleo] to an I.S. of three members..." You also state that you are "frankly not interested" in coming to Paris--even after repeated urging--to discuss your differences with the I.S. representative in Europe, myself and the other Italian comrades.

There is only one way to interpret your comments: that you are setting yourself up as an independent entity at least equal in authority to the I.S., and thereby denying the very concept of centralized political responsibility and authority in the I.S. This is federalism, the real version of the "united front tactic" you want to apply to the GBL.

And yet, after making a series of comments which clearly demonstrate a federalist conception (and therefore implicitly "freedom of criticism" to the outside) you become self-righteously indignant when we wonder what the exact content of your discussion with Fernando of the GBL was! The technique of provoking us, and then responding to our anger with professions of outraged innocence may be effective with your students, but it will not wash with us. You yourself raise the question of discipline in relation to the GBL when you state in your letter to Federico of 9 January:

"when I met Fernando, I spoke with him for a few minutes about the Workers Vanguard article and my letter [to WV], on this question our opinion coincided: the content of the article was doubtless not as bad as the headline."

From this statement, it follows (1) that you told Fernando--a leading member of the GBL executive--about your internal criticisms of the article, i.e., your letter to WV and (2) that you were prepared to discuss with Fernando a joint appreciation of a WV article about which you had expressed serious reservations. On the face of it, this would be a breach of discipline. If you did not state any of your differences with the article to Fernando, but rather defended the article; if you did not let Fernando read the draft reply to the GBL or communicate to him the contents of your letter to WV, we would be happy to receive an explicit statement to that effect. Since you do not make such a statement in your letter, what is the rest of your argumentation (it's all the I.S.'s fault) supposed to prove? You have no reason to become indignant and protest your innocence, since your letter gives clear cause for suspicion.

You attempt to justify your refusal to come to Paris politically by raising a whole series of what amount to accusations of bureaucratism against the I.S. Thus you say that the I.S. bears the major responsibility for whatever you may have discussed with Fernando (what did you discuss with him?), since we delayed publishing the reply to the GBL. There is also the adjacent implication that we did so not because the overwhelming workload of leading comrades has delayed finishing the reply, but because we supposedly wanted to slam the door in the face of the GBL. You further imply that the I.S. is composed of bureaucratic authoritarians who present more or less incomprehensible motions ex nihilo, refusing to allow discussion on them. You accuse the I.S. either of bureaucratic suppression of crucial information in relation to a "draft of an international statute, whose existence I have been unaware of up to now" (I will take up the question of statutes below) or of bureaucratically refusing to formulate draft statutes. You accuse the I.S. of discussing basic political questions only "in restricted circles" (i.e., of maliciously excluding you from the discussion), and implicitly of

concealing the existence and identity of oppositionists (since "very few know of them") by insisting that "these questions must be dealt with in front of the entire organization."

Now we would be the first to say--and have repeatedly said--that there have been weaknesses in the functioning of the I.S., due largely to lack of human resources. Again, you should reread the discussion on this subject in the 70-page International Discussion Bulletin on Italy. We have, from the beginning, recognized that the organizational structure of the iSt is an interim structure which is necessitated by the fact that, given our small size and lack of a sufficient number of full sections, we are not in a position to hold a delegated conference to found the International Trotskyist League and elect an IEC, and that therefore the International Secretariat is elected by the present IEC, composed of the Central Committee members of the full sections. Within our present structure, the fullest political accountability exists; of course the I.S. can be recalled by the IEC at any time. Currently, some aspects of the full-fledged statutes of the SL/U.S., adopted in 1969, have been superseded by our organizational development and hence are now inadequate. The statutes of our Australian section are currently the most advanced in the iSt.

On the other hand, the iSt as a whole is still striving to function at the level projected in the organizational regulations adopted at our foundation in 1974 and those which have subsequently been adopted. It is completely false to say that there are no international statutes. However, given our small size and weakness--as well as the fact that our current regulations are more advanced than our actual organizational development--it would be pretentious, as well as risking mistakes in hypothetically specifying procedures which we have no way of testing in practice--to attempt to suck full-fledged statutes out of our thumb at this time. We, however, also have a tradition in the statutes and practices of the sections of the iSt, in particular the SL/U.S., and in the statutes and best practices of the early Comintern and the Fourth International.

But rather than acknowledging our evident present weaknesses, and therefore the overwhelming necessity for what we clearly state are interim organizational regulations, in the purest Bordigist tradition, you demand all or nothing. Your purpose is evidently to backhandedly challenge our established norms and procedures so that you may flaunt the elementary norms and duties of membership. Do you hope to blackmail us into acquiescing to bad faith and indiscipline by raising a cry of "bureaucratism" and "arbitrariness" because we do not have a blueprint for some of the precise mechanisms of international regulation (some of which were far from clear to Lenin's Comintern)? We have been scrupulous in safeguarding our internal democracy--we have no finished "statutes" setting out how many pages per month of translations we will produce of internal bulletins, irrespective of whether we have 500 supporters or 5,000, but we have a proven record of having translated and circulated many dozens of pages of your arguments and criticisms. Do not think that we will be less scrupulous in safeguarding our discipline and centralism.

Finding conveniently that perfection is lacking, you present an

ultimatum to the I.S.: "a series of non-negotiable conditions concerning the immediate and total retraction of any insinuation of disloyal collaboration with the GBL and the reintegration of full rights to the Nucleo and the comrades." Beyond this, you raise a series of organizational questions, essentially centered on protecting the rights of minorities. From your appeal to supposedly "depressed" elements, you clearly are toying with the idea of a faction fight. But can you present any evidence that the SL or the iSt has in the past suppressed oppositionists? On the contrary, it has been the leadership which has repeatedly taken the initiative of a political discussion. You, on the other hand, refuse to come to Paris to present your views to the leadership, while trying to lay the groundwork for attempting to present yourself to whatever "depressed" elements you can find as the guardian of iSt democracy solicitous of "guarantees" of your rights.

Writing concerning "The Question of the Party Regime," Cannon pointed out:

"Reversing the political method of the Marxists, who always put the political questions first and subordinate the organization questions to them, our petty-bourgeois opposition, like every other petty-bourgeois group, has devoted the main burden of its arguments to a criticism of the party regime, that is, the leadership and its 'method' of leading the party..."

"Such questions, in the best case, are secondary in importance to the theoretical and political issues in dispute and had to be subordinated to them in the discussion. It would have been absurd for us, in the early stages of the discussion, to take time out to answer these trivia."

--Struggle for a Proletarian Party

So, when faced with this presumably bureaucratic Cannonite regime, your solution is to set yourself up as the political authority which can accept or reject the decisions of the I.S.--which in turn, is supposed to accept your "non-negotiable conditions." In a sense, of course, any member has the right to do this--we are, after all, a voluntary organization--but the option of rejecting out of hand, as you do, not merely the decisions of the leading bodies of the organization, but even their right to make decisions, is incompatible with membership in the organization. Your refusal to come to Paris, and a number of statements in your letter--referred to above--mean that you have yourself called your membership into question. You even explicitly refer to "a process leading toward an organizational break." This is one of the central reasons why the I.S. has put the Nucleo into receivership. On consultation, the other members of the I.S. accept the motion drafted in Paris, noting additionally that in this case "receivership" means that the Nucleo as an entity is dissolved and that direct political authority and responsibility for its members reverts to the I.S., and that you yourself have called into question whether you consider yourself an active and loyal member of the iSt.

In my letter of 5 February 1977 from Paris, I requested that you

send all current contact addresses you have to New York. To date, we have not received them. In addition to those addresses, you must also send us copies of all correspondence you have had with contacts which we do not already have. Not to send them would be a clear sign of your refusal to respect the discipline of the organization. We also require from you a clear statement that you are willing to respect the discipline, uphold the line, and carry out the decisions of the organization to all those outside it. Unless you are able to make such an elementary "guarantee" of your membership, we may certainly continue to circulate your views within the tendency, as we have in the past, for the information of our comrades, but you will have no claim whatsoever on the democracy of the iSt. Members of the iSt have real and full rights; those rights belong to its members.

Comradely greetings,

John Sharpe
Interim Secretary, iSt

cc: Alexandre
LTF, London, Berlin,
Genova, Stockholm, Toronto,
Vancouver, Sydney, Melbourne,
Chicago, Bay Area

TELEGRAM TO FOSCO

11 April 1977
3:30 p.m.

YOUR UNRESOLVED STATUS CANNOT CONTINUE LONG. REQUIRE
IMMEDIATE AND CLEAR REPLY TO MY LETTER OF 18 MARCH.

--SHARPE

[translation]

FOSCO TO I.S.

Belluno
14 April 1977

I.S. of the iSt--New York
for information: Alexandre/Lesueur--Paris
Federico

Dear comrades,

I am replying to your telegram of the 12th current, which demanded an "immediate and clear reply."

Comrade Sharpe's letter of 18 March is but a frenzied cover for the difficult shape the organization is in and also expresses the total vacuum of I.S. perspectives in Italy. This is confirmed by the "incidents" over the last two articles on Italy (WV 131 and YSp 53). You are zigzagging, comrades, between spontaneism and tailism vis-à-vis the autonomos and the Metropolitan Indians. It seems to me that it would be truly difficult to detect a substantial difference between these positions appearing in our press and the Pabloites' capitulation to the "New Mass Vanguard." As I said on the telephone to Lewis, I was not in a position to make a statement on Federico's degree of capitulation to the Metropolitan Indians, insofar as I was only very partially informed about the discussion. In fact, for several weeks comrade Federico stopped sending me copies of the correspondence (a photocopy of Federico's letter of 20 March--a real deviation for anyone claiming to be a Trotskyist--was received here from New York after the phone call). In addition, only today did I receive Federico's letter of 23 March, postmarked from Genova however on 8 April (!). This demonstrates on the one hand the violations of the conditions contained in Sharpe's letter of 5 February 1977 and on the other hand it could be--only the future will determine the degree of seriousness--a symptom of second thoughts concerning the iSt's work in Italy. But similarly I did not have and have not yet received the letter of 9 March, probably from Lesueur (who, if I understand correctly, has decided to appropriate the political materials which Bart acquired in London with my money and

which were entrusted to him until February). I have thus given my agreement in general to Lewis' cautious orientation, but certainly caution (besides being decidedly insufficient) cannot be a substitute for an analysis of the relationships between classes and of the state of political forces which is distorted and virtually non-existent.

However, these observations are aimed more at illustrating the state of disintegration and degeneration into which the I.S. has thrown our work in Italy than at giving a decisive form to the disagreements (I have much more serious differences with J.R.'s americano-centrist orientation, cf. WV No. 143).

This month's time (which has turned into two and a half months, given that my previous letter waited for over a month and a half for an answer) has thus been useful both for thinking over the extent of our differences, and for checking the democracy of the organization and the concrete attitude of the comrades. At the end of this period, I feel it is again appropriate to demonstrate the desire to keep the door ajar ["uno spiraglio aperta," lit: a peep-hole open] for collaboration, so as to allow clarification concerning the iSt's real orientation for work in Italy and concerning the realization of minimum democratic conditions which might permit both pursuing the discussion and concrete collaborative action. In this framework, to answer comrade Sharpe's precise questions (and put off refuting the numerous distortions and misunderstandings with which his letter is overflowing and which are obvious even to a blind man until the discussion can be further pursued), I declare, without imposing any preconceived conditions, that I accept the discipline of the organization, that I formally respect the authority of the three members of the I.S., that I defend the line of the organization to the outside.

* * * * *

In the cautiously trusting expectation that you want to clarify in the near future your general analysis and your orientation toward political tasks in Italy, I think it appropriate to bring to your attention what my current projects are:

a) At the level of the open confrontation with you within the organization, I am working on a contribution to the orientation of the iSt and in particular on its activity in Italy, which can be included as preparatory material for the international conference of the iSt referred to in point 7 of the "Declaration for Organizing an International Trotskyist Tendency" (in this document, holding an international conference of the iSt is in no way tied to the formation of a Trotskyist League). Although I cannot guarantee that this document will be ready in a short time, both due to the complexity of the problems and due to the difficulties of reading materials in English, I hereby request the right to include this contribution in the discussion materials of the National Conferences of the sections of the iSt.

b) At the level of collaboration, in a possible perspective of restarting activity in Italy (which should be discussed with you) I am preparing a pamphlet on the question of relations between Bordiga-Gramsci and the formation of a Trotskyist organization in Italy. This

is an area toward which Massari is clearly moving, with a most opportunistic orientation. The documents section is already ready to be mimeographed, everything should be ready by June, working with a certain diligence. Naturally, the material will first be reviewed by you and circulated internally.

* * * * *

I am also sending you the addresses of Italian contacts which you request, noting that they are, except in a few cases which you already know about, merely literature requests, at least six months old--for the most part going on a year since the period immediately following the publication of Italian Spartacist No. 1.

Trotskyist greetings,

Fosco

P.S. I think it appropriate that the present letter be sent both to all sections and to the comrades of the organization who received my previous letter. The fact that this requires an organizational effort notwithstanding (diminished however by the extreme infrequency of the correspondence). I think that this practice of circulating letters is indispensable until we arrive at a satisfactory settlement of our relations.

SHARPE TO FOSCO

New York
26 April 1977

Fosco
Italy

Dear Comrade Fosco,

Concerning your letter of 14 April: "Maintaining a peep-hole open for collaboration" ("uno spiraglio aperta alla collaborazione") is not our idea of fulfilling the requirements for membership in a Bolshevik organization. The basic criteria for membership is maintaining regular activity under the supervision of the appropriate body, in this case the I.S. We note, therefore, the continued expression of open Menshevism contained in your letter of 14 April in reply to my telegram of 11 April (but not to my letter of 18 March). If you are to continue as a member, we expect that you will:

(1) write a report of everything you know about the Collettivo Politico Discussionone--its membership, its collective and individual past, etc., including the essential content of any discussions you may have had with its members;

(2) mimeograph at least 300 copies of as much of the Vietnam bulletin as is currently ready (approximately 40 stencils, according to Federico);

(3) send an updated financial report (in January, you reported having just enough money to cover your phone bill);

(4) attend meetings we are attempting to set up in early May in Italy with the GBL (we will notify you as soon as we have a time and place);

(5) send us the completed "Dossier sulla FMR," including the passages selected for publication and the editorial notes concerning them.

In addition, the list of contacts in your letter does not coincide with the figures you list for "contacts with the Nucleo" from various regions in your letter of 6 January 1977 or with some other reports. Please clarify. In addition, send us copies of all correspondence from or to them, with the exception of [certain letters] we already have. This is the third time we have made this request. In addition, send us reports on any further information you may have about them. I also notice that in letters to Warner of 21 and 27 January 1977 you say that you send WV to [certain people]. We also need reports on these people.

All of the above projects take priority over a collection of documents and article on Bordiga-Gramsci-Trotsky.

As you know, according to our organizational rules (statutes),

it is the duty of the leadership to regulate internal discussion. We are now beginning production of a second Italy bulletin (perhaps we should entitle it: "uno spiraglio sulla collaborazione"?). You request including a document in the discussions of the national sections. While we have no objection to this, I would remind you that the Conference of the SL/U.S. is taking place at the end of June, and therefore the deadline for any document that is to be submitted, especially where translation is required, will be early June. We have not yet decided on a maximum length, but it will be impossible to translate anything significantly longer than my letter of 18 March, at the most. And of course, the later we receive the document, the less can be translated. With a slightly later deadline, the same holds true for the meetings of other sections, which will be held in conjunction with the European summer camp at the beginning of August. Since I will be leaving the U.S. for the camp in mid-July, it will be impossible to translate and circulate anything of significant length which we receive after mid-June.

During the period when you were maintaining yourself incommunicado, we were unsure as to your continuing membership. We therefore delayed sending you copies of certain correspondence. According to notations on Federico's letters and reports to New York, you do not have his letters to New York of 26 March, 4 April, and 8 April, and his letter to Lesueur of 20 March. We are sending you copies of these letters, as well as my reply to Federico of 13 April. We do not have a copy of Lesueur's letter to Federico, and are requesting that Paris send a copy both to New York and to you.

We are sending a translation of your letter of 14 April, as well as a copy of this reply, to comrades and sections who received my letter of 18 March, and will be including both in the Bulletin.

Communist greetings,

Sharpe