NEWS

Students protest Vermont plan to obtain Hydro-Quebec power

By Kristan Schiller

By the end of April, the Vermont Public Service Board must decide whether or not to sign a twenty-year contract to buy electricity from Phase II of Hydro-Quebec’s James Bay Project. A group of Middlebury students have protested the signing of the contract by participating in a number of demonstrations and circulating a petition.

Vermont utilities see the hydro-electric power that the project generates as a cheap source of power that is less damaging to the environment than power from fossil fuels. Enacting Phase II entails the diversion of eight major rivers in the James Bay area and would cause wildlife destruction on a grand-scale and necessitate the relocation of the Cree Indians and Inuit Eskimos, who are among the last indigenous peoples in North America.

"They’ve already done Phase I. Phase II is what they’re proposing to do if Vermont buys the power. If they don’t have any support to buy into the contract, they might not go ahead with it. That’s the whole thing we’re basing our fight against,” said former Environmental Quality President Susan Odden ’90 who has taken action to prevent the environmental overhaul with a handful of other Middlebury students and Vermonters. Phase I involved the building of a dam that has already caused a lot of damage,” Odden said. “Some people in the government here say: ‘Vermont’s not the place for the fight. You should go up and protest in Canada.’ But the thing is that Vermont should be responsible to other parts of the world,” Odden explained. “You can’t just ignore Canada.”

Acting on this belief, Odden teamed up with Greg Western ’91, and Corey Chase ’92, to urge the Middlebury community to sign petitions which will be presented to the government as a show of opposition to Phase II. In about two weeks, the activists have obtained at least 500 signatures from Middlebury students.

"A lot of students have been active, as far as going to the off-campus events,” Odden said.

The fight against Phase II began for about thirteen Middlebury students on February 20, when they expressed their views at a public hearing held in Montpelier by the Vermont Public Service Board. Within a week, these students had also participated in a national rally that occurred in the state capital that focused on Hydro-Quebec.

Since February, Odden and others have collaborated with concerned Vermont citizens, University of Vermont students, and other organizations such as the Vermont All Species Project and the Native American Solidarity Network. The Middlebury-based group EQ (Environmental Quality) has been integrative in both initiating action and soliciting action from other students. According to Odden, Assistant Professor of Northern Studies William Howland has been highly supportive of the issue because he understands its effects on the Inuits and Eskimos. Howland is unable to take any concrete stance, however, as he has been called upon “by both sides” to be a mediator due to his expertise in Northern Studies.

The Cree And Inuit, the two cultures of the James Bay region of northern Quebec affected by Hydro-Quebec, have been historically at odds with each other over land and hunting rights. The impact of Phase II upon their lifestyles, however, has prompted them to put aside their differen

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Heterosexism

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every member of the group gets hurt, because each thinks, "It could just as
casually have been me."

According to Russell, the Ver-
month State Legislature is in the middle of reviewing the Hate Crimes Bill which
would impose additional penalties and/or the option of civil penalties in
in a case where a crime is hate-mot-

Hydro-Quebec

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noes, and the Inuit, who use kayaks.
They were welcomed by about two
hundred people, including Mayor
Peter Clavelle. Their goal was to
parade to New York City by Earth
Day, April 22.

The Cree and Inuit came to the
United States to draw attention to the
destruction threatened by Phase II of
Hydro-Quebec and to save their land.
On Saturday, April 7, their "council car"
pulled into the summer camp on Lake
Dunmore and they ate a potluck supper near an tended fire with
Oddsen and other Middlebury stu-
dents and Vermonters.

The necessity for cultural reloca-
tion of the Cree and Inuit lies in the
fact that both cultures live off of the
land which will be demolished. They
eat the caribou, white fish, pike, goose
and seal meat that local hunters catch
in the Great Whale River or harpoon in
the bay.

In addition, the social impact re-
sulting from Hydro-Quebec's Phase
II forestall the same for Phase II. Mat-
thew Mukash, a 39-year old Cree
Indian, told Monica Allen, a Sunday
Randall Herald reporter about the
village of Radisson, built next to the
Indian village of Chisasibi, where the
Phasel dam was built in 1975. Radis-
son, where white Hydro-Quebec
workers live, has a shopping mall,
new schools, and new homes.
In Chisasibi, on the other hand,

vated. Under the Reagan Administra-
tion the Hate Crimes Committee
found the group most victimized by
hate crimes to be gay men and lesbi-
ans. Despite this finding, the Ver-
month state legislature raised contro-
voy over the appearance of the term
"sexual orientation" in the Hate
Crimes Bill.

Similarly, Russell explained,
when the Gay Rights Bill suggested

was built that connected Radisson
and Chisasibi in the 1970's. It was
though that this road would benefit
the Cree, but it only introduced these
problems, which were rare before the
1970's. The natives want to keep
their villages free of outside influ-
ences to prevent these problems from
further developing.

"After meeting the Cree and In-
uit, I couldn't see myself being part
of buying power from it (Hydro-Que-
bec) and to destroy their land," Oddson
said. "They'd be put on a reservation... they'd be moved from
their community.

"They get compensated in money,
but money doesn't help them be-
cause the money just leads towards
gambling and drinking... things that
city life brings to the Indian culture,"
she added.

After seeing a slide show and par-
icipating in a discussion with the
Cree and Inuit the same night as the
Lake Dunmore dinner, Oddson and
other members of the college com-
munity have written letters to the
Public Service Board to and Gover-
nor Kean urging them to reject
Hydro-Quebec Phase II.

A "Black Out" was also organ-
ized on Wednesday, April 18, where
students and faculty at thirteen col-
leges in Vermont, including about 50
people at Middlebury, boycotted
power by not using electricity that
day. A speak-out was staged on the
adding the term "sexual orientation"
the existing non-discriminatory
clause, it failed because people
claimed it would be a special privi-
lege for gay people.

"When we included the term
'race,' was that special privilege for
black people? When we included the
term 'sex,' was that special privilege
for women?" Russell asked. "Every
one of us has a sex; every one of us
steps of a theater in Burlington which
focused on energy efficiency.

On Friday, April 20, Oddson and
and a few other members of the
Middlebury community were able to
meet with George Sterzinger, the
Commissioner of the Public Service
Department, to express their opposi-
tion to Hydro-Quebec. They talked
for about an hour and a half, she said,
but Sterzinger held firm in his sup-
port of the energy program.

has a race; every one of us has a
sexual orientation. So every one of
us is equally protected under that.
According to Russell, homopho-
bia affects not only the behavior of
straight people, but it also affects
the behavior of gay people as well.

"I've had to learn what the risk
factors are," Russell said. "I've had
to learn what situations probably
aren't safe and which situations
are more safe, and what actions I need
to take in order to keep me as safe
as possible. That's hyper vigilance.
I can't turn it off."

Hyper vigilance, Russell pointed
out, is prevalent in oppressed com-
munities. Women, too, she explained,
are very aware of their environment
for the same reason he is: to avoid
danger, to stay safe.

At the end of the session, Russell
answered several questions which
members of the audience had written
down at the beginning of his talk.
In answer to one question, he empha-
sized the importance of making accu-
rate information available to every-
one. He suggested that the issue of
homosexuality could be addressed in
psychology, sociology or human rela-
tions classes, so that people can get
the information they need without
having to explain why they're getting
it. Until people know the facts, they
will be afraid of the unknown; and as
Russell said, "Homophobia is hold-
ing us all back."

Succumb to
furore scribendi per Campus:
The uncontrollable desire to write for
The Campus

ATTENTION SENIORS!
TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE CLASS OF 1990
As you know, the Senior Class Gift Campaign is officially underway. The class
has voted to enhance the existing skating area outside McCullough. Please con-
sider contributing to this gift that will be enjoyed by everyone year round. Class
Agents are soliciting you now. Help us reach our goal of 68% participation!
Your donation is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely, the 1990 Senior Class Gift Committee
Randall Barry, Liz Bayley, Caroline Berry, Betsy Brubaker, Suzy Chambers, Monica Chrambach, Jill Danielli, Rob Deloriste, Pat
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