

Tales from the Planet

Fifth Estate Collective

1992

Jolt to James Bay

In an era when almost all environmental battles seem doomed to defeat, it was heartening to see Quebec's energy megaproject at James Bay dealt a crippling blow by the decision of the State of New York to cancel a 20-year power contract.

The giant hydroelectric complex in the Canadian sub-Arctic is devastating the James Bay wilderness and destroying the traditional way of life for thousands of Cree and Inuit who live there. (See FE, Winter 1992.)

In a move based on economics, not ecology, New York Governor Mario Cuomo announced in March that he was canceling the state's plans to buy electricity from the facility. This leaves the project without a major purchaser for the energy it planned to generate.

Although the Quebec provincial government says this will not halt their plans to continue destroying the wilderness, most analysts said the decision will create a construction delay of at least several years. Hopefully, within this respite, the native peoples and the environmentalists who have been working to stop the James Bay project will be able to end Quebec's assault on the environment permanently.

Eat The Rich!

Workin' more, makin' less—that's the pattern workers are facing according to the Washington-based Economic Policy Institute. Coupled with a continuing decline in real wages, the average American is putting in about 140 more work hours a year than 20 years ago. Also, paid time-off is dropping for vacations, sick days, holidays, etc.

This is another mechanism whereby the rich are getting richer at the expense of the classes below them. We create more value for the capitalist market and they compensate us less. The rich pocket the difference. This allows them, for instance, to dress elegantly, as in a recent Saks Fifth Avenue ad, in the now-fashionable "Western" look. All you need is \$375 for a tuxedo blouse, \$450 for leather jeans and \$425 for a leather cowboy hat.

The ad, which appeared in the February 16, 1992 *New York Times*, was followed by an article about widespread drug abuse in New York City's shelters for the homeless. EAT THE RICH!

Beeper Messiah

Religious fervor in the computer age:

Followers of the Brooklyn-based Lubavitcher Rabbi, Menachem Schneerson, claim he is the authentic "Messiah" and are preparing for his trip to Israel where he will reveal himself. In order not to miss the millennium, the ultra-orthodox sect members in the "Holy Land" carry beepers so they can be immediately informed of his arrival. Maybe

dope dealers and doctors will also be swept heavenward in the “Rapture” along with the devout. The beeper code number is 770-770, in case you’re in the neighborhood.

Radical Tours.

A *Fifth Estate* subscriber, Bruce Kayton, is leading what he calls, “Radical Walking Tours” through New York City to places where “very, very radical, revolutionary” events occurred over the centuries.

The tours last about three hours, cost a minimal fee, and stop at sites, for instance, where a prominent anarchist was murdered by a mafia boss as a favor to Mussolini, or where Margaret Sanger set up the first birth control clinic in the U.S. Tours investigate different parts of the city, each leaving from another point, and view history on foot from places such as where the first Europeans landed to the location of recent events. “Radical Walking Tours” can be reached at (704) 492-0069.

Decade Eco-scam

What was billed as the “Environmental Decade” has turned out instead to be nothing much more than an advertising, packaging and public relations gimmick for corporations and government. Case in point: “Chemlawn,” a Detroit lawn service which sprays poisonous chemicals to create flawless grass for the green-and white suburbs (green lawns, white people) has changed its name to (grab your bad-bag!) “Ecoscape.”

Divine Justice?

A Croatian poet in the pages of *Vaseline* (c/o Librairie “La Guide,” 18, rue Turbigo, 75002, Paris, France), reported that workers at the Chernobyl nuclear plant walked off with religious icons from apartments abandoned by residents following the 1986 catastrophe. Sold abroad, these irradiated icons spread their rays in the homes of the faithful among U.S. and Western European managers and business people.

Red Flag Anti-Fag

The RCP (Remote Controlled Parrots), a dracula plaguing the anarchist movement, is catching some well-deserved shit for their official homophobia. The RCP’s program for a new world has no place for gays whose sexuality “is perpetuated and fostered by the decay of capitalism” and has an “underlying ideology” of male dominance. They advocate “struggle” to “reform” homosexuals “after the revolution.” This distorted view of same-sex love has come under fire from a variety of groups in different cities.

The Bay Area (California) chapter of the National Lawyers Guild, an organization of leftist lawyers, recently decided to no longer provide legal aid to the Maooid group because of its anti-gay stance. Although some members dissented from the Guild’s position, many felt as one gay activist did, that the RCP’s position on homosexuality is “just as bad as the Klan’s or Nazis’.”

Locally, the 404 Willis Collective rejected the RCYB’s (Really Confused Young Bourgeoisie) request to hold a fundraiser in their anti-authoritarian community center. In Chicago, the Baklava affinity group debated the local commies around the same issue and came away with many of their worst fears confirmed about this authoritarian cult. Sexual freedom and homophobia are not “minor” political issues and queer liberationists are not the yuppies the RCP seems to think they are. Reject repression peddled under the banner of revolution or religion!

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