their attention. The plane incident took place next morning. A close associate of the Maono has said that he was "asked" to kill Kodama on March 2, and one Japanese newspaper, published on the day of the incident, carried an account reporting that "an instruction came from the United States to Japan in early February ordering the assassination of Kodama".

The "kamikaze" attack was made on the day before an agreement was signed to hand over to the Japanese authorities investigating the Lockheed scandal the American materials on the case. In fact, the materials so far handed over do not include the unpublished materials held by the US Senate or other materials held by the US government. Many Japanese political forces believe that a great white-wash is under way. Thirteen national organisations including the Communist, Socialist and Komei parties and the General Council of Trade Unions have joined forces to fight for a full and public inquiry.

Each new disclosure of bribery in various countries confirms the connection between multinational corporations and CIA intervention in internal politics. US imperialism does not confine itself to military operations to ensure that governments will remain compliant or be replaced. The role of the multinational ITT and the CIA in destabilising the Popular Unity Government of Chile is well known. Japan and Italy are the two countries where, to date, the Lockheed scandal has surfaced. In both countries, a strong communist party has developed a strategy of combining militant mass action with a wide unity against the most conservative forces. In Italy, the ruling Christian Democrats stagger from crisis to crisis. In Japan, the ruling Liberal Democrats are divided and disoriented. Both countries are vitally important to United States imperialist strategy. Kissinger has recently announced that the US won't tolerate a communist presence in an Italian government, illustrating once again that the United States continues to suffer from the illusion that it has the right to determine election results or changes in the social system in other countries. Unfortunately, as Chile showed, the United States has considerable power to turn these illusions into ghastly realities.

The case of the suicide pilot, Maono, may seem fantastic, but there is no ground for considering that Japan or Italy or, for that matter, Australia, is an exception when it comes to US intervention and dirty tricks.

- M.R.

Discussion

Pat Vort-Ronald's article on the Italian Communist Party (ALR No. 50) is a very partial view. Her article expresses views which are contradicted in the daily debate and activity of communists and other forces in Italy today.

Space does not allow a full treatment of Vort-Ronald's article but several of her assumptions and conclusions demand comment. Vort-Ronald claims that "the PCI's strategic program abandons socialist revolution as a foreseeable goal" opting instead for a "gradualist parliamentarist road which begins with reforms". I believe this conclusion is drawn from a misreading of PCI documents and actions.

Enrico Berlinguer, General Secretary of the PCI made some relevant observations on the occasion of the 80th birthday of Spanish communist Dolores Ibarruri last December. He said that communists and marxists must have the audacity and intelligence to liberate themselves from any scholastic application of doctrine, dogma, and orientations which are not adequate to our experience and historical conditions. He argued that communists must advance to socialism along paths which are as yet partly unexplored without allowing ourselves to be paralysed by the risks which are in every new development. These can be overcome, he claimed, when innovative courage is accompanied by steadfastness to great principles and ideals. (1)
As in Australia, there are plenty of small sects in Italy which speak of socialist revolution without putting forward any real view of how to get there. The PCI rather than abandoning the goal of socialism does have a strategic view of how to get there. This view does not divide revolution into two stages but sees it as a continual process and importantly does not seek "short cuts" to gaining power but has a perspective of the relationship between what sort of socialism one hopes to develop and how one tries to create it. The process of revolution, however, will inevitably have many different phases and approaches, including the use of parliaments.

For example, Lenin argues in *Left Wing Communism - An Infantile Disorder* that it is more difficult to start a socialist revolution in Western Europe than it was in Russia. He says: "...to attempt to 'circumvent' this difficulty by 'skipping' the arduous job of utilising reactionary parliaments for revolutionary purposes is childish. You want to create a new society yet you fear the difficulties involved in forming a good parliamentary group made up of convinced, devoted and heroic communists, in a reactionary parliament! .... It is because, in Western Europe, the backward masses of the workers and - to an even greater degree - of the small peasants are much more imbued with bourgeois-democratic and parliamentary prejudices than they were in Russia; because of that, it is only from within such institutions as bourgeois parliaments that communists can (and must) wage a long and persistent struggle, unaided by any difficulties, to expose, dispel and overcome these prejudices." (emphasis V.I.L.) (2)

In his writings, Lenin speaks of many alliances and compromises with bourgeois liberalism, Mensheviks, Socialist-Revolutionaries, Kautskyites, and others. "At the very moment of the October Revolution, we entered into an informal but very important (and very successful) political bloc with the petty-bourgeois peasantry by adopting the Socialist-Revolutionary agrarian program in its entirety, without a single alteration, i.e. we effected an undeniable compromise in order to prove to the peasants that we wanted, not to 'steamroller' them but to reach agreement with them. At the same time we proposed (and soon after effected) a formal political bloc, including participation in the government, with the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries .... " (3)

Pat Vort-Ronald reproaches the PCI for asserting that socialism is not on the immediate agenda. Unfortunately, the obvious truth is that it is not.

And where and when was the "analogous situation" for "contemplating seizure of power as Lenin did"? Italy in 1976 is not Russia in 1917 - or at any other time that I know of.

Pat makes much of "the PCI's emphasis on 'democracy' rather than socialism" (my emphasis - P.H.), despite the fact that the socialist goal, its democratic content, and the PCI's strategic program for achieving it, were brought out at the PCI Congress last year and in joint discussions between the French and Italian Communist Parties late last year. The PCI-PCF communiqué issued states: "The Italian and French Communists hold that the march towards socialism and the building of a socialist society, which they propose as the prospect for their countries, must be achieved within the framework of a continuous democratisation of economic, social and political life. Socialism will constitute a higher phase of democracy and freedom: democracy realised in the most complete manner."

It continues: "A socialist transformation of society presupposes public control over the principle means of production and exchange, their progressive socialisation and implementation of democratic economic planning at the national level. The sector of small and medium-sized industrial and commercial enterprises can and must fulfil a specific, positive role in the building of socialism.

"This transformation can only be the result of great, powerful struggles and broad mass movements, uniting the majority of the people around the working class. It requires the existence, guarantee and development of democratic institutions fully representative of popular
sovereignty and the free exercise of direct, proportional universal suffrage. It is in this framework that the two parties - which have always and will always respect the verdict of universal suffrage - conceive the rise of the working people to leadership of the State." (4)

In a report to the Central Committee on the record vote won in the 1975 Regional elections, a member of the PCI Executive Committee, Armando Cossutta, said: "We are and we remain above all a great fighting party, capable of translating its elaboration into initiative, movement and action and that intends to obtain these results by constantly promoting and organising the direct, critical, democratic participation of the masses, of the various strata and sectors, in all phases of our activity, from elaboration to implementation: A party that does not wait for elections to develop its function fully, but rather sees elections as a consistent development of a political battle that goes on every day, without interruption, and that draws new vigor and greater efficacy from the outcome of the vote. We are in short, and intend to always be, a serious, responsible, constructive force at the service of the workers and the nation." (5)

The PCI's impact on Italian life is immense. It is the impact not only of a very large party but also of a party committed to change - to the democratisation of life and to the renewal of Italy in a socialist direction. Far from being confined to parliamentarism or government administration of the system, there is a constant and deliberate determination to develop action outside parliament. Parliament and regional governments exist in relationship to action elsewhere, not as the main or only source of initiative.

Fascism continues to be a real presence in Italian political life. There are distinct fascist parties, acts of terrorism, obvious links between important sectors of the ruling class, including the army and police, with fascists. But the PCI's advocacy of unity and defence of democratic rights and forms does not seek merely to maintain bourgeois democracy but to extend and greatly enlarge not only the limits of democracy but its very form itself.

"Defence of the democratic state requires a broader development of democracy. For this reason, we stress that the democratic state can be strong and vital if it rests on the confidence and initiative of the broad masses of citizens and their organisations, if it avails itself of the will to participate that is emerging with increasing vigor in all sectors of society; if it works to strengthen the country's democratic fabric, encouraging both original forms of participation and organisation and an organic relationship between these forms and the representative institutions." (6)

In the schools, the PCI and other forces have achieved important democratic reforms giving parents, teachers and students equal representation on school councils. There is a widespread debate aimed at increasing and improving the participation in these councils, and in new student councils to be established in each school.

Millions of Italian workers do not accept the untramelled 'right' of the employers to invest when and where they please and to produce what they please. There are many examples of work-ins, refusal to accept the sack, and political initiatives beyond the 'normal' concerns of trade unions. This is not, of course, the same thing as socialism. But it cannot be dismissed as a bourgeois democratic approach.

Proposals for the renewal of the productive process are not merely proposals to be implemented at a government level, nor are they merely reforms aimed at pressuring the monopolies while leaving the ideological and structural framework of Italian capitalism untouched. Each struggle of workers does flow over into other sections of society, challenging ideological hegemony.

One example is the struggle at the Innocenti-Leyland factory in Milan last year when it was learnt that British Leyland intended to close their Italian operation. After many months of negotiation and smaller actions the Innocenti workers decided to occupy the factory, preventing the sale or removal of plant, etc. They demanded the reopening of the factory with government and/or private financing to produce vehicles suitable for public rather than private transport. They demanded controls on investment, a clear industrial plan and some controls over managerial decisions.

Having developed unity for these demands among the vehicle workers themselves, support was sought from other areas of the Italian car industry, from other metal workers and from the Milan community. There were strikes in solidarity with the Innocenti workers, including a general stoppage in Milan. Workers and students from all parts of Italy expressed support in different ways.

Vort-Ronald argues that "the PCI faces all the general dangers of co-option faced by any working class party trying to administer the capitalist state, and reform and rationalise capitalist production, especially given that it plans to do this in alliance with non-socialist parties". This observation is obviously true, yet the point surely is now to lessen the dangers and to turn the participation of the PCI in government and administration into a force which can facilitate the development of the mass movement for socialism.

Where the PCI currently participates in administrations, for example in Naples, they directly challenge and demand that the Christian Democrats (DC) participate in formulating plans to deal with the crisis deeply affecting the city and country - a crisis partially created by the DC. The PCI refuses to allow the DC to occupy the safe obstructionist role of opposition.
Space is insufficient to deal with the complex arguments relating to the PCI and the "emancipation of women". I agree with some points Pat has made but her presentation of the current debate on abortion omits a great deal. Her statement that the PCI "seems to abdicate from the task of political leadership" on this question and seems "to ignore the vast numbers of women who want to make their own choices about abortion" is quite wrong, I believe. (7)

I do not accept all the positions of the PCI and have criticisms and queries concerning parts of their strategy and program. However, in discussing foreign parties we must avoid distortions and seek to understand why they see things as they do, rather than impose our own concepts onto their reality.

- Phil Herington

Phil Herington visited Italy for four weeks in December last year, during which time he was able to examine the activity and policies of the PCI and attend the 20th Congress of the FGCI (Federation of Italian Young Communists).

FOOTNOTES

1. UNITA, December 13, 1975.
3. Ibid., pp. 556-557.
5. The Italian Communists (Foreign Bulletin of the PCI), No. 4, June-August 1975, p. 33.
6. Political Resolution approved by the 14th Congress of the PCI, in The Italian Communists No. 2-3, 1975, p. 131.
7. Ibid, plus the continual debate in Unita.

The comment by an enigmatic 'Ruaric Dixon' (ALR No. 49, p. 30) evidences much of the muddled thinking that is especially characteristic of bourgeois anthropologists. I am sorry that Dixon did not express other disagreements he had with my original article though I hope they are better established than the one he has chosen to expound.

Perhaps I should begin the details of my reply by restating that my article was written within a marxist framework and proceeded on the basis of the science of historical materialism as I have come to understand it. That Dixon or Levi Strauss do not work within that framework or feel they have "satisfactorily dealt with" key tenets of it is central to the weaknesses in Dixon's comment. Quotes from Marx (or any other theorist) when they are so badly removed from context and misunderstood hardly serve to establish a contrary position. On both questions of the nature of historical development and of the Asiatic mode of production I suggest reading Marx's own views and not Levi Strauss' comments on what Marx should have meant to say.

A major fact of historical materialism is the existence of 'monopoly capitalism' since roughly the turn of this century. In Australia this has been reflected among other things in a scramble for the rich mineral resources of the Northern Territory and the granting of massive pastoral leases in the areas where most of the remnants of traditional Black societies lived. These facts, in addition to the 'reserve army of unskilled labor' role that urban Blacks play are what result in the 'proletarianisation' of Blacks - a fact of modern Australian capitalism. Questions about what would have been the 'independent' developments in Black Australia if colonialism and monopoly capitalism had not existed are relevant only to academics with nothing better to do. A major social, political or economic force is equally real in terms of its effects whether it derives from within a particular social formation or outside of it. That societies "might endure indefinitely" is speculative nonsense easily refuted by any astute student of history and is fundamentally at variance with the facts of historical materialism.

It is only on the basis of such profound misunderstandings that Dixon could produce the conclusion he does - that a move "back to traditional economy and lifestyles" by Blacks in Arnhem Land could result in the establishment of conditions in which "self-determination would proceed from the economic base". Not only does such a view fail to see the direct and powerful monopoly capital interests involved in this region - interests that will simply not allow such developments to get 'out of hand'; it also just happens to overlook the fact that every aspect of this development is totally dependent on the whim of the capitalist state. If this is 'self-determination' then we have all had it for years and it's pretty useless.

The only future for Blacks and all oppressed sections of society lies in challenging capitalism - in confronting the state with the aim of producing the conditions for a self-managed, socialist society. This requires a linking up with the proletariat - the decisive force in social change - and it is the prime task of any committed militant to assist this process. Major tasks include attacking the racist ideology possessed by most workers and pointing out the groups whose interests such ideology serves (pastoral and sections of manufacturing capital along with multinational mineral concerns) and also pointing out the errors of 'Black separatism' and 'traditionalism' which also tend to exacerbate divisions within the broad working class movement.

- Gary P. Nicholls.