

# Bits of the World in Brief

## Fifth Estate Collective

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**HOPE FOR DOPE** — *High Times* magazine reports that the recent Paraquat scare is just that and “not to believe the government.” Paraquat paranoia developed a few months ago when it surfaced that the U.S. had financed the spraying of Mexican marijuana fields with the herbicide and that smoking of treated weed would cause “irreversible lung damage.” The Paraquat campaign has cost the taxpayers over \$50 million since it began in 1974.

*High Times* says “to date, there hasn’t been a single certifiable case of Paraquat poisoning anywhere in this country.” Also, pot tested showed a Paraquat content of 1% contamination in the East and 15% in the Midwest with the heaviest concentration being in the West and Southwest 30 to 35%. Studies have shown that only 1 to 5% of the contaminant is likely to survive combustion when smoked and that only smoking extravagantly soaked specimens of pot over a period of months could create a health risk. Still, this government hoax has been part of what has caused the recent marijuana shortage and the resulting increased use of dangerous drugs such as narcotics and pharmaceuticals.

**ROCK ‘N’ RUSSIA** — As part of a cultural “thaw” the Soviet government recently permitted the reggae/disco group Boney-M to perform at a Moscow concert. Only 100 of the 3,000 available seats were offered to the public with the rest going to middle-aged officials of the government and Communist Party. Still, hundreds of young Russians milled around in the snow outside the auditorium under the watchful eye of armed militiamen, while inside, Boney-M lead singer Bobby Farrell, attired in a black jump suit and grey cape, along with the rest of the group, put on a show rarely seen in stodgy Moscow. When three young fans ran onstage to dance along with the band, they were removed by uniformed police and “detained”.

**IT’S GOOD IN RUSSIA** — It’s not known if Russian leader Leonid Brezhnev was in attendance at the Boney-M concert, but if he had shown up in one of the many luxury cars he owns, it would have added a touch of class—the ruling class. Brezhnev, communism’s most prominent citizen, owns a Rolls-Royce, a Cadillac, a Mercedes, a Citroen—Maserati, a Chevrolet (still a proletarian at heart), a Lincoln Continental, and a Matra-Rancho cross-country car. This information came out recently when his Highness was invited to test drive Aston Martin’s \$50,000 V8 Vantage on Russian roads. Aston-Martin officials said they think Brezhnev will be impressed by their car’s acceleration rate from 100 mph to its top speed of 170. Leonid’s mother reportedly is worried what will happen to her son if the Reds ever come back.

**VISIONS OF A NEW WORLD** — Ever wonder how leninists view life after the Revolution? Here’s how James Harris, a mucky-muck in the Socialist Workers Party, sees the future after their gang seizes power. “I saw Cubans participating in that grueling campaign (sugar harvest)—working ten, twelve hours a day and six or seven days a week—not because they were told to but because they were convinced that this was needed to carry forward the revolution. And I got a glimpse of what the future can be like when capitalism is removed.”

**SAME IN UKRAINE** — Maybe we’re just lazy. Here’s another report of workers sacrifice from “News From Ukraine” an official government publication dated October 1978: “Young coal miners of the Donbas have taken an outstanding patriotic initiative. In honor of the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Leninist Lomsomol, which is marked on October 29, they decided to extract 60,000 tons of coal above plan during the pre-Jubilee week.”

MUSIC TO SOOTHE THE SAVAGE — Zodiac News Service reports on an experiment in which potential shoplifters were urged not to steal through the use of subliminal messages has apparently been successful in New York City.

Six department stores—stores whose identities have not been released—have been using the subliminal messages through their Muzak systems that broadcast background music to shoppers. Unknown to listeners, the Muzak tapes also transmitted such phrases as, “I am honest, I will not steal,” over and over again below the level of conscious hearing.

The “Media Industry Newsletter” reports that storewide thefts in the six stores have dropped by 30% in the six weeks the shoplifting turn-offs have been operating. Muzak had previously indicated that if the experiments did succeed, the anti-stealing messages would be offered to Muzak subscribers in stores across the nation.

POSTER WAR HEATS UP — China’s phony “giant poster democracy” of the past few months had the news media buzzing with the prospect that the Chinese bureaucracy had dumped Stalinism in favor of social democracy.

Although a few surface level liberalizations have taken place, it is obvious that the so-called “spontaneous” appearance (and disappearance) of these posters was nothing more than a rigged spectacle to cement Premier Teng Hsiao-ping’s power (and consequently that of the Teng’s power base—the Peoples Liberation Army), within the bureaucracy.

But one of the reasons for the Chinese Communist Party’s (CCP) calling a halt to their “poster democracy” was that the reaction of the general population was getting out of hand; they were taking matters a little too far for Teng’s comfort. During the final days of the poster war (an ideological battle where Mao was criticized and his supporters within the bureaucracy verbally attacked and in some cases removed from office), a separate movement began. People started putting up their own posters, posing questions and voicing anger that the government found threatening.

One of the more recent additions to this group of pirate posters, one that surely doesn’t sit well with the bureaucracy, openly demands the “liberation of sex.” Quite a strong and damaging demand when one takes into account the fact that unmarried men and women in China are supposed to be celibate—until marriage—and are told to read the writings of Marx, Lenin and Mao if they ever get the urge to get it on.

In an article from the Japanese Kyodo news service, they report that the poster criticized the official government policy of “delayed marriage and delayed love,” saying “it’s a cruel crime that destroys young hearts and bodies.”

The poster went on to say that some police officials have used their authority in sexually abusing female prisoners and declared that 30 years after the CCP seizure of state power, China still has many sex crimes and that sexual repression has increased the rate of sex crimes. Kyodo reported that the author of the poster added: “In our country, feudalistic thinking still is predominant in everyday life.”

As the rabble sang in Marat/Sade: “What’s the point of revolution without general copulation, copulation, copulation?”

REVOLUTIONARY JUNK FOOD — At 12:01 Eastern Standard Time, on the first day of 1979, the Chinese and U.S. governments formally exchanged representatives and recognized each other’s legitimacy (!) to rule. We’re sure everyone knows this; it’s old hat, but an additional flit of horror that came with all this “recognition” was the news that Coca-Cola and McDonald’s hamburgers are going to become the new staple diet for 850 million Chinese (or so the two companies hope).

While Chinese politburo members shook a leg to the Bee Gee’s disco hit “Staying Alive” (how appropriate), lesser ranking Chinese bureaucrats were diligently working on trade agreements with the two junk-food conglomerates via their Japanese representatives.

Both Coca-Cola and McDonald’s are getting their foot in the door by sending their first load of food (sic) to tourist hotels in China’s major cities. Apparently they hope by doing so they can entice the rest of the country’s population to let them do it all for them in the near future.

In an article that appeared in the *New York Times*, Den Fujita, president of Mc-Donald’s of Japan, speculated that the Chinese government’s interest in American fast food was part of a larger plan to raise China’s productivity by giving people more time to work. “Traditional Chinese food is time consuming,” said Fujita. “The Chinese want to curtail the time taken for eating and cooking.”

“Ideally,” Fujita continued, “China wants to learn from Japan how to cut up meat and to package it with vegetables so that each consumer can just buy instant food at the stores, bring it home and cook it without spending too much time.”

As if all of this weren't enough to make any sane person puke, it seems other Japanese trading companies are planning to sell golf clubs to China and to build a golf course near the Ming tombs, close to the Great Wall.

McCapital: We do it all on you.

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