

**Mining in the
RAINFORESTS**

**Autumn
'89**

OZONE

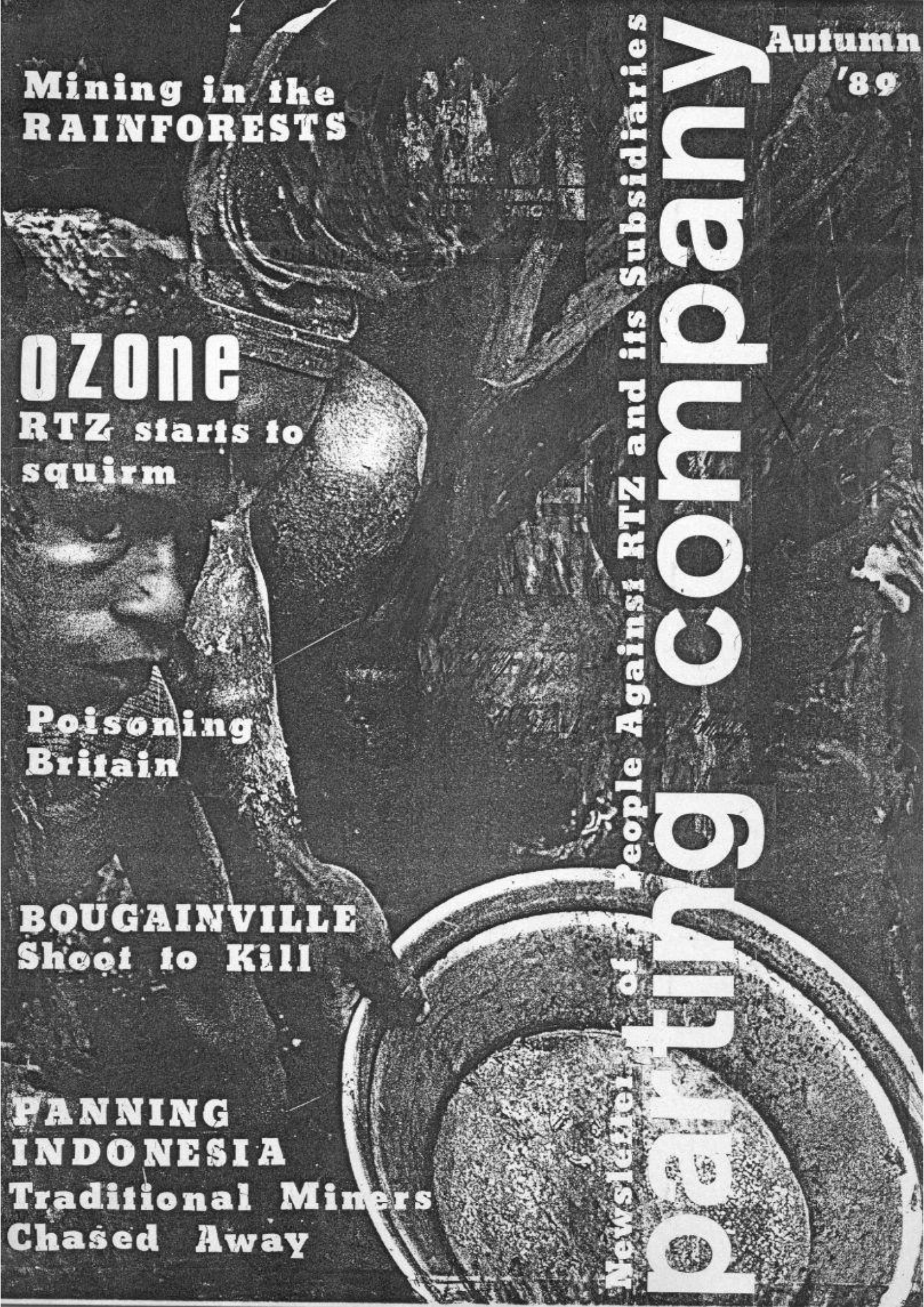
**RTZ starts to
squirm**

**Poisoning
Britain**

**BOUGAINVILLE
Shoot to Kill**

**PANNING
INDONESIA
Traditional Miners
Chased Away**

Newsletter of People Against RTZ and its Subsidiaries
parting company



PARTING COMPANY
is the newsletter of
PARTIZANS, the People
Against RTZ and its
subsidiaries.

We are a voluntary
collective of individuals
who liase with other
campaigns around the issues
of multinational mining,
indigenous peoples' land
rights, the effects of RTZ
and other mining companies
on the environment and
peoples' health.

RTZ and its subsidiaries
make up the biggest and
most powerful multinational
mining company in the
world. In this issue we
focus on just some of the
several hundred operations
that have branded RTZ
amongst environmentalists
and human rights campaign-
ers as the dirtiest and
most direputable of all
the mining companies.

Good reading, and if you
wish to learn more about
RTZ or PARTIZANS, or if
you wish to contribute
to future editions of this
newsletter, please fill
in the form on the back
page, or drop us a line.

CHINA: THE GRIP OF STEEL

A matter of urgency

In its recent summary of events in China since the Tiananmen Square massacres, Amnesty International unequivocally condemns the Chinese regime for violations of human rights and continued persecution of student and peasant leaders.

Chinese pro-democracy workers and support organisations outside China have called for a ban on all support - diplomatic and economic - for the murderous Li Peng regime.

PARTIZANS (at a recent monthly collective meeting) sent full support to the movement, via the Friends of Chinese Menchu, in Hong Kong.

Why is Partizans particularly concerned?

Because RTZ/CRA has been one of the biggest economic bulwarks of the Chinese state. Using state capital, it is opening up a massive iron ore deposit (Channar) on Aboriginal traditional land in the Pilbara region of Western Australia.

This will supply feed to the Baoshan steel complex near Shanghai: much of it will doubtless go towards armaments and munitions which could be used for further crushing of the Chinese people.

We urge Partizans supporters to protest at RTZ/CRA's explicit financing of the Chinese military-industrial complex, and its implicit endorsement of the regime's monstrous repression.

WRITE NOW to RTZ, at 6 St. James Square, London SW1.

Address your protests to Sir Alistair Frame, and ask that they be forwarded by RTZ (as 49% owner of CRA) to their associate company in Melbourne. Demand that all commerce between the company and the Chinese Metallurgical Import and Export Corp should cease, until human rights violations are stopped, and all democratic movements allowed freedom to function.

Please send Partizans copies of any replies. Thankyou!

RTZ



SOUTHERN AFRICA

wheeling and dealing

in apartheid

The mining industry is "positively dancing" according to the Mining Journal (18/8/89), after Lord Hanson took over Consolidated Goldfields recently (thus torpedoing Anglo American's chances) and RTZ confirmed its takeover of the BP Minerals assets. But now RTZ is to sell its part of Unisel gold mine in South Africa and the Tsumeb copper mine in Namibia. By the time you read this it's likely that RTZ will also be well on the way to selling off its stake in the Oryx South African mine, also aquired as part of the BP deal.

BP Coal is also up for sale: appropriately BP announced its sell-off just after the the RTZ take-over was approved by shareholders. While BP is keeping its Indonesian mine (Kaltim Prima, which it shares with CRA), and Canadian coal assets, it will probably sell its South African coal interests to South African companies. Since Hanson is likely to sell-off alot of Consolidated Gold Fields' apartheid assets too, (CGF owns 38% of Gold Fields of South Africa, which in turn owns the lion's share of the Tsumeb mine), it looks like big British mining capital is finally starting to pull-out of South Africa. PARTIZANS supporters will be especially interested in the RTZ sell offs. At the June extra-ordinary meeting, to gain shareholder approval for the huge take-over of BP Minerals,

Frame was tackled about RTZ's increase in South African assets. Characteristically, he told shareholders that they could sell their shares, if they disapproved. Now he's taken some of his own advice: not, it should be pointed out because of world opinion, (though this is not as negligible as Frame likes to make out), but because the South African gold interests are considered to be surplus to requirements, and RTZ needs to increase its cashflow again. Of course it still holds the invaluable interest in Richard Bay Minerals, the world's largest producer of Titanium. The Namibian disposal is probably for somewhat different reasons. It was only a modest share (just over 14%), with no management control, and RTZ just hates playing second fiddle to anyone. Future control of Tsumeb is itself in doubt, as its major investors are Gold Fields of South Africa, partly-owned by Consgold.

It is probably also true to say that RTZ could not bear to face yet another campaign over its illegal exploitation of Namibian natural resources. It tried to conceal its stake in Tsumeb (the share wasn't mentioned in the Brief set before shareholders at the BP takeover meeting, and when a PARTIZANS' supporter pointed out the omission, Frame claimed that it was a mistake).

Dissenting RTZ shareholders aren't the only ones to experience the dirty tactics of the company chairman at annual general meetings. At the Shell a.g.m. on the 11th May there were several calls from Anti-Apartheid supporters for a poll on the company's involvement in South Africa. The Companies Act states that in law a poll must take place if called for by anyone in the meeting. Shell's chair, Sir Peter Holmes is claimed to have said that, in the general noise of the a.g.m, he did not hear the demand. The Anti Apartheid movement are considering to challenge Shell under the Companies Act. Likewise, at the RTZ extraordinary meeting, called to approve the aquisition of the BP Minerals assets, Sir Alistair Frame brought the meeting to an abrupt end, just as shareholders were about to call for a poll on the new aquisitions. (Guardian 12/5/89).

RTZ & ENVIRONMENT

At last year's a.g.m. RTZ had obviously forecast that the contentious issue would be Rossing uranium in Namibia. Sir Alistair opened that meeting with a statement on RTZ's activities in Namibia, hoping that this would deflect many of the questions he expected from the floor.

This year it is THE ENVIRONMENT. Sir Alistair proudly announced that the special environmental affairs group at RTZ was ensuring that environmental aspects of their operations were not overlooked, and that RTZ was devoted to environmental protection. Would RTZ therefore wind-up an operation if it was considered to be detrimental to the environment? CFCs for example? Smelters emitting radioactive particles, poisonous gases and heavy metals? Mines which destroy the ecology of entire river systems? Uranium mines and explorations? Cyanide leaching processes in metal extraction? Well, er.....

One of PARTiZANS's campaigners asked Sir Alistair, "In view of the high political profile of 'green' issues, will RTZ now give environmental protection a higher priority than profit?" Sir Alistair's reply was that RTZ always meets and continues to meet any of the environmental protection laws of the country in which they operate, seeking to protect the interests of shareholders whilst abiding by those laws.

In the case of CFCs this means that while the only other British producer, ICI, has already promised cuts in production, and many retailers and producers of aerosols have already switched to alternatives, RTZ's ISC Chemicals has made no such declaration on the issue. But when they are forced to cease production by legislation, or else because there's no longer a viable market, they will, no doubt sing their own praises as environmental saviours. RTZ have already latched onto the 'green' image. Put it in a brown paper bag and paint it green - that's bound to make the sales figures climb. Or if you happen to be RTZ, and think that you were given a lifetime go-as-you-please, do-as-you-please ticket to ride the world, then merely adhering to national and international laws must seem the ultimate in virtuosity.

BP SHEIKDOWN

Footnote to the RTZ/BP saga
From Mog O'dor.

AS is now widely known, the determination by BP to get ready cash from its mining sale to RTZ was contingent to a large extent on its need to buy back the galloping stake in Britain's biggest company, held by the Kuwait Investment Office (KIO). Now the KIO is vehemently opposed to apartheid, and BP, along with Shell, is one of the regime's major international props. According to the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers' Union (OCAW) of the US, the KIO's investment represented an opportunity for action against South Africa, and an opportunity to "Rock the boat....within a major British institution". So, not only did BP send those unruly arabs packing, it also got a reprieve from the distasteful prospect of a sheik or two standing up in the BP boardroom and demanding disinvestment from one of the company's most lucrative areas of operation.

ISC POISONED WATER

In 1988 Britain experienced one of its worst single cases of water pollution at Camelford in Cornwall when a lorry load of 20 tons of aluminium sulphate was poured into the wrong tank at the Lowermoor treatment works. Camelford residents experienced joint and muscle pains, headaches, diarrhoea, nausea and rashes - a quarter of those affected were still complaining that they felt unwell nearly one year later. In collusion with the government, the water authority failed to inform the public that there was any problem: infact they denied it. But they had already identified levels 500 times the permitted amount of aluminium (3000 times according to independent tests). It transpired that the reason the accident had taken place was because the lorry driver delivering the chemical had come on the wrong day and, on finding no workers at the plant, had opened the gate with a master key and emptied his lorry into what he thought was the right tank. The lorry driver was a relief worker from ISC chemicals in Bristol, the chemicals division of RTZ.

OZONE KILLERS!

RTZ WAS "MADE TO SQUIRM"

Was it really only a year ago that Sir Alistair told the RTZ shareholders that he had seen no scientific evidence to encourage him to believe that CFCs were destroying the ozone layer? That is enough of a surprise considering that he is the chair of one of the only two CFC producers in Britain. But given his vested interest in defending his enterprises by hook or by crook, perhaps what's more is that Sir Alistair's response did not push the assembly of comitose shareholders into a frenzy of outrage.

"SIR ALISTAIR, EITHER YOU'RE A LIAR OR YOU ARE INCOMPETENT"

This year things were slightly different. Sir Alistair was reminded of his statement of one year ago, and told, "Either you are a liar or you are incompetent". This did little to stir the coin-operated hearts of the shareholders, but Sir Alistair was ruffled, and in a telephone call to Liz Ward of Hull Action on Child Cancers, an RTZ representative admitted that RTZ had been "made to squirm" on the issue of CFCs.

The issue is not whether the ozone layer is or is not destroyed by CFCs, but whether the projected deadlines (literally) will be too late. John Gribbin, author of "Hole in the Sky", reports that even if the direct release of CFCs ceased

immediately, ozone depletion would continue to increase for at least two decades. So even the declaration by chief of ICI, Denys Henderson, that his company will strive to eliminate "CFCs by a date to be set as soon after 1998 as is practicable" is not enough, but at least it is one better than RTZ. At the a.g.m. Sir Alistair managed to skirt the issue of committing themselves to a date to phase out CFC production, he preferred to dwell on the vast resources that ISC Chemicals were putting into research to find alternatives to CFCs.

But there is now a rumour going round that RTZ may soon sell its speciality chemicals divisions for around half a billion pounds. Apparently it has decided that the business is too small to compete on a world scale. (Has it anything to do with the lambasting it has received in the last year over its manufacture of CFC's?). ICI has apparently made a tentative approach to buy the business, but was rebuffed. RTZ is, instead going for either a US buyer (Dow Chemicals?) or, as now seems more likely, Rhone-Poulenc of France (a company that is heavily involved in nuclear power and mineral sands and rare earth mining, where it has already got into hot water among environmentalists in Western Australia).



Has the advertising hype finally got to us? For the past twenty years the lead-free petrol campaign was knocked on the head by the oil companies, and yet now, in these times of ozone consciousness we are encouraged to believe that these same companies are the very ones at the vanguard of the struggle to save the world. Lead free petrol. Does that paint a picture of blue skies and wafting cummuli? The exhaust fumes from cars, lead-free or otherwise still contribute more to ozone depletion than the use of CFCs. Perhaps that ozone sucker Mrs Thatcher should remember that from when she was a chemist in Grantham? It appears not though: wasn't it her government which blocked Dutch and West German demands for the highest possible emissions controls on new cars earlier this year? (Guardian 8/3/89).

Pledge on cancer check broken

GUARDIAN 10/6/89

Patrick Donovan
Industrial Correspondent

THE Department of the Environment has failed to mount a promised scientific investigation into the high incidence of radiation-linked child deaths in Humberside despite an assurance to victims' parents from the junior minister, Mrs Virginia Bottomley.

A department spokesman last night admitted that a research unit set up to look at "cancer clusters" around atomic power stations and other radioactivity-emitting installations nationwide was "not in a position to do any immediate research". An investigation remained a "long term objective" he said.

The DoE appears to contradict assurances given to worried families by the local Conservative MP, Mr James Cran. Mr Cran, MP for Beverley, told a pressure group government research has been commissioned into allegations that a spate of rare cancers have been caused by RTZ's giant Capper Pass copper smelting plant.

Concerns about the North Ferriby plant would form part of a nationwide investigation into "cancer clusters," Mr Cran said.

Environmentalists claim that local cancer levels run far above the national average, with deaths from rare tumours in children under 15 now at one a month in North Humberside alone.

Mr Cran said in a letter to Ms Liz Ward of the Humberside Action on Child Cancers group in January: "Virginia [Bottomley] has confirmed to me that the Small Area Health Statistics Unit at the London School of Hygiene has been asked to

look at the effect on the health of people living around nuclear establishments, as well as the Capper Pass plant."

More than two months later, however, the unit told campaigners that no request had been received and disclosed that the necessary computerised analysis equipment was still being developed and would not be ready within the near future.

Professor G. Rose, head of the unit, said in a letter: "Unfortunately, Virginia Bottomley seems to have made a mistaken statement." Concern has been growing about the incidence of cancer growths, in particular the local rate of brain tumours which is up to double the regional average.

RTZ's plant was cleared by a recent report from Leed University's Leukaemia Research Fund Centre.

But the study found that levels of cancer "cannot be assumed to be due to chance".

Ms Ward said the Government's stance was extraordinary. "It now seems as if the whole issue has been deliberately swept under the carpet."

Cancer levels were well above the national average, Ms Ward said. "We are concerned that there is an enormous problem in this area that has not been acknowledged."

"The north bank of the Humber has a heavy concentration of industrial pollution." Capper Pass could be a major factor in causing cancer, but a full investigation was needed of all the industries around the area.

An RTZ official said yesterday that the plant, one of 1,500 non-nuclear installations licensed by the National Radiological Protection Board to emit radiation, operated at safe levels.

For years, RTZ has argued that its Angelsey aluminium smelter is above suspicion - despite criticisms by various authorities and prima facie evidence that aluminium poisoning from long term employment in parts of the plant has caused the degenerative disease usually known as senile dementia. Now a recent Australian study has produced new evidence that workers in smelting "pot rooms" develop, not only chronic asthma, but cancer.

Head of the Peter McCallum Hospital in Melbourne stated in April that at least 39 workers had died from worker-related cancer in the country's aluminium smelters: a finding confirmed by the executive director of the Asbestos and Industrial Cancer Society, who declared that smelter managements are "criminal" in their negligence of workers' health and safety.

Mog O'dor Column.

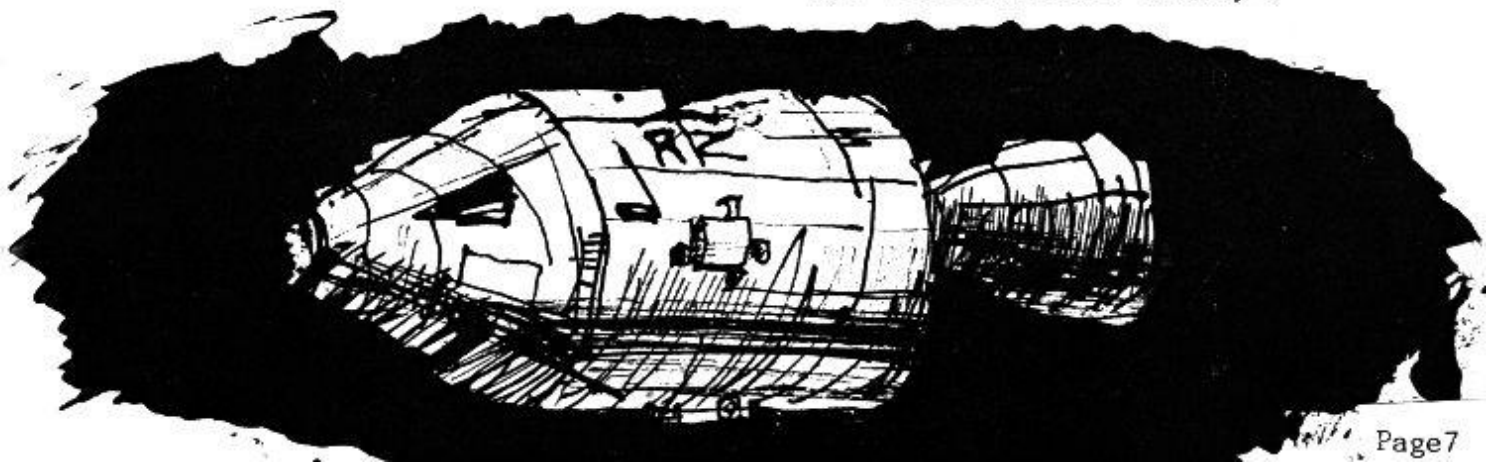
I learn from my contacts down-under (and what a geo-centric term that is !) that CRA's 67% subsidiary, Comalco, is sponsoring a study into putting people on the moon. Well, that's not the official project - yet.

But it's certainly true that our old bauxite buddies have dished in some cash, along with BHP and the Bond corporation to help Martin Marietta of the USA study the feasibility of setting-up a space station in Cape York.

Cape York, you may wonder? Haven't we heard of that before? Of course we have. If you've ever read a single word of what PARTIZANS has written in the last ten years, you'll know that Cape York consists of huge tracts of Aboriginal land which were seized by Comalco thirty years ago to make way for the world's largest bauxite mine. The people at Mapoon were forced off their land, and the people at Weipa shoved into an impoverished, insanitary, demoralising enclave. They've never got direct royalties, nor one cent of compensation. And Martin Marietta - haven't we perhaps....?

Of course! If you follow anything to do with the aerospace industry, and specifically the part of it that likes to play wargames with the universe, you'll know that this is one of the world's biggest 'defence' contractors to the Pentagon. The connection between Comalco and Martin Marietta is more than a peck on the cheek at a Collins House cocktail party. Comalco bought out MM's aluminium interests five years ago. And, no doubt it's planning to get in on the ground floor (pardon the Colemanism), if the space station comes off. Comalco on the moon? well, at least Comalco aluminium in the moonprobe!

Would that Dante were still with us! Could he not depict with more eloquence than a hundred columnists, this monstrous apparition of a band of mediocre, dollar-struck time bandits, their fortunes derived from piracy on a gargantuan scale, alchemising the raw substance they have ripped from under the heels of one of the oldest traditional communities in the world, now engineering to send star-struck Australians from that very land a million miles to colonise space? The first victim of the Comalco tragi-comedy was undoubtedly Mother Earth. Its last act might well be entitled "Lunacy".



RTZ owns 49% of CRA; CRA owns the majority of Bougainville Copper Ltd which operates the Bougainville copper mine at Panguna on the island of Bougainville. RTZ opened the mine under Australian auspices before Papua New Guinea achieved independence. The Bougainville copper mine has been closed since May - although at the time of writing, the company has plans to re-commence production at a reduced level early in September. Because of the closure, contracts with Japanese and European consumers are currently in jeopardy.

Around 30 people have been officially reported killed since late 1988, thanks to the oppression unleashed on Bougainville landowners, in response to the sabotage of the mine ten months ago. Some of the dead are landowners, others mine employees, and at least one central government official has been killed. The international press and the mining media has depicted these events as stemming almost wholly from the Bougainville Liberation Army's demands for secession, and as indiscriminate attacks by Francis Ona and disaffected BCL ex-employees. Fortunately, the PNG press, as well as the Melanesians themselves, have painted a quite different picture: one of local people whose land has been ravaged and polluted by the huge copper/gold project, and who have struggled for more than a decade for proper compensation and a share of the royalties from the mine.

BOUGAINVILLE

At one stage earlier this year, it seemed possible that the landowners and the central government might meet to work out a compromise. That was dashed by the central government, which while critical of some aspects of BCL's operations, has been desperately afraid that the company will pull out, and it will lose a sizeable chunk of revenue (16 - 20%)

In order to crush the rebellion, the PNG government has put at least 400 troops and 120 police onto the island of Bougainville. These forces have attacked unarmed villagers and burnt their homes; they have also viciously attacked two provincial government ministers. CRA has, throughout this period, sat back, claiming the "affair" has nothing to do with the company. The moral imperative that it should close down its operations until all parties to the conflict could work out an arrangement acceptable to the majority of Bougainville Landowners, has fallen on deaf ears. The PNG government has defended CRA: CRA has bulwarked the central government.

The Australian government has also been playing an invidious role, supplying four military helicopters and allowing ex-RAAF "advisors" to assist in the repression of the landowners. The defence agreement between PNG and its former colonial masters allows for assistance in combatting external threats (from Indonesia) but not internal "rebellion" - let alone legitimate demands for self-determination.

Here we publish a recent interview between the Australian Direct Action magazine and a Bougainville representative of Melanesian Solidarity (MeSol) which should leave us in no doubt of where the real responsibility for this situation lies.

AU

DIRECT ACTION August 15, 1989

MELBOURNE — Although Papua New Guinea attained political independence in 1975, it continues to be dominated by Australia, Herman Buago told a public forum here on August 11. Australian corporations currently have \$2 billion invested in PNG and own 67 per cent of the economy.

The forum was organised by the Committee Against Repression in the Pacific and Asia (CARPA) to discuss the events in Bougainville. Buago is an activist from PNG and a founding member of Melanesian Solidarity (MeSol). He is also speaking in Sydney and Brisbane.

After giving a brief history of colonial rule of PNG, Buago described the current struggle of landowners led by Francis Ona in Bougainville, which centres on the CRA-controlled copper mine in Panguna.

The demands of the Bougainville traditional landowners for fair compensation for the displacement caused by the huge mine are met at all new, Buago told the meeting. The landowners have been petitioning the government since the 1970s, when the mine began operation, but to no avail.

The compensation of 10 billion demanded by the landowners is not merely for themselves but is for the development of social services for the entire community, which has received none of the benefits which the government promised would result from the mine.

Buago described how the government has responded to the situation with violence rather than negotiation. The Australian government is actively assisting in this repression. It has provided helicopters and AS "advisers", and ex-RAAF mercenaries will be paid by Australia in its effort to protect the profits of CRA.

In discussion it was pointed out that, apart from an "aid" package to PNG, the Hake government is providing \$13.6 million to train PNG police at the same time as the overall amount of Australian overseas aid is decreasing. The Australian government has also looked at the possibility of sending Federal Police to points of unrest such as Bougainville, the idea being that this would be seen as more acceptable than army intervention!

Bougainville is not the only area of unrest, said Buago, and he expects similar events to take place in many other parts of the country. Already, the situation around the HP-owned Ok Tedi gold and copper mine is developing into another "Bougainville".

Australia's role in PNG crisis

Human rights violations around the country by security forces are also causing widespread resentment. In Bougainville, many innocent people have been bashed and attacked by the security forces. North Solomons province Premier Joseph Kabul had been shot at and beaten, and one of his ministers had lost an eye in a vicious assault by government forces.

Buago, speaking to *Direct Action*, encouraged people in Australia to campaign against Australian government intervention in PNG as a way of assisting people in Bougainville and other parts of the country.

— Andrew Bath

★ ★ ★

What's the main purpose of your visit to Australia?

I am here to let the people of Australia know the truth behind the Bougainville crisis and the role of the Australian government in it. For example, the Australian government has supplied the PNG government with four Iroquois helicopters and other military aid, including military advisers.

People in Australia have a misconception about why the four helicopters were sent to PNG. The initial reasons given were for surveillance purposes, to be used on the borders with Indonesia, and for evacuation and transportation of people from remote areas in the event of accidents.

But as the crisis develops, the helicopters could be used against innocent people. In this sense the Australian government is directly intervening in the PNG crisis.

Can you describe the background of the dispute?

When CRA went in to explore the copper and gold mines, PNG was still being administered by Australia. CRA did not undertake any negotiations with the land owners. They went in by force.

So later on the landowners, in particular the young people, realised that they had been fooled. They also realised that the life span of the mine was going to end around 1997 and that the people were going to be the sufferers of the effects of the mine.

The royalties are not adequate for future generations in the years to come. Where do we plant the crops, the food in the gardens? The landowners are fighting for the generations to come. The companies will pack up and leave the people behind with nothing.

The people have been requesting the government and company to negotiate for a better share and for a better development approach so that the people can benefit from it.

The company has not provided the people with adequate conditions, such as proper housing. Some of the people's houses that have been built haven't been fully completed.

The roads have not been maintained. If the company was providing development, then the infrastructure such as roads should be maintained.

Some of the schools in the area are made out of materials from the bush. The company does not provide resources to maintain the schools.

The miners have also been complaining about the working conditions at BCL. When they have demanded wage rises and life insurance from the company, the management has knocked back their demands.

Then there is the question of who should pay life insurance if the workers are attacked on the job in the period of this crisis.

What have been the environmental effects of mining?

The effects of the mining are the environmental destruction of the rivers and the bush. All the land belonging to the people has been completely destroyed. The mining disposals are dumped in the Jaba river, which flows to the sea. So the sea is polluted and so is the soil. It's like a desert.

This affects the fish life in the waters close to the mine. In the mouth of the river there are no fish to be found.

The people in the south of Bougainville have been complaining about climatic changes in the area. They say these changes have occurred since the mine came into operation.

Why did the landowners turn to armed struggle?

In the initial stages, when the landowners came out requesting the government to negotiate for a better share of the company profits as a form of compensation, the government turned down their demand.

The people's concern and their demands have been put forward since the late '70s. The people felt that unless they struggled more forcefully, nothing would eventuate. So as a last resort they took up arms to continue the struggle.

The company and the government are working together. The PNG government is protecting the interests of CRA and other multinational companies who are making millions exploiting the people.

The media in PNG has been very biased in the handling of the information. It has only been putting forward a position in favor of the government without getting the real story from the people. About 80-90 per cent of the people in Bougainville and many others around the whole country support Francis Ona in his struggle.

Is there repression directed against people on Bougainville who are not part of Francis Ona's Bougainville Revolutionary Army?

Since the state of emergency, some people have run away into the bush. They are scared of the security forces. You have fully armed security forces deployed.

There have been a lot of human rights violations in the provinces. For example, a student at the University of Technology in Lae was shot dead by the riot police. This is in a different province to Bougainville.

My father has been assaulted by the security forces, assaulted in his own home. The premier and his car were also attacked by the security forces. His family was inside the car at the time. They shot at his car and smashed the windscreen.

My father and the premier were both working hard to solve the problems, playing a neutral role between the landowners and the government. They wanted to negotiate with the landowners to solve the problems in a peaceful manner.

I am also concerned about my own security. The security forces in Bougainville pick on anyone whom they suspect of being a supporter or sympathiser of the militants. I want to make it clear that I am not a member of the BRA.

How do you think the situation on Bougainville can be resolved?

The problems should be solved in a Melanesian way — through discussion, with people coming around and sitting together and finding ways of solving the problems.

The Australian people should pressurise their government not to give any more military aid. The Australian military experts, I believe, are assisting the PNG government and the security forces to crush the militants.★

BREAKING

NEW

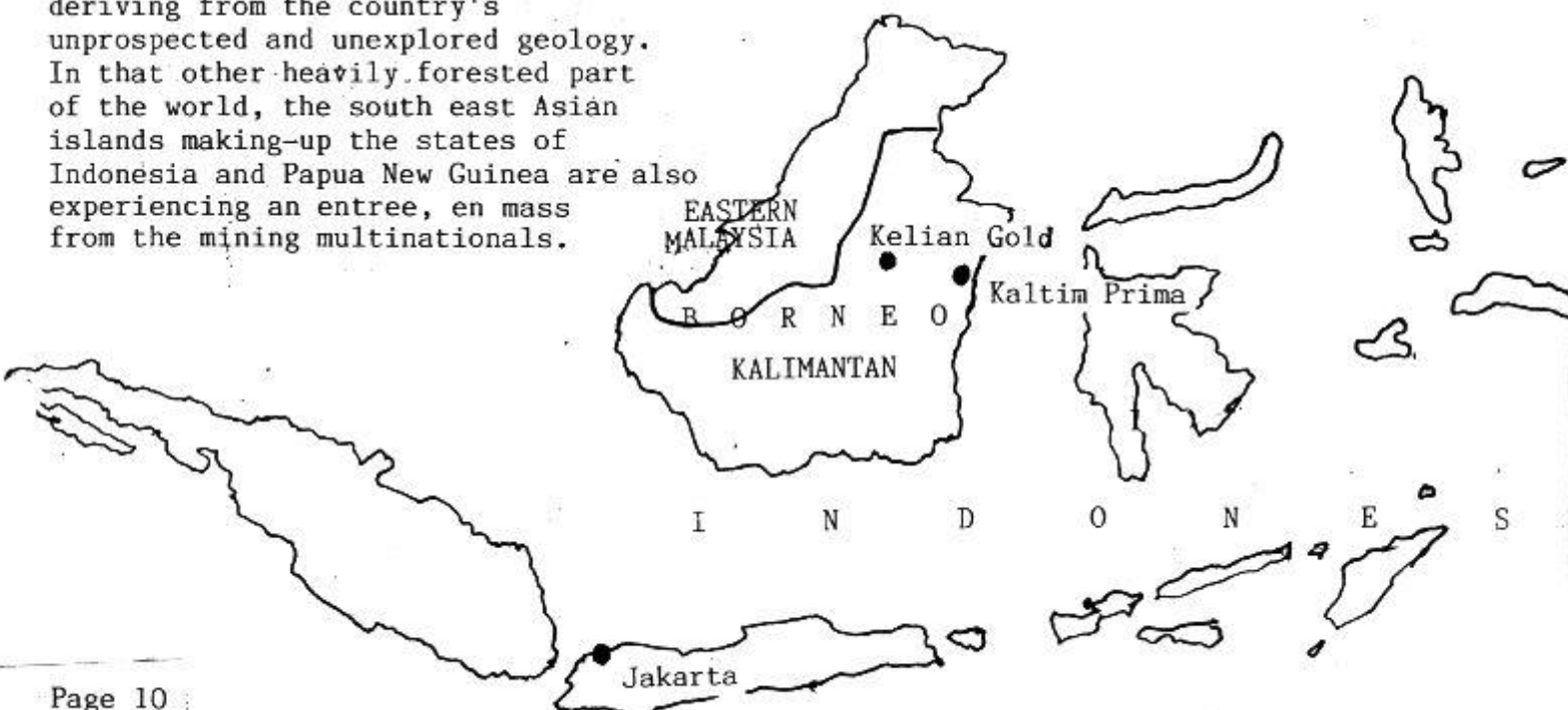
GROUND

In June, Murdoch's Sunday Times ran a series of articles on the destruction of the world's rainforests by British companies. BP's Jacunda tin mine is in the Jamari National Forest - designated a protected area by the Brazilian government. It has already destroyed an estimated 250,000 acres of Amazon rainforest (an area bigger than the West Midlands) according to the Brazilian forestry service. The following week, chair of BP, Sir Peter Walter failed to convincingly defend his company, which currently has a "Now we're greener than ever" advertising campaign in Britain. RTZ has taken over BP's majority share in Companhia de Mineracao Jacunda, which it adds to several other interests in Brazil, including the low grade, high tech Morro do Ouro gold mine (situated south of the rainforest).

The rainforests of the world are the penultimate assault by the mining companies on this planet, (the last will be the Antarctic), and just as the 70's will be remembered for the acceleration of the pillage of minerals from the remotest parts of the Australian continent, so the late eighties mark the beginnings of the multinational massacre of the tropical forests. In Brazil the government have now introduced legislation to try and control foreign investment deriving from the country's unprospected and unexplored geology. In that other heavily forested part of the world, the south east Asian islands making-up the states of Indonesia and Papua New Guinea are also experiencing an entree, en mass from the mining multinationals.

In Indonesia, two of CRA's major projects in tropical rainforest areas of Kalimantan (formerly Borneo) have moved closer to fruition. More than 30 million tonnes of ore has been located at the Kelian gold prospect in East Kalimantan, containing an average of 2.2 grammes of gold per tonne. Underneath this deposit is another one, nearly as large, containing the same grade of gold, but which would require more complex recovery methods. In other words, potentially 60 million tonnes of land will be dug up, after an indeterminate amount of forest cover has been destroyed - for the sake of around a million kilos of gold.

The Kaltim Prima Coal project is another venture which will destroy areas of rainforest in East Kalimantan. The deposit is estimated to contain nearly 400 million tonnes of coal (by comparison total British coal production is about a quarter of this per year). But whereas Britain's coal is mined underground, Kalimantan's will be recovered by ripping through the forest, destroying animals and plants, and endangering the ecological balance, threatening the delicate interplay of soil, water, trees and air. In a letter to a PARTIZANS supporter, PT Kaltim Prima, the project managers, claim that the area has been designated by the Indonesian



AND OLD TRADITIONS

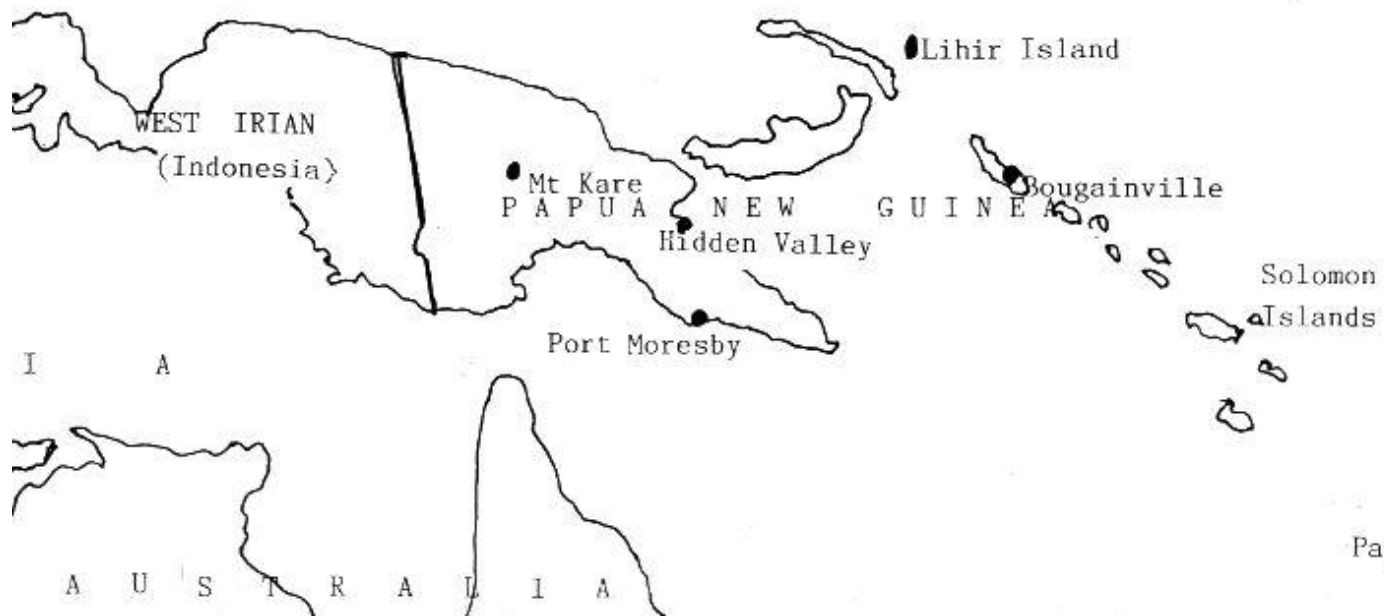
government as "production forest", and that there are no indigenous Dayak people living in the area. In their words, the area is "essentially unoccupied".

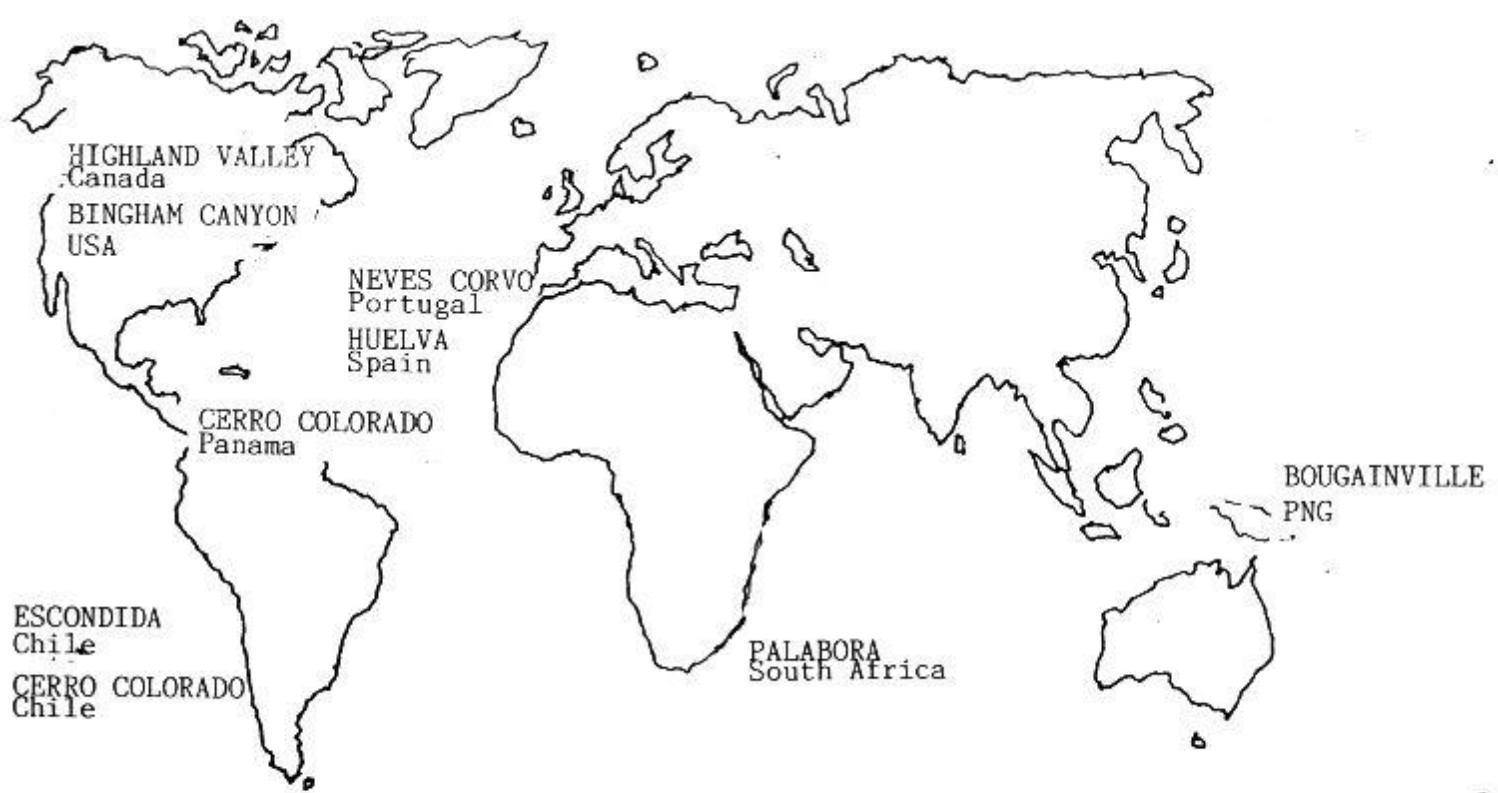
In an article in "Lestari Alamku" (May 1989 - an Indonesian publication) there are reports that 5,000 people were thrown off Rio Tinto Indonesia concession areas at Parenga, and 4,500 from Parit Cina (also RTI). This article also reports that 75% of the 10,000 Indonesian miners using small-scale mining techniques were expelled from the Ampalit area of central Kalimantan. The concession for this area is held by the Australian venture PT Ampalit Mas Perdana. A store providing basic goods for the small scale miners was burned down, and 2,500 miners are hiding in the forest from officials who are preventing vehicles from bringing food provisions to the miners.

In Papua New Guinea, small-scale gold mining using panning techniques has been going on for a long time. Mt Kare, in the bleak and unaccommodating highlands is now the site of a modern-day goldrush. Local landowners and other people from PNG have won between 225,000 and 250,000 ounces of gold using traditional panning techniques. This has held-up CRA, who hold the prospecting rights to this area. They intend to start mechanised mining of the site as soon as the claim has been sorted out.

Since independence land tenure in PNG has been based on a Western model. Inhabitants were given ownership of their traditional lands, but the state owns what is under the ground. This has meant that landowners have been legally allowed to extract minerals by non-mechanised means. (The landowners at Bougainville have been given no such rights because Bougainville Copper was opened before PNG became independent).

It is unclear what will happen at Mt Kare - will a joint venture between landowners and CRA be formed, as has been suggested by the mining press? The government would certainly like that - so far they have received virtually no taxes from the 2,000 or so miners working in the area. It seems to be in their interests to encourage the big multinationals, rather than the small-scale locals. RTZ will also have a 80% share in the Lihir Island gold project, which it takes over from BP Minerals. This has been described as the worlds richest gold deposit outside South Africa; production is expected by the second half of 1991. CRA also have a gold and silver prospect at Hidden Valley in PNG. RTZ/CRA are not the only outfit to encroach on this relatively untouched string of Pacific islands; but they are certainly, with their newly aquired BP interests, the most dominant foreign mining presence in the area.





COPPER . . .

RTZ is usually associated with uranium : to a lesser extent with highly dubious smelting activities in Britain and, through the medium of its associate companies, CRA and Comalco, with bauxite mining. Yet it is also one of the world's copper-producing giants. When nuclear power is long dead and buried; the Weipa bauxite fields have been returned - albeit ravaged - to their original occupiers; Avonmouth, Anglesey and Capper Pass plants have been closed down under new 'green' legislation, RTZ is likely to still be churning out the very mineral on which it built its original fortunes.

The original Rio Tinto company opened up its first mine in the Huelva region of Andalusia more than a century ago. By the late 1880's it was the world's biggest single mining company. Profits were obscenely large - and all siphoned back to the Rio Tinto HQ in London. The cost to the people of Andalusia was monstrous: thousands of miners (mostly women) died from malnutrition and diseases brought on by work conditions. During the Spanish Civil War, the company issued secret instructions that workers actively supporting the Republican cause should be "taken out and shot."

When Rio Tinto sold off much of the Spanish copper assets, it had more than enough money to spare, with which to traverse the globe and buy up other mines: specifically uranium. Finding in Consolidated Zinc of Australia a like-minded corporate high-flyer, ruthless and expansionist (and also controlled by British capital), RT joined up with CZ in 1962. The new Rio Tinto-Zinc was set to play a major new role as an iron, lead, zinc and bauxite producer, and a pre-eminent role as supplier of fuel for the burgeoning atomic industry.

But copper has never been far behind. The acquisition of the large Palabora deposits in the Transvaal and Lornex Copper in Canada (a subsidiary of Rio Algom) combined with Bougainville's huge resources in Papua New Guinea, had put RTZ among the world's front-running copper producers by the early '70's.

While the company failed (through a combination of local Guaymi resistance, international protest and a falling copper price) to open up the Cerro Colorado deposits in Panama in the 1980's, it succeeded in buying into Europe's most lucrative new mine a little later: this is the Neves Corvo copper/tin project, south of Lisbon.

Moreover, RTZ has interests in two mammoth Chilean copper projects: one of which, La Escondida, could become the world's

ROBBERS and

cheapest producer. This mine met with vociferous opposition from Finnish groups last year (because of Finnish government funding) but the main Finnish trade union has now apparently dropped its objection to the mine.

And this year, of course, RTZ secured one of the biggest prizes of all: the vast Bingham Canyon mine close to Salt Lake City, Utah. Bingham is the world's largest open-pit mine, and was ceded to RTZ as part of the RTZ/BP Minerals deal. Even if RTZ does not acquire Woly Downs (Olympic Dam) as part of the same deal (currently Western Mining has secured an injunction against RTZ buying out BP's 49% interest) the corporation's ascendancy in the copper industry seems assured for a long time to come.

However - and it's a big qualification - copper is notoriously subject to market fluctuations, and vulnerable to substitution by other metals. (What, we may fantasise, would happen to the industry if super-conductivity proved a viable alternative to copper-conducted electrical power?) The copper price virtually collapsed several years ago, forcing the major oil companies to sell-out (BP being one of the last to exit) and the industry, especially in the USA, to "rationalise". While there was some expectation in the early '80's that new mines would be required within the following decade, new capacity is now only replacing mined-out pits: effectively there is no real growth in the industry, and none is expected for some time to come. What are the implications of this for RTZ? So long as it controls some of the cheapest copper sources in the world (and Palabora is possibly the cheapest producer); so long as their grade doesn't fall too steeply; and so long as it fulfils its contracts and makes new ones - the company has little to worry about.

But, low-cost production depends on several factors - not least keeping down wages and limiting workers' demands. Fulfilling contracts (and attracting new ones) depends on maintaining production and delivering on time. The two are, of course, related. Nowhere is this more obvious than at Bougainville, where a combination of attacks by local people on the mine-site, and insecurity of employees, has resulted in a closure which has already lasted more than a quarter of a year. At Highland Valley Copper in British Columbia (a mine operated jointly by RTZ's Canadian subsidiary and Cominco) 1,200 unionized workers have been on strike since July

As a result, customers for copper - in particular Japanese smelters - have been looking elsewhere for their supplies. Perhaps the biggest beneficiary of the disruption has been Freeport-Mc-Moran, a US company, whose Indonesian subsidiary recently expanded operations in West Papua (Irian Jaya) much to the consternation of local people and many around the world who have long opposed this company's neo-colonialism on the island. (The mine-site has been attacked in the past by members of the liberation movement, OPM - something of a precedent for more recent actions by Bougainvilleans at Panguna).

Unfortunately, there is no co-ordination between local communities affected by copper mining in the "under-developed" world and the workforce elsewhere. Indeed, over the last six years in the USA, the major copper companies have succeeded in virtually breaking the back of the United Mineworkers' Union and reducing union representation by nearly a half. (Down from 250,000 in 1977 to 133,000 ten years later.) One company recently refined its strategy in breaking union power, by setting up communications' seminars, called "charm schools": in one area where there was 50 years' union representation, the employees have allegedly voted by a 2 to 1 majority to reject the Union.

RTZ's Kennecott Copper subsidiary (owners of the Bingham Canyon mine) has participated in this Union breaking. Given the company's track record, it would naturally not hesitate to impose even more draconian measures in the future. Intransigence in Papua New Guinea, and ruthlessness in the USA are all of a piece.



Forced removal

AS SAFE AS HOUSES



OPPOSITE: RTZ warn against the increasing dangers of burglaries at home — and the answers that RTZ have come up with. Home protection has been a nice little earner for RTZ's Pillar Electrical, with MK Electrics, Friedland, Oakland, Superswitch, Digital Audio, and Peak Technology under its wing.

ABOVE: A mining company smashes down homes to make way for a new mine. RTZ have done this all over the world.

WHO SAID.....? "We will squash Survival International like a fly, if they do not get off our back !"

RTZ OPERA

Atlantic College in Wales, the further education outfit sponsored by our old friends, (RTZ has always wanted to bring out the best in the young — look at its efforts with the Rossing Foundation in Namibia), has just featured a British premier of the new opera by Philip Glass.

We wonder if Glass, who wrote the music for Powaaquatsi, a film record of man's destruction of the environment, was aware of what he was lending his reputation to in this instance?

But anyway, with RTZ's takeover of BP beginning to look like the grotesque over-reach we predicted, the title of the new opera matches its sponsor's likely future. It's called "The Fall of The House of Usher".

Answer: A senior director of RTZ — probably Sir Alistair Frame — in the early 1980s, in response to the organisation's support for the Guaymi peoples' of Panama's right to tell RTZ to get off their backs !

Quoted in "World Apart" by Robin Hanbury-Tenison. Granada Publishing 1984.

Available from PARTIZANS.

who are you kidding?

Perhaps the most outrageous statement made by Frame at this year's a.g.m. was one in which he declared that, as from 1990 he would no longer accept any a.g.m. questions about the activities of the group's largest and most important associate company, CRA. He later appeared to modify his threat, saying that he would accept questions about the company, but "only insofar as they relate to RTZ" - an "undertaking" clearly meant to include questions relating solely to revenue from Australasian operations, but not the impact of those operations on Aboriginal people, the environment, third world economies, etc.

Certainly there is another forum in which questions can be asked of these operations - that's the CRA a.g.m. which takes place in Melbourne, usually three or four weeks before RTZ's own shareholders' meeting. However, though shareholders have asked socially responsible questions of CRA in the past, the main focus has been, and will continue to be London.

Why? The answer is to be found in RTZ's history and its modus operandi. It is only a few years ago that RTZ reduced its equity in CRA to less than 50% - and only because it could no longer resist the demands made upon it by the Australian Foreign Investment Review Board (FIRB). Up to that point, CRA's fortunes were inextricably linked with those of RTZ - there is not one decision made 'down under' that was not either initiated, or fully supported by the board at 6, St James' Square. Nor has the situation changed since "Australianisation" occurred. One mute testimony to this is the recent appointment of CRA's Head of Exploration to be the RTZ counter part in London. And who doubts that the decision to plunge (we nearly

said plunder), ahead with uranium developments in the Western Desert - the most hotly disputed of CRA's recent schemes - was essentially made in London? After all, CRA has only operated two uranium mines, Mary Kathleen and Rum Jungle, both now closed; RTZ is a world leader. Interestingly, the British public have, only in the past year, been treated to another debate about the effects of minority control, in the case of Anglo American's bid (now stymied), for the control of Consolidated Gold Fields. Frame's equivalent at the helm of Anglo American, Harry Openheimer, once admitted that "When I say control, I don't necessarily mean 51%", and as the Guardian commented last year "...Anglo knows full well that few companies are going to argue with a shareholder which has more than 30% of the equity".

British company law is even more emphatic about where the power lies. Any company which builds up more than 29.9% of a subsidiary/associate is bound to make a full bid. And the 1986 Banking act defines the controller of a bank as someone who "...is entitled to exercise, or control the exercise of 15% or more, of the voting power". (Guardian 11/10/88).

RTZ is not only the single largest stakeholder in CRA - it is the only powerful one. All the Australian shareholders between them hold only 40%. We will be writing to Frame in no uncertain terms, demanding he recognise (as has been the case since the 1970s) that RTZ shareholders have the right to ask any questions they will about the operations of the company's subsidiaries and associates. If he doesn't agree, he will have only himself to blame for the outcry at next year's a.g.m.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

Your names, addresses telephone numbers and contributions are contained on a computer disc. As we do not have the considerable sum of money available to protect this information, under the Data Protection Act we are obliged to ask all those on our membership/subscription list whether they object to being on our list. (It is remotely possible that a computer pirate could "break in" to our computer system and discover who our subscribers are, but RTZ already know who the ringleaders are). If you have any objections, please write or telephone us.

NOW SUE US!

PARTIZANS members of long standing will know that, back in the late 70's, Comalco got so hot under the collar at allegations made in a Granada TV documentary about its destructive activities at Weipa, that it sued ABC TV for showing it (See RTZ UNcovered, PARTIZANS 1985 and Dirty Bizness, PARTIZANS 1986) One statement that got Comalco/RTZ/CRA agitated came from the Aboriginal land rights worker and Weipa leader Joyce Hall, declaring that the company had treated Aborigines "like dogs".

ABC lost its case and had to pay record damages to Comalco. More recently, a film made about the disasterous social impact of Comalco operations in the Cape York peninsula - David Bradbury's "State of Shock" was threatened with similar action by CRA/Comalco. Who's next on the list? Apparently it's Frontline, the New Zealand Broadcasting system's current affairs programme, which in July exposed the appalling lengths to which Comalco has gone to secure cheap electricity for its Tiwai Point smelter, at the expense of New Zealand consumers, the environment, Maori land rights, politician integrity - and just about everything else of value on this planet.

According to a message we have received from CAFCA (Campaign Against Foreign Control of Aotearoa) Comalco is not only suing Frontline, but also the respected New Zealand newspaper, The Listener, which published a similar condemnation. Strangely enough though, RTZ itself seems to have taken the affair lying down. This is all the more peculiar since the single most damning statement made by Frontline was: "...the massive mining conglomerate RTZ has a dreadful record of exploitation in developing countries..." and goes on to mention the pillage of the Aboriginal territories in North Queensland. Although the Weipa documentary "Strangers in their own land" was first screened in Britain, RTZ kept a low profile. Will it do the same about Frontline - content to let its Comalco minions carry the can? Watch this space!

STOP PRESS.....Comalco New Zealand made a record profit last year, but has still had the audacity to claim it's getting an "inadequate" long-term return from its Tiwai Point smelter, thanks to electricity prices - although these are the cheapest in the country, and among the cheapest in the world.

Comalco is a liar, a fraud, a rip-off merchant, a polluter, a despoiler, a thief in the night, a robber by day, a purloiner of the land, the water and light itself.....now sue us!!!

IF YOU'RE NOT A PARTIZANS SUPPORTER, WE'D LIKE TO HEAR FROM YOU. EVEN IF YOU ARE.....

*I would like to take-out/renew my subscription to PARTING COMPANY
(£4 per year, £3 unwaged. Five issues per year).....Please Tick

*I would like the following publications: DIRTY BUSINESS (1986 report 80p).
RTZ UNCOVERED (1985 report 60p).
HIDDEN VIEW (1987 report 50p).

NAME.....ADDRESS.....

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WE are always interested in hearing from you, and are happy to answer questions or queries. The PARTIZANS collective welcomes input from newcomers. Please write to:

PARTIZANS, 218 Liverpool Road, London N1 1LE