

Refinery Cutback

There are also indications that plans to develop Iran into a center for finished energy products are running into serious problems. Shell Oil Co. announced today that it is reducing capacity of a yet-to-be-built refinery by one-half. As a result, Iran pulled out of a joint marketing venture with Shell in the United States--part of which was slated to be supplied by Iranian refinery capacity. In recent weeks, two other agreements with American oil companies have also collapsed.

Gas Pipeline Delayed

Other development projects are having difficulty getting funding as investors take a wait-and-see attitude. This Monday, officials of the Alaskan Arctic Gas Pipeline Co., a consortium of 23 U.S. and Canadian firms handling only development of natural gas, admitted at a press conference that "difficulties" had forced them to put off to November 1979 starting construction of a \$5.6 billion pipeline--the date originally targeted for its completion. The pipeline, running from Alaska's North Slope across Canada to the United States, cannot be completed before mid-1980 or later. This pipeline is the key to the development of Canada's natural gas output from the entire Mackenzie Delta, throwing an additional wrench into exploitation of Canada's energy resources.

JAPAN SOCIALIST FACTIONS FIGHT OVER TRILATERAL TRAP

NEW YORK, N.Y., Dec. 31 (IPS)--Stormy factional battles raged at the annual convention of the Japanese Socialist Party (JSP), which met recently in Tokyo, ripping apart all remaining illusions of party unity.

The battles--waged by the pro-Soviet Shakaishugi Kyokai (Socialism Society) against the anti-communist Eda faction--centered on Eda's efforts to drag the JSP into an unholy alliance with the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), a move which would lend a progressive facade to the scenario which Rockefeller's U.S.-based think-tank, the Brookings Institution, has scripted for Japan.

The convention's factional warfare was the culmination of a mounting internal crisis within the JSP, paralleling the factional battles in the LDP which strengthened Trilateral Commission elements within that party and resulted in the Watergating of former Prime Minister Tanaka. The rapid disintegration of the Japanese economy and government has been propelling growing numbers of younger JSP members and members of the left-wing trade unions into the left factions, especially Kyokai's.

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Faced with this situation, the centrist leadership around Party Chairman Narita and Party Secretary Ishibashi has attempted to maintain a precarious balance in the party, edging to the right. This has been reflected in increasing tension between the JSP and the Japanese Communist Party, whose united-front governments in various cities have shown signs of breaking apart.

Eda: In Service to Rockefeller

The Kyokai faction went into the convention knowing that the Eda group intended to force the JSP to repudiate its alliance with the Communist Party and to purge it of its pro-socialist members in order to open the door to a JSP-LDP coalition.

Such a coalition between the discredited LDP and non-Communist opposition parties has been vociferously advocated by Japanese members of the Trilateral Commission, including the chairman of the country's largest corporation, Mitsubishi.

The main advocate of Rockefeller's scheme within the JSP itself is Saburo Eda, former Party Chairman and leader of the major right faction. An avowed anti-Communist, Eda introduced the CIA-inspired notions of "structural reformism" and "national roads to socialism"--the line currently espoused by CIA agent Giorgio Amendola of the Italian Communist Party--into the JSP in the early 1960s.

Eda is an intimate of trade-union leaders who are enthusiastic supporters of co-participation and wage indexation. Over the past year, Eda has formed an alliance with his former enemy, Kozo Sasaki, leader of the JSP's largest faction, a countergang based on pro-Maoist and anti-Soviet sections of the party.

ICLC Pushes United Front

Despite its inability to see that the only way to fight Rockefeller's plans for Japan is through an international working class united front, pro-Soviet Kyokai has clearly identified the danger of the "democratic face." The November issue of their journal, Socialism, featured a major article titled "Criticism of the Eda faction's 'Conservative-Revolutionary Alliance,'" attacking Eda's attempt to liquidate the JSP into a Trilateral Commission-directed alliance. The article states: "By moving for their 'anti-Kyokai' push at the convention, Eda's monopoly capital People's Freedom Alliance (the proposed coalition government) is pushing an anti-Socialism United Front...if they go on saying that they must disassociate themselves from the JSP." (emphasis added)

At the convention, Kyokai allowed the real issues of policy and program to be submerged under questions of party procedure. Eda and Sasaki joined hands in a Maoist front to attack the pro-Soviet leanings of the party, defended by Kyokai.

The real fireworks erupted over an attempt by the centrists to expand the executive positions in the Central Committee in order to avoid Kyokai's demand for the removal of Eda from the Party's Vice-Chairmanship.

Despite initial resistance to the proposal, Kyokai eventually relented, declaring "We wash our hands of this dirty trick."

But members of the Japanese section of the International Caucus of Labor Committees attending the conference laid out to Kyokai and others what a real alternative to Eda and his Rockefeller-dictated policies would have to be: a programmatic united front between the Communist Party and serious, pro-socialist elements of the JSP.

Laying the first necessary foundations for such a united front, the ICLC organizers held intensive discussions with left-wing elements of the JSP and distributed copies of the recently published Japanese edition of the ICLC's journal, the International Bulletin.

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR HELPS IMPLEMENT "SHARE-THE-WORK" PLANS

Dec. 31 (IPS)--The Wage and Hour Division of the U.S. Department of Labor is tailoring its enforcement of federal laws to enable employers to institute "share-the-work" shortened workweeks, plantwide wage cuts, and other productivity measures. A bureaucrat at the division's headquarters in Washington, D.C. that he is now telling workers who file complaints against miserable working conditions and low wages that "having a job at \$2 an hour is better than not having a job at all."

The federal administrator of the division, Betty Murphy Southard, says she will give very serious attention to employer recycling programs. She already has approved a West Coast company's plans to close one week a month for three months, an across-the-board wage cut, and another company's plans for plantwide wage reductions.

The division is responsible for enforcing the Fair Labor Standards Act (which contains the minimum wage and overtime premium provisions), the Child Labor Laws, the Age Discrimination Act, and other laws. These laws often create legal nuisances for employers who want to "rationalize" production.

At present, the division still seems constrained to obey the "letter of the law" while giving employers as wide a latitude as possible to institute their plans. In the future, all pretensions of legality in this and other matters will have to be dropped as the Department of Labor enforces Rockefeller's labor policies.