

news from nowhere

world socialist news & analysis

More Oil, More Capitalism, More War...

It is plain that the invasion of Iraq was essentially caused by Western capitalism's desire to control that country's oil supplies. But the Middle East is not the only area with such resources, and other capitalist powers are keen to get their hands on whatever energy supplies they can.

China, for instance, used to pride itself on its oil industry, with "In industry, learn from Daqing", referring to a celebrated oilfield, being part of a ubiquitous slogan in Maoist days. Since 1993, however, it has been a net importer of oil, and now imports 30 percent of its requirements. Existing fields are approaching depletion, and on one estimate, by 2020 at least half of the oil it needs will have to be imported. This is problematic for China's rulers, in terms of both cost and security of supplies.

Hence the interest in exploring and exploiting the Tarim Basin, a vast area located in the extreme west of China, near the border with Kirghistan (see Beijing Review, 9 October). This has both oil and gas, possibly as much as 6 billion tons of the former and 8 trillion cubic meters of the latter. Oil production is already under

way, but it is gas that is the current focus of interest. A pipeline, over 4000 kilometers long and costing untold billions of dollars, is being planned to carry natural gas from Tarim to the Shanghai area on China's eastern coast. Even this, though, is only likely to provide thirty years' worth of gas supplies.

Meanwhile, oil resources in Russia have also become a subject of dispute. The Angarsk area, near Irkutsk on the shore of Lake Baikal, is at the center of a sizable oilfield, and the Russian rulers, relatively strapped for cash as they are, see this as a resource they can sell in return for foreign exchange. However, the amount of oil there is unlikely to be enough to justify more

than one pipeline to deliver it to prospective customers, so there is a scramble to see where that pipeline should go. China, of course, wants it to go to Daqing so that its own needs for oil can be met.

But Japan has another idea, a pipeline to Nakhodka, which is in Russia's far east, just down the coast from Vladivostok and facing Japan. The Japanese Prime Minister visited Moscow in January this year, and the pipeline was one of the items on their agenda. And the United States, not content with getting hold of Iraq's oil, has its own eyes on what is happening: a pipeline in the other direction to Murmansk, near Russia's border with Finland, could lead to the oil being exported to the US instead.

Behind all this diplomacy lie two issues, apart from the general one of ensuring access to energy. One is diversification of supplies, so that problems in one area will not lead to a drastic cutback in availability of oil or gas. China, for instance, sees

Kazakhstan as another potential supplier, and a Chinese company is already exploring there. Japan currently takes nearly 90 percent of its oil imports from the Persian Gulf area, and this is not a healthy situation as far as Japan's capitalists are concerned. The other issue is seeking to prevent any one rival country from dominating oil supplies in a particular area. Japan, again, does not want China to control the lion's share of oil in east Asia. Any country that was in such a situation of dominance would quite likely have the whip-hand over its competitors.

The availability and sensible use of energy is an issue for any society. But under capitalism, questions of strategy and inter-nation rivalry far outweigh environmental and other concerns. We cannot predict whether there will be an Oil War in central or eastern Asia in the near future, but there is no doubt that this is one area of the world to watch very closely.

SS



Why I am a Socialist

For the last few years I have been struck with an ever-growing feeling that the world is suffering from a vile sickness. While the cause of this disease remained elusive for some time, its symptoms were ubiquitous. No matter where I turned I saw the signs of decay: the vast oceans of the world being polluted daily, entire families roaming the streets without a place to call home, countless children starving both abroad and at home, fellow humans dying of horrific yet treatable ailments. It took some time, but eventually I came upon a startling epiphany; I managed to identify the cause at the center of this worldly sickness, and its name was Profit. The reason for all of these aforementioned atrocities was the desire of a few to make a profit at the deplorable expense of the many. For money, men were willing to sacrifice their own humanity and the humanity of their fellow citizens. The system that perpetuates this paradigm of ruthless questing for profit is Capitalism; it is the system that is in practice by our entire modern world. Capitalism is the cause of the decay of our world, and it must be stopped. It is to help wage the war against the virulent Capitalist regime that I have joined the World Socialist Party. The advent of Socialism is the only way by which mankind will be able to cast away its shackles, to cure the world's evils, and to rediscover its own humanity and potential greatness.

Z.G.

WSP News...

The National Administrative Committee (NAC) is taking action is setting up a party organizer in order to aid the growth of our party.

Spring Conference planning- Following what was considered a very success and useful first spring conference last May, it was decided that we do it again this year. A tentative date of May 2nd (May Day weekend) was set.

Getting organized/setting priorities. Amid the great propaganda ideas that where discussed at the Fall conference, we are setting priorities for 2004.

A WSP comrade, currently incarcerated, has sent us addresses for a number of other prisoners seeking WSM publications. WSR's and other introduction material will be sent out to these contacts. Good work Kevin!

Party members and sympathizers are encouraged to donate money to help finance our many requests for literature from imprisoned workers.



WSP Meetings

National Administrative Committee (NAC) meetings are held on the first Tuesday of the month 8PM Eastern. Contact Boston for information.

The World Socialist Party

is part of a global socialist movement that believes capitalism cannot meet the needs of the majority of the people in the world, however "progressive" it might become.

To meet these needs, capitalism must be replaced by socialism.

The only way to achieve socialism is for the working class to recognize this and consciously and politically work to replace capitalism with socialism.

The World Socialist Party of the United States does not support the idea of reforming capitalism and therefore does not work for reforms. There are plenty of other organizations that do and yet the problems remain. By relegating socialism to the future, it is relegated to never.

Only a party dedicated only to socialism can promote socialism in any real, honest manner.

Among all the political parties in the U.S., only the World Socialist Party is dedicated to socialism as an immediate goal. It is this objective that makes the World Socialist Party revolutionary - our dedication to peaceful, democratic and immediate change.

The World Socialist Party rejects the theory of permanent leadership and vanguards.

The World Socialist Party is, therefore, engaged in a war of ideas against all other parties. Those other parties, no matter what they claim, are supporting the capitalist system and opposing the immediate establishment of socialism.

WSM Uganda

On 26 October the Kabale Socialist Club in Uganda held a meeting with a dozen people who had been reading socialist literature.

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