

Update

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Robbery at the Gas Pump!

Price-gouging by the big oil monopolies is breaking the budgets of millions of working people.

On May 2, the U.S. Department of Energy reported that the average price of a gallon of gas in the U.S. was \$3.96. Many families with 2 wage-earners are spending over \$100/week just to get to work. Small businesses are passing the increased price of gas to consumers. Many public school districts are being forced to spend millions of dollars to buy gas for buses. Many families are suffering as a result of the heavy burden of winter heating bills.

The exorbitant prices for gas and oil are not due to any shortages. Exploration for oil and gas as well as the development of refinery capacity and other processes needed to deliver the product are carried out over long periods and the amount of gas available at any given time is not dependent on momentary fluctuations.

The real problem is price-gouging by the big oil capitalists. For example, from 1999 to 2004, the oil refineries nearly doubled their profits on gasoline from 22.6 cents/gallon to 40.8 cents. Between 2001-2005, the top five oil companies in the U.S. grabbed nearly \$280 billion in profits. (See testi-

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Building the Mass Workers' Press

Building The Worker is the basic task which the Workers Party has taken up in the present period.

Building the workers' own press is a decisive and permanent part of the work of developing the independent working class movement. Through their press, the workers present their aims and program to society, unite their own ranks and mobilize the broadest sections of the people in support of their program. Through their press, the working class and its Party carry out

the theoretical and ideological work necessary to advance the workers' struggle and create conditions for the socialist transformation of society. In addition to this political and ideological role, the workers' press plays an important organizational role, providing a scaffolding around which the workers build their independent movement.

At this time, the workers' press

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Iraqis Protest U.S. Occupation

Growing struggles demanding an end to the U.S. occupation are taking place throughout Iraq.

On April 9 – the eight-year anniversary of U.S. troops entering Baghdad – tens of thousands of Iraqis took to the streets in Baghdad and put forward demands including for an end to the U.S. occupation and for Prime Minister Maliki to step down. Organizers said that the demonstrations will continue every Friday until the demands are met. In Mosul, hundreds of people have been gathering in the streets every day since April 7th to demand an end to the U.S. military presence in Iraq and have vowed to continue their protests until U.S. forces leave the country. These demonstrations are following on the heels of a wave of anti-occupation protests in

cities and towns throughout the country which began in late February.

In April, U.S. Secretary of State Robert Gates and other U.S. officials admitted to plans to keep U.S. troops in Iraq beyond the promised December 31 deadline for withdrawal. Once again, extended deadlines and promises for the phased withdrawal of U.S. troops are being used by U.S. imperialism to buy time to build up a puppet army in Iraq and defeat the resistance.

But it is U.S. imperialism which will be defeated in Iraq because the Iraqi people are resisting. The Iraqis will win because they are fighting for freedom and independence and this cause is stronger than the greatest military power in the world which fights only for colonialism and domination.

Robbery!

mony of Tyson Slocum of Public Citizen before Senate Committee, February 2006). With additional price increases this year, Exxon Mobil grabbed \$7.5 billion in profits in the 3 months of January, February, and March (up 69% over the same period last year); Shell grabbed \$6.3 billion (up 30% over the same period last year); Chevron grabbed \$6.2 billion (up 36%); Conoco Phillips grabbed \$3 billion (up 43%), etc. Yet even these profits were not enough and during April the companies raised prices nearly 10%.

The root problem is that a handful of giant companies dominate all facets of the oil and gas industry – exploration, production, refining, transportation, retail sales, etc. For example, just 10 companies (including ExxonMobil, Chevron, ConocoPhillips, BP and Shell) control 83% of our country's refinery capacity. These giant capitalists use their monopoly position to extort ever-higher prices out of the American people.

The American people will continue to pay ransom for such necessities as heat and transportation until

we challenge and restrict the power of the monopolies.

Oil and gas are natural resources which, by right, belong to the people of our country. The oil and gas industries have been created through public investment and the collective labor of the country. These resources must be put in service of the people.

As a first step, the availability and cost of such necessities as gas and heating oil cannot be left to the arbitrary ups and downs of the market or the price-gouging of the capitalist monopolies.

The government must take control over oil and gas pricing and distribution, regulating production in order to guarantee the availability of these commodities at the lowest possible price.

To fundamentally solve the problem, the oil and gas industries must be taken out of the hands of the capitalists and returned to the public. These industries must be run on the basis of meeting the needs of the people and protecting the environment, not as a means of maximizing profits for the capitalists.

Mass Workers' Press

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is taking up the specific tasks of opposing the reactionary, anti-social agenda of the bourgeoisie as well as isolating those forces which keep trying to create illusions in the capitalist class and the capitalist system.

In the view of the Workers Party, ideological work and ideological struggle are decisive fronts of the class struggle at this time. In the face of the counter-revolutionary onslaught of the world bourgeoisie, the working class is accumulating new forces and preparing for the inevitable rise of the revolutionary movement. Thus the question of the guiding line – of the clarity of the workers about the causes of their exploitation and oppression, about the changes the workers must make in society in order to emancipate themselves, about the strategy and tactics of their struggle – is of paramount importance. The Workers Party holds that the emancipation of the working class is the act of the workers themselves and this means that the success of the movement depends in the first place on the internal strength of the working class – on its political unity, ideological clarity and organizational solidity.

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History of U.S. Policy in the Middle East

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norities or outside pressure." Truman, after reading the early drafts of his Doctrine submitted by his advisors, commented that they "made the whole thing sound like an investment prospectus."

During the administrations of Truman and Eisenhower, the U.S. repeatedly resorted to direct intervention to "protect" its oil empire.

In 1953 the CIA organized a coup d'etat in Iran to overthrow the Mossadegh government, which had nationalized British and American oil interests. The CIA murdered and arrested thousands of Iranians and installed a monarchy headed by the son of the former Shah. The new monarch rewarded the American oil consortium of Standard Oil, Texaco, Gulf and Socony Mobil with 40% ownership of Iranian oil. Gulf Oil, for its part, rewarded Kermit Roosevelt, the CIA man in charge of the coup, with a corporate vice presidency. John Foster Dulles, Secretary of State at the time of the coup, and his brother Allen Dulles, head of the CIA, continued to reap their rewards as the law firm representing the Standard Oil interests.

In 1956, the U.S. put its troops on full scale nuclear alert to assist Israel in its seizure of Egypt's Suez Canal, and in 1958, Eisenhower dispatched 14,000 U.S. marines to Lebanon to suppress the national revolutionary movement there and to restore to power the pro-imperialist Phalange based government.

U.S. imperialism also worked to build up various reactionary regimes in the region, in order to use them against the

revolutionary liberation movements of the Arab masses. As early as 1947, the U.S. signed the Tripartite Agreement, under which it began supplying arms to Israel under the Mutual Security Program Act of 1951, \$3 billion in military aid was supplied to Greece, Turkey, Iran, Lebanon, Syria, Saudi Arabia and Israel in order to "facilitate collective security and to help maintain internal stability." In addition, the U.S. provided technical aid and advisors to these regimes.

In 1954, the U.S. initiated the Baghdad Pact as a military alliance including Turkey, Pakistan, Iraq and Britain. The key committee of the Baghdad Pact was a special military section devoted to counter insurgency. During the 1960's, Israel and Iran became the main pillars of U.S. imperialism in the region. Both were armed to the teeth by the U.S. and repeatedly used to attack the national liberation movements of the Arab peoples.

The overthrow of the Shah of Iran in 1978 destabilized U.S. imperialism's network of alliances in the region. Since 1978, the U.S. has frantically sought to project its own military force into the Gulf and to strengthen its military alliances with other reactionary Arab regimes. Immediately after the Iranian revolution, Jimmy Carter re-enunciated the determination of U.S. imperialism to use its own military force in the Persian Gulf to "protect vital U.S. interests," i.e., to maintain control of the immense oil wealth. To insure imperialism's ability to intervene, Carter established the Rapid Deployment Force, a special detachment of the U.S. military

trained as a mobile, quick-strike counter insurgency force. During the Reagan administration, the Rapid Deployment Force was upgraded to command status, renamed the Central Command Force and its troop strength increased by 50% to over 300,000.

Also during the 1980's, the U.S. set up air and naval bases in Bahrain, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, the Sudan and the island of Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean. On the initiative of the U.S., Saudi Arabia organized the Gulf Cooperation Council in 1981 and the Joint Military Command of the GCC in 1982, to integrate the armies of the smaller Gulf states with the Saudi armed forces.

During the 1980's, U.S. imperialism repeatedly carried out military interventions and strikes against the peoples of the Middle East. In 1980, Carter launched the aborted invasion of Iran, linking a "hostage rescue mission" with plans for a military coup to replace the Khomeini government. In 1982-83, Reagan dispatched tens of thousands of U.S. marines to Lebanon and ordered U.S. warships to bomb the Lebanese people. Reagan also carried out the terrorist night time bombardments of Libya and dispatched a huge war flotilla to the Gulf in 1987, to assist Iraq in its war against Iran. During this period, the U.S. also stepped up its collaboration with Israeli Zionism, financing and instigating its aggression against Lebanon, as well as its genocidal war to crush the Palestinian liberation struggle in the West Bank and Gaza. (to be continued)

On the History of U.S. Policy in the Middle East

Below we provide some background on U.S. policy in the Middle East which first appeared in a previous issue of The Worker.

At the end of the second World War, U.S. imperialism replaced the British as the dominant colonial power in the Middle East.

In 1947, the official "United States Petroleum Policy" put forward by a special Interdepartmental Committee of the federal government, declared that the U.S. goals in the Middle East were to "seek the removal or modification of existing barriers (legal, contractual or otherwise) to the expansion of American foreign oil operations and facilitate the entry or re-entry of private foreign capital into countries where the absence of such capital inhibits oil development..."

The report specifically mapped out the government's task as "promote(ing) the entry of additional American firms into all phases of foreign oil operations." As Truman's Assistant Secretary of State of Near Eastern, South Asian and African Affairs, George McGhee, pointed out, the big "threat" to the penetration of U.S. firms "lay in the possibility of a handful of nationalist leaders

moving to upset regimes which were relatively inept and corrupt. . . . The Committee agreed that although a country has a sovereign right to nationalize its industries, it does not follow that a country should exercise this right and was of the opinion that all feasible methods of persuasion should be used to induce a country considering nationalization of its petroleum industry to refrain from such a corporate nationalization."

By 1956, the U.S. oil companies had gained control over 60% of the Arabian oil. Today, despite the wave of oil nationalizations which deprived foreign companies of direct ownership of the oil resources of various Arab countries, the giant U.S. monopolies, through "buy back" agreements, operating and licensing arrangements and a near monopoly on the refining, transport and marketing of oil, continue to play a dominant role in the control of Middle Eastern and world oil.

The U.S. government, in order to fulfill its stated mission "promoting the entry of additional American firms" into the Middle East and "removing all barriers" to the U.S. domination of Middle Eastern oil, has 1) repeatedly projected its military

power directly into the region, carried out aggression against the Arab peoples and sought to establish and fortify its permanent military presence and 2) built up alliances and client regimes among the reactionary Arab ruling classes as well as with the expansionist state of Israel.

The first large scale U.S. intervention in the post war Middle East was in Iran in 1946. In Azerbaijan, northern Iran, the masses rose up against the Shah, a former collaborator with Hitler, and a loyal watchdog of British and American oil interests in the Middle East. Robert Grow, major general in the U.S. army, directed the Shah's suppression of the Azerbaijan uprising. In October 1946, the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, declaring their intention to go to war, if necessary, to thwart the Iranian people's revolutionary movement, plainly stated the U.S. objectives: "the Joint Chiefs of Staff consider that as a source of oil Iran is an area of major strategic interest to the U.S." In an early version of the "domino theory," the Joint Chiefs also warned that the "loss" of Iran would threaten Aramco's vast oil holdings in Saudi Arabia, "a stupendous source of strategic power, and one of the greatest material prizes in world history."

The U.S. policy of intervention in the Middle East was codified in the Truman Doctrine, which declared imperialism's intention to "protect" by any and every means including military, the Middle East's "great natural resources" and the pro-imperialist governments "who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed mi-

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