

# Parting Company

The Newsletter of People Against RTZ and Subsidiaries (PARTIZANS) Winter 1993

still  
£1  
only

## EXCLUSIVE



## ***RTZ's New AGM Strategy Committee Meets***

Plus: Double Bluff at Gold Rock • PARTIZANS Visits the RTZ Arts Festival • Aborigines, Lies and Videotape • Namibians Won't Be Fooled Anymore • And much more inside...

# Editorial

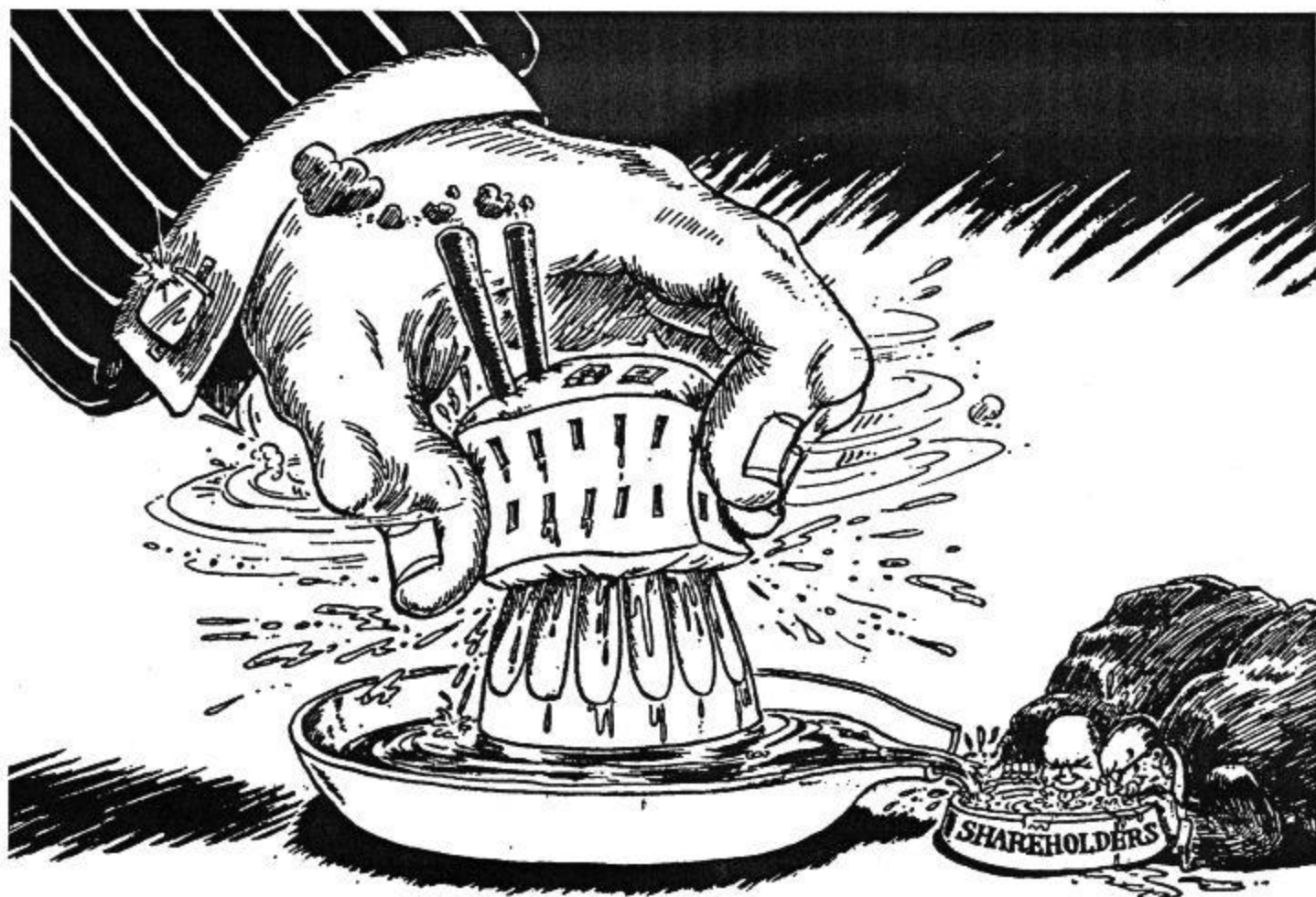
**A** chapter in the recent New Consumer employees' guide - **Britain's Best Employers?** - confirms the suspicions of a good many readers of **Parting Company**. RTZ is named as one of the least responsive and responsible companies when it comes to social and environmental issues. Contrast this with RTZ's latest **Review**, which presents a squeaky clean company image, and boasts large-scale assistance to groups doing good for their community and the environment. The gap between these two could not seem wider. Yet there are similarities between proponents and opponents of corporate mining - specifically RTZ's - which we would do well to consider. Each lobby ostensibly wants better environmental accountability. (RTZ participates in the International Council for Metals and the Environment, which has criticized the "appalling" pollution bequeathed by the USSR). The problem is that Partizans, FoE and a host of community groups want independent social and environmental assessments (EIAs or EISs) with life-cycle "accounting". They want it done in public and with full disclosure of all the evidence. RTZ continues to beat a retreat on every aspect of these demands. Last year, for example, it flatly

refused to disclose its long-awaited EIA on the Rossing mine. This wasn't despite, but because of, the controversy raised by the publication of the NSC/Partizan book **Past Exposure**.

Both sides also ostensibly want an end to poverty and ill-health in the South. But whereas most Partizans supporters see this deriving from agendas set by the South, RTZ is a strong supporter of the GATT round and multilateral funding agencies. The radical attack on the very concept of "development" now coming both from North and South plays no part in RTZ's *realpolitik*. Ironically, while accusing its detractors of being trapped in the past, RTZ's thinking still seems embedded in Walt Rostow's now widely-disparaged "trickledown" theory.

But the most crucial divide centres on the question of power. For some years, PARTIZANS has accused RTZ of a complete failure to perceive what it has done, or is doing, to land-based communities, specifically indigenous ones. RTZ has countered that it always involves local communities in what it is doing, and that the most

con't. on page 15...



# Double Bluff at Gold Rock

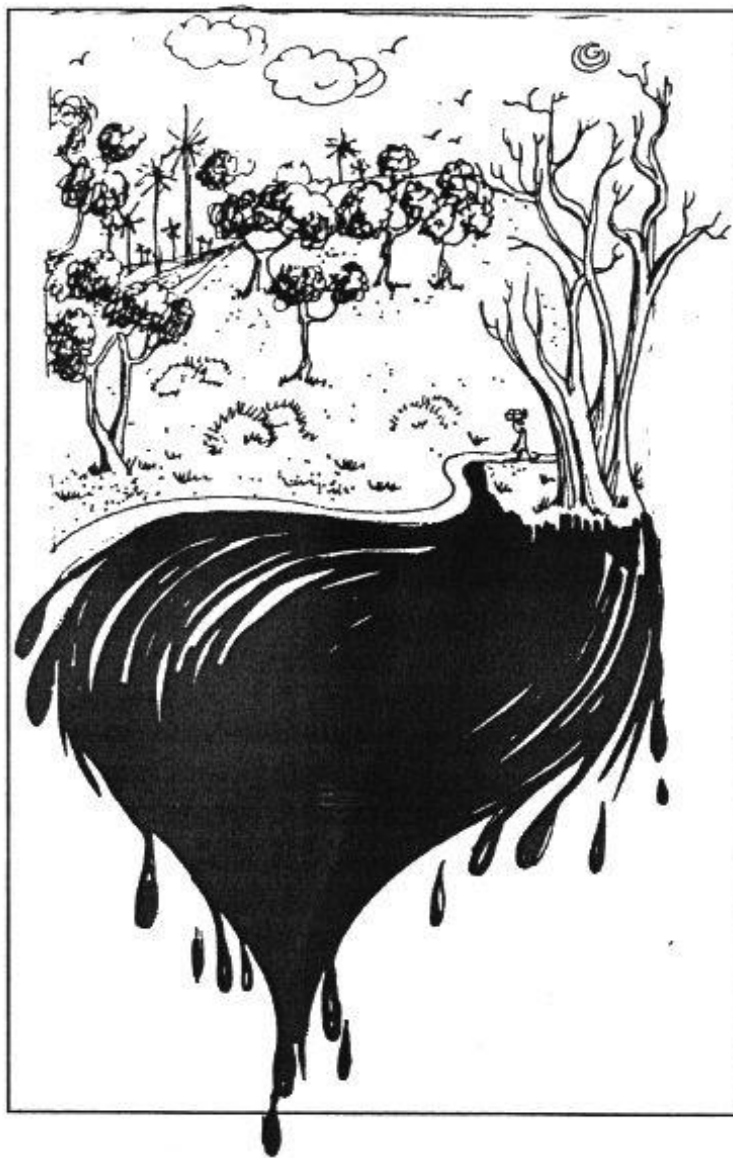
**A** subsidiary of Kennecott (RTZ 100%) has started exploring for gold in the Minas de Oro, Comayagua region of Honduras. This came only shortly after a US timber company, Stone, was chucked out of the country following massive popular protest. The gold deposit found by Fisher Watt Gold (whose major shareholder is Kennecott) may be worth \$1,600 million.

Many residents are worried that, if Kennecott are given the go-ahead for full scale exploitation, the environmental and social damage would far outweigh any benefits from new jobs. Residents have set up the Association of Conservation of Nature and Development of Minas de Oro to protect the region, while a national journalists' association has also launched a campaign.

Local people fear that if chemicals, such as cyanide, are used to extract the gold, then the water supply may become polluted. (see box - heap leaching). The mountainous area where the mine may be established is around springs that supply many local gravity-fed water systems. The mine pollution could seriously impair the quality of these rare water sources and the life they sustain. The effects of such pollution would thus be very widespread.

The company is playing a cool game of double bluff. Locally, Kennecott is saying that there is only a 1 in 30 chance of the mine going ahead. But, in the financial and mining press overseas (where it matters) Fisher Watt has said it is one of the most important recent gold discoveries.

A more immediate problem is that of deforestation and erosion. During drilling and related construction many of the dirt roads in the mountains above Minas de Oro have been widened and new ones constructed. This is of little relevance to local people, who travel almost exclusively by foot or on horse-back on previously existing roads and trails. The company's efforts to stop erosion with drainage ditches and by planting grass have been inadequate during the recent rainy season.



The Honduran government seems dismissive of any criticism of the company. The Minister of Natural Resources, Mario Nufio Gamero, has called environmental groups "lefties" and expressed fears that Kennecott will be forced to leave as was Stone.

Solidarity has been expressed by people in Wisconsin, also subject to threatened mining by Kennecott (the Flambeau Copper mine). After people in Minas de Oro asked Minewatch to send someone to talk to them about mining dangers and Kennecott in particular, Sister Toni Harris of the Sinsinawa Sisters in Wisconsin, visited Minas de Oro in January 1993. Although she spent only just over

a week in the area, she made contact with many local people, and protestors from around the country, some of whom who were born in the area but have since moved out. Thirty questions for Kennecott have been drawn up by the local environmental organisation, which the company has said should be "directed at our HQ in London". No doubt they will be!

*see box on page 13...*

# "Namibians Cannot Be Fooled Anymore!!!"

**T**he gloves are coming off in the fight over health and safety issues at Rössing Uranium. Last September a mission from the International Atomic Energy Agency toured the mine but their initial pronouncements failed to convince the Mineworkers Union of Namibia who had already begun to identify individual cancer cases. The full IAEA report is expected any time now. Also in September, The MUN attended the World Uranium Hearings in Salzburg and met other uranium miners and their communities. A group of environmentalists and scientists sent a technical letter from Salzburg to the IAEA, which remains unanswered. In the run-up to the IAEA mission, a Windhoek newspaper launched a political witch-hunt against assorted no-goodniks, and a war of words has continued with exchanges of letters between readers and the Manager for Corporate Affairs at Rössing. The company and the union have each placed full-page ads in the Namibian press. And in January, the MUN tabled proposals for a comprehensive environmental health and safety agreement.

## IAEA

The International Atomic Energy Agency is the UN body responsible for non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and radiation protection within nuclear energy programmes. In practice, the IAEA has generally functioned as a lobby organisation promoting the expansion of nuclear power. In 1991, the IAEA produced a study of Chernobyl which claimed that the 1986 accident did not result in any measurable radiological effects on the health of the local population. The study omitted data on the hundreds of thousands of people who were brought in as emergency clean-up crews or were evacuated at the time. By 1992 the World Health Organisation had found the thyroid cancer rate amongst children in the area running at 14 times normal.

The IAEA were approached by the Namibian Government just before the publication of "Past Exposure". A preliminary visit in March appears to have discovered problems with dust levels in the ore crushers, dust control at the Tailings Dam (a system of waste tyres and fishing nets), external radiation levels in parts of the mill and maintenance workshops, and radiation monitoring for workers who clean the loaded drums of uranium (they should wear finger dosimeters). The full team arrived in September and after two weeks

announced preliminary findings that gave Rössing a clean bill of health. However, their final report (due in February) has yet to appear.

On arrival, the union asked the IAEA to examine various technical issues arising from "Past Exposure", and also submitted their own report based on discussion amongst the shop stewards. This included lists of workers who had died of cancer and others currently suffering serious illness. The IAEA did not respond to most of the union proposals and refused to meet, interview, or medically examine any of the current cases. Instead, their preliminary report stated:

*"Grievances exist about some cases of illnesses, including lung cancer, which are thought to be related to radiation exposure. However, such cases can only be addressed in comparison to national vital statistics, which do not seem to exist."*

In other words, no matter how many people become ill or die, no matter what their exposure to radiation or dust may have been, no conclusion can be drawn because for some unknown reason the authorities in South African-occupied Namibia failed to compile cancer incidence rates and the new Government has not yet done so. In reality the lack of national statistics means that cases must be evaluated in the light of regional, continental or international data.

The IAEA seems to have concentrated on current operations at Rössing. According to team leader Mr. J.U. Ahmed, the fact that IAEA monitoring confirmed the low current radiation levels stated by the company, as well as the company's thorough records and technical ability, was enough to satisfy the IAEA about past issues. By this logic, Matrix Churchill could satisfy the IAEA that they had not exported arms to Iraq in 1989 by letting a trained accountant show the Agency their current order book, for checking against 1992 Customs records. Mr. Ahmed also told "The Namibian" that the team's brief did not include questions which could only be settled in court under Namibian law.

The IAEA told the union that allegations about failure to monitor the Whole Body Dose of radiation in past years were a political issue which the union would have to take up with the Government and which did not concern the IAEA. Once again, rather curious since control over Whole

Body doses is the basis of the radiation protection scheme of the International Commission on Radiological Protection (ICRP) which the IAEA applies and which Rössing claims to have upheld throughout all phases of its operation. "Past Exposure" disproves this claim. Does the IAEA really not care whether the company has purported to adhere to ICRP standards whilst actually violating them?

At this stage, the only public document arising from the IAEA visit is a Ministry of Foreign Affairs press statement on the preliminary findings. Aside from the reference to "some cases of illnesses", the statement consists of nothing but generalised praise for current operations:

- The radiation and general occupational safety programme at Rössing is of a high standard.

- The medical surveillance programme for workers and their families is excellent.

- The radiation exposure levels at various facilities are very low, much lower than the current international limits.

- At the low levels of exposures, the probabilities of radiation induced occupational illnesses are extremely low, well within acceptable levels of risk in safe industries.

- The radiation and radioactive contamination monitoring results of Rössing are reliable.

- The mill tailings management programme of Rössing and the associated surveillance programme are of good standard and conform with the current international standards.

- The mission is of the opinion that the radiation safety, occupational safety and medical surveillance programmes of Rössing can serve as good

examples to many similar industries around the world.

We can only hope that the final report will address the real questions about the past as well as the present, and will provide enough detail so that it can be properly evaluated.

### World Uranium Hearings

A few hours after the IAEA press conference, two MUN representatives and the Deputy Speaker of the Namibian Assembly (Parliament) flew off to Salzburg for the "World Uranium Hearings", a historic gathering of mining communities, miners, environmental activists and experts. It was the first chance for the Namibians and many others to share their experiences and recognise the full

impact of the nuclear fuel cycle on communities ranging from the survivors of Hiroshima to the Navajo who contracted lung cancer while digging uranium for more US weapons.



During the hearings, a group of 24 scientists and other researchers signed a detailed letter to the IAEA (copied to the Government at the time), raising a host of technical questions about their mission. For example, the letter asked:

*In view of the fact that UNSCEAR has identified radon releases from uncovered tailings piles to be the largest source of collective dose in the entire nuclear fuel cycle, what view does the IAEA take of the fact that the Tailings Dam is, and always has been uncovered? In judging the mill tailings management and surveillance programme to "conform with the current international standards", which international standards were applied? Are these equivalent to or more stringent than those applied to the US facilities, including the Environmental Impact Statement process which requires public participation and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission performance criteria?...Why is the tailings reclamation plan at Rössing kept secret?*

The response, after a month, was to refer all queries to the Government of Namibia on grounds of protocol. Clearly, no-one other than the IAEA and Rössing itself could answer these legitimate questions.

### War of Words

On the eve of the IAEA mission, a curious 4-page feature article appeared in the "Windhoek Advertiser". Entitled 'The War Against Rössing and the Consequences for Namibia' it began:

"Organisations and people ideologically opposed to the generation of electricity by nuclear power are waging a relentless war against Rössing Uranium Limited. Their objective is to damage Rössing's reputation, deny it opportunity to obtain new business and ultimately force it to shut down. They know that potential buyers of Rössing's product will shun a company whose environmental reputation is in tatters..." The article went on to a series of smears on the MUN plus various individuals and organisations in-

involved in "Past Exposure" and subsequent press coverage. For some reason Partizans was not mentioned. Perhaps an article which wrapped itself in patriotism and denounced foreigners could hardly acknowledge that the power behind Rössing was none other than RTZ, a British multinational.

In the wake of the IAEA press statement, Rössing placed full page ads in every Namibian newspaper claiming their case was fully vindicated and demanding that the union and all the critics cease their attacks. "All those who have the interests of Namibia at heart should now give encouragement to Rössing in its drive to increase its uranium sales, thus enabling it to return to its pre-eminent position in the Namibian economy."

The union publicly criticised the IAEA and pressed for an independent investigation of the medical issues. In mid-October, they placed their own full page ad in "The Namibian"

### For the past years the mineworkers at Rössing Uranium Limited experienced various health problems:

- 110 workers were early retired owing to ill health through medical separation scheme
  - 10 workers died of cancer and lung diseases
- 25 workers currently at the mine are still suffering from medical problems
- Approximately 60-70 people suffered permanent disability from 1982-1992...

The MUN requested the IAEA to seriously investigate the problems or causes which led to the health problems of the above mentioned numbers of comrades. This was not done. The IAEA instead did have an assignment to conduct a technical appraisal. No physical examination which included the assessment of the level of chromosome aberrations and gene mutations in blood cells of people exposed to radiation; the examination of the smoking-induced lung cancers versus radiation-induced lung cancers in smoking miners; dust related illnesses, including Chronic Obstructive Lung Disease.

The MUN rejected the findings since: It was preliminary in nature and even the Government promised to comment officially after the study of the full report. Also MUN rejected the report because of the poor credibility of the IAEA, especially at incidents like the Chernobyl disaster...

In turn Rössing is trying to score points in the industrial relations arena. They claim that MUN is campaigning for closure of Rössing while we were the only organisation who condemned retrenchment and even now condemn the hiring and firing campaign of innocent workers. How logical is it for the Namibian social fabric to believe this hogwash?...

### NAMIBIANS CANNOT BE FOOLED ANYMORE!!!

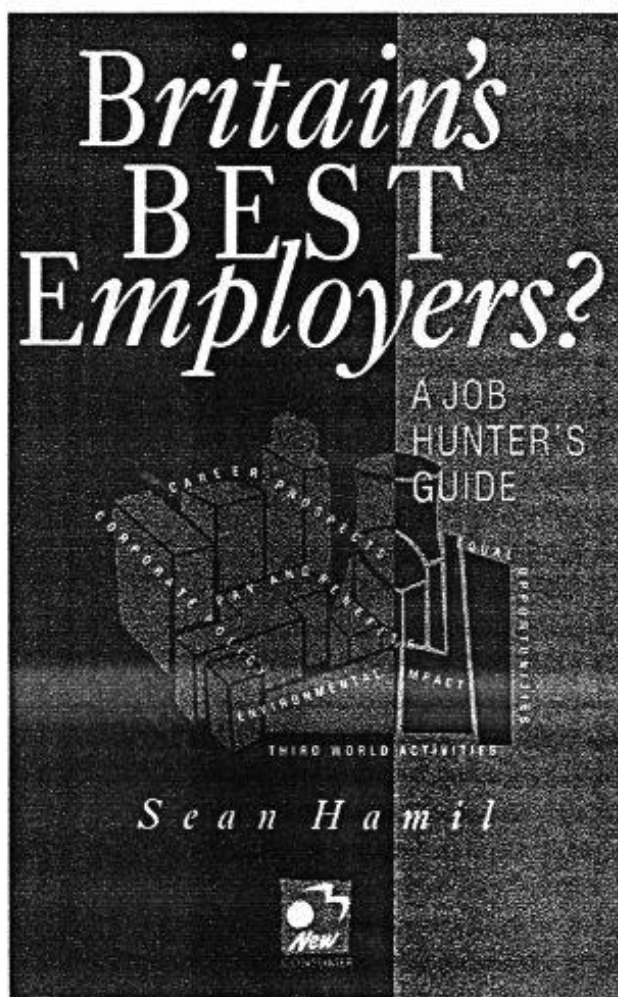
### Health and Safety Agreement

Last May, RTZ Chair Sir Derek Birkin told shareholders that the company had no objections in principle to reaching a health and safety agreement with the Mineworkers Union of Namibia at

Rössing Uranium comparable to the agreement at Rio Algom (Canada). As we go to press, the MUN have submitted detailed proposals for a comprehensive agreement which they seek to negotiate with management. **Watch this space...**

# Reviews

- THE SHAREHOLDERS ACTION HANDBOOK • BRITAIN'S BEST EMPLOYERS? A Job Hunter's Guide • WORLD OF WASTE • FROM GLOBAL CAPITALISM TO ECONOMIC JUSTICE • ECOLOGICAL TAX REFORM, A Policy Proposal for Sustainable Development •



*Craig Mackenzie The Shareholders Action Handbook (New Consumer 1992)*

The author of the concise and eminently readable **Share Holders Action Handbook** joined Partizans in 1992, just prior to that years RTZ annual general meeting. This was impressive "hands on" type research, and Craig Mackenzie's thoroughness is evident throughout this work. We are treated to a short history of the development of the modern British body corporate, followed by a well-argued critique of current practice. But where the book scores over other essays of the kind is in its attention to practical detail, as well as the dilemmas faced by activists.

From the initiation of Partizans in 1978, there has been an underlying tension between tactics designed to reform the company, and those aimed at undermining it. While Craig's survey - drawn from scores of examples - concentrates on the former, he does not neglect the latter. And not

only does Partizans feature as one of his preferred models, but a review of the handbook which appeared in **The Independent on Sunday** (January 17 1993) singled out our group for specific mention.

*Sean Hamil Britain's Best Employers? A Job Hunter's Guide (New Consumer 1993)*

A second offering from the New Consumer is more substantial - indeed quite over-awing. **Britain's Best Employers?** started life (without the question mark) as a positive guide for job hunters on who offered them their best market. In Sean Hamil's capable hands it has developed into a substantiative critique of business practices in (and outside) contemporary Britain. The scale is commendably broad - including not only private companies, but finance institutions and public sector services, such as the National Health Service and local authorities. Because the survey was often dependent on PR answers to a New Consumer Questionnaire, rather than an independent monitoring group, the quality of assessment is uneven. Some companies often in the public eye - such as Hanson, British Airways, BP, RTZ, or Royal Dutch Shell - get well-rounded appraisals. Other entries strive too hard to be even-handed, and sometimes don't include the very information which a prospective employee might be searching.

British Steel for example is singled out by Sean Hamil for its environmental initiatives, yet it committed five major pollution offences in Britain between summer 1991 and late 1992 - the last of which was called by **End** magazine: "probably the most important prosecution brought by HM Inspectorate of Pollution (HMIP) since it began flexing its legal muscles". At roughly the same time, Friends of the Earth cited the company as a major culprit tipping toxic wastes, including heavy metals, into sewers. British Nuclear Fuels, which merits the longest single entry in the book, gets a good summary of its domestic operations and the overall impacts of nuclearisation; surprisingly there is no mention of its overseas uranium operations or contracts.

*con't. page 16 ...*

# PARTiZANS visits the RTZ arts Festival...

**F**or the first time, last year RTZ held a "Festival of Arts" at St James Chapel near to Picadilly. The festival consisted of a week of music, different varieties, classical, jazz, etc...all pleasantly splendid, comfortable, stuff and in the perfect venue, a chapel renowned for its humanitarian stance, ideal for public relations (sic).

Ideal to relax to after a hard days work in the office, counting profits made from exploiting and polluting the earth, that's if you work for RTZ anyway. Well this year there was a little alternative entertainment, which the RTZ organisers and audience didn't find so comfortable.

It all started when PARTiZANS received a brochure advertising the festival "promoting culture and the arts." Immediately, plans for a protest were put into action. Alexandra, PARTiZANS graphic designer, started work on a leaflet to let the public know what RTZ are really up to and compiled a mock, simulation of the "official leaflet" which RTZ used to advertise the festival. PARTiZANers were contacted to form a picket outside the gates of the chapel and plans for a banner drop inside the chapel were conceived.

Towards the end of the Jazz session, on the Thursday, Colin and Richard, two PARTiZANers stood up with a banner and walked in front of the stage obscuring the band from the sight of the audience. All the audience could see now was a banner saying:

**Plunder! The story of RTZ.**

Many people reached for their leaflets and began to read them. About six of the organiser henchmen, approached Colin. One said " I think it is

time that you left." to which Colin replied "I think that there are a lot of people around the world that think its time RTZ left." They turned around and walked away, leaving Colin and Richard standing with the banner for the remainder of the evening.



After the performance two upset RTZ employees confronted students on their actions.

Following on from this performance the Guildhall college principal involved, has borrowed a copy of **Plunder** and is setting up separate meetings

with PARTiZANS and RTZ to assess the ethics of the funding. But it has been discovered recently that an independent board of trustees is responsible for sponsorship.

**The following reports come from a PARTiZANS demonstrator and one of the Guildhall students at the concerts...**

Albert who practically manned a constant one man vigil on the church reports:  
*Having so enjoyed myself on the previous two pickets, i went back on the Friday. i was there in good time to leaflet most people on their way in. Good reaction from some concert-goers; one person, in the lobby waiting for a friend, came back to the steps and said how pleased she was to get a leaflet, having spotted the sponsorship. i said did you know about RTZ and the reply was to the effect that anyone that was politically literate knew what sort of a company they were! But the RTZ/organisers group inside were unhappy again. A guy came out-who eventually turned out to be involved, along with the music*



college, having some of their people sponsored to do visual arts things around the place-with official leaflets who tried to get people arriving to have the "proper" "official" ones... but he obviously had no political experience in terms of distributing leaflets to the masses (as i pointed out) because i did much better than him. He was a bit belligerent, though basically OK underneath. Asked me if i was a communist, if i was employed etc... I tried to puncture a few stereotypes. He said that RTZ could sue for plagiarising their design on the alternative leaflet - said i looked forward to the court case eagerly. He said hadn't RTZ sued over allegations in the leaflet since they were also all published in the book (Plunder) plugged on the leaflet: I said why did he think they hadn't sued, maybe because the allegations were true? He thought about it and couldn't think of a better reason, and shut up for a while.

The guy also - after prompting from the others inside - said i couldn't stand there on private property, they had hired the church and they had no right etc.... i explained that until disestablishment, any British citizen had right of public access to a Church of England church without let or hinderence - part of the constitution and all that - actually i made that up on the spot! He seemed impressed and stopped trying to get me to go. Some slightly upper-class-twit types came and one of them asked for a large number of leaflets - not admitting that i was down to the last handful in my bag, i said they'd better pay for their own photocopying if they wanted that many; where upon another of them tried to grab the ones in my hand and started tearing them. But my firm grip and withering look were enough to save the leaflets.

After the concert started another woman from inside came to talk to me - she'd looked at the leaflet and was terribly concerned, and talked about it all for ages. Turned out she was a sculpture student at the academy and had something being displayed, but was upset about what she had found. She seemed a really good sort, and eventually we retired to the coffee shop next to the church for a coffee and a sticky cake. (well i had a sticky cake.) She and I sat with some of the people she knew from her college (including the "upper class twitish" ones) - The woman turned out to be some one involved in the college sponsorship deals etc. i talked a bit but mostly it degenerated into an argument between Sara and the college woman. Woman going on about how grants would suffer if they didn't have sponsors; Sara saying that she wouldn't care if the whole academy closed down if only the earth could be saved ...all good passionate stuff.

I eventually left my leaflets on other tables for the interval and crept off. All in all, very worth while - both the contact and knowing a bit about how upset they were

about the opposition was very useful. And knowing how the arts people arguing for RTZ could only do so by virtue of their ignorance or class-stereotype bias. And especially good to know that the debate maybe going on within the arts bodies (the academy to perhaps, as well as the music college).

### Now over to Loz Speyer:

One week before the festival, students from the Guildhall school of music contacted PARTiZANS asking if we knew anything about the festival and requested to meet us for more information about the company. At the meeting the students explained to us that they were on a one year Jazz course and that five of the students were indirectly sponsored by RTZ and knew nothing about it. They were quite outraged and said that one of the conditions on their contracts was to play performances for the school and that the performance had been booked before the course started. There was no way of avoiding playing the performance without breaking their contracts; however the students came up with two conditions that had to be met by the college, if they were to play, otherwise they were prepared to break their contracts. The conditions were :

- 1.) That the college authorities agree to examine evidence available from PARTiZANS and consider turning down future sponsorship from RTZ, and
- 2.) That the students are allowed to include in the performance spoken introductions and musical material adequate to express the feelings on the matter. Every member of the big band and some others signed the agreement and it was presented to the principal. After another meeting it was agreed to, as long as the intros were "sensible" and that no direct reference was made to RTZ.

On the 15th of October 1992 the performance went ahead. It started with a singers group doing two black south African songs and a Billy Holiday song specifically about racism. Spoken Indirect introductions were used to build tension and the big band concert followed with their session containing an angry improvisation and a theme lamenting the destruction of the rainforests, called "The day the Earth caught fire". A dedication of the ANC's "freedom charter" (the ten main points forming the lyrics) to the workers of the Rossing uranium mine who are suffering from illnesses contracted due to lack of correct health procedures.

# Aborigines, Lies, and Videotape

**W** Whose interests exactly does the state government of Western Australia represent? Certainly not those of the Aboriginal communities in the area. Nor those of environmentally conscious people who share the Aborigines' well founded fears about the long term consequences of large scale mining projects. Once again over the past year, the state government has shown itself to be the ally of the multinational mining companies, promoting their interests over and above the legitimate claims of the Aboriginal communities. In effect the stamp of legality is given to what is little more than cultural and environmental desecration, disguised as economic development.

On the 26th of February last year, work started at the Marandoo iron ore project owned by Hamersley Iron, a subsidiary of CRA, RTZ:49%). Ten days were allowed to salvage archaeological sites around the mine, to the dismay of the Karijini Aboriginal Corporation which pointed out that this hardly allowed time to cover the 105 sites stretching over an area of 200 sq. kilometers. Hamersley was given the go-ahead, despite a recommendation made by the WA Museum's Aboriginal Cultural Committee (ACMC) which advises the govt. on Aboriginal cultural matters. The Museum asked for consent to use the land to be denied, on the basis that 105 new sites of ethnographic and archaeological significance had been discovered. However, the

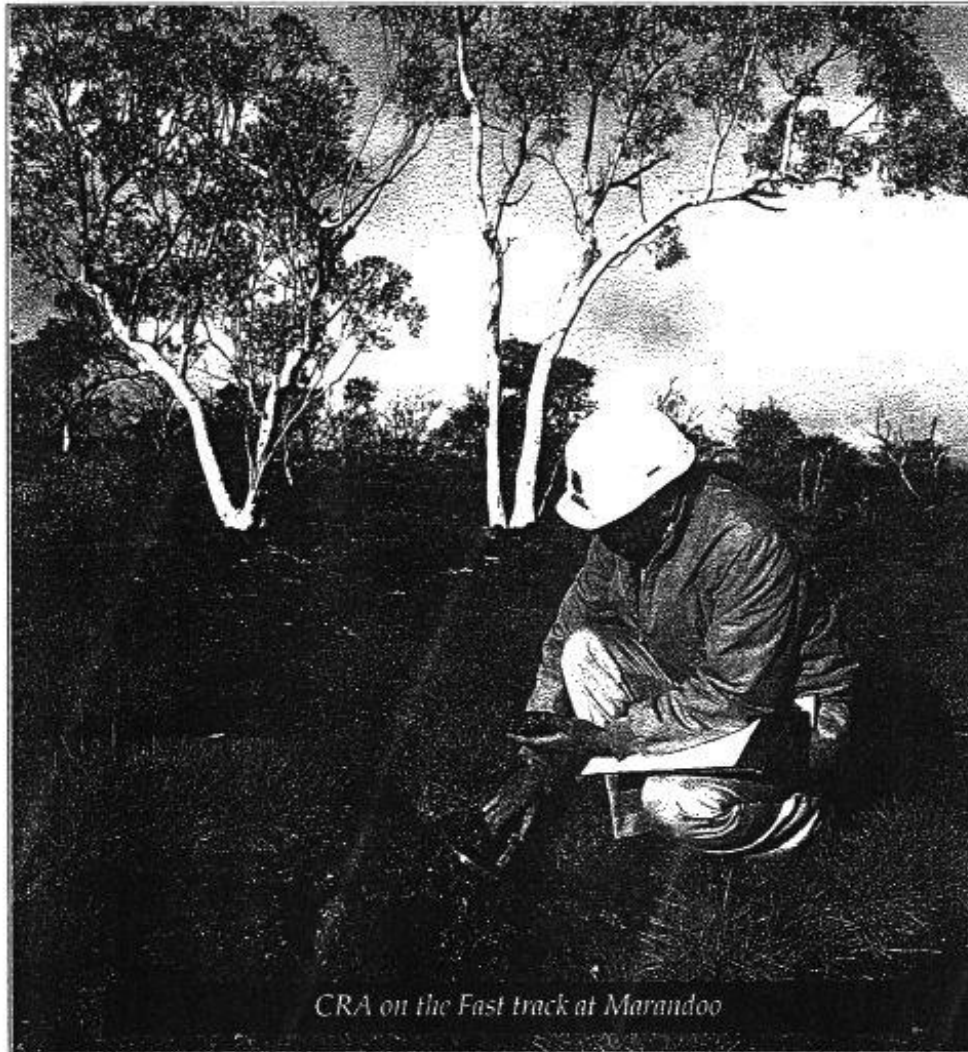
mining industry pointed out that, if the project did not get the go ahead soon, markets would dry up. The Liberal party opposition also opposed allowing (as they saw it) hundreds of thousands of job opportunities to slip away at a time of record unemployment.

WA premier Carmen Lawrence pledged in January that, if necessary, her government would

introduce new legislation to override the Aboriginal heritage laws which were likely to hold up the project. And, indeed in early February, Hamersley Iron was granted Aboriginal sites' clearance on condition that they protect or avoid a mere 3 out of the 150 sites identified by the Museum and record several others. Hamersley was, of course, very pleased with these conditions but remained anxious that the project

could be held up by court action brought by Aboriginal communities under the Aboriginal Heritage Act. The mining industry demanded that the red tape "be cut and a one stop shop set up to allow developers to get on with the job" (West Australian 17/1/92). As a result the government rushed legislation through a special sitting of parliament to ensure that no action could be taken to halt the progress of the project on the basis of breaches of the Aboriginal Heritage Act.

The Karijini Aboriginal Corporation immediately applied to the Federal Minister for Aboriginal



*CRA on the Fast track at Marandoo*

Affairs, Robert Tickner, to stop work on the project going ahead under the Aboriginal and Torres Islander Protection Act. This same legislation had been used to delay the proposed Newmont/BHP mine at Coronation Hill and contributed to the final decision to ban it. However, the Federal government backed the actions of its state government. Robert Tickner said he was not convinced the project threatened Aboriginal sites with immediate desecration as was required for the act to apply, and he gave the company unrestricted access for drilling and sampling. He expressed the hope that the company would give early indications that it is committed to improved Aboriginal relations and to advancing Aboriginal employment and economic development as part of the project.

Shallow sentiments indeed from politicians who have just removed from the Aboriginal communities in WA the last remaining legal claims to land which is rightfully theirs. And all this in the interests of a company which has an appalling record where Aboriginal affairs are concerned. As one correspondent to the Western Australian press asked: "What is the point of having any Aboriginal Heritage Legislation if the government is simply going to legislate around it in favour of every mining development proposal?...This is not

a question of jobs, it's not a question of fighting our way out of economic recession. It's a question of which laws can suddenly become dispensable at the will of whoever can shout the loudest." (WA 1/1/92)

This process of rushing through legislation in the interest of industrial developers over the rights of ordinary people has been going on since the early days of the industrial revolution all over the world. In Australia it has acquired the technologically up-to-date term "fast-tracking," as though life on earth were just so much video tape which the rich and powerful can simply adjust to suit their image. The implications of fast-tracking are disastrous. The way is now open for other mining projects successfully held up under the Aboriginal Heritage Act to go ahead, for example the Yakabindi Nickel project of Dominion Mining. Most recently, MIM Holdings was given fast tracked government approvals, after releasing a hurriedly produced draft environmental impact statement, so it can 'develop' a huge lead-silver-nickel deposit on the Gulf of Carpentaria over and above the longstanding claims of the people to the land. As Mick Dodson, Director of the Northern Land Council, said for **Land Right's News**: "Fast-tracking is a shameful disgrace."

## Worst of the Worst!

---

Human Rights organisation tells world's biggest mining company where to shove its pickles

---

Survival International has named RTZ as the "worst" of the world's "worst companies" operating on (or threatening) native land in the Americas. The major human rights organisation published their hit list in September 1992, to commemorate the disastrous Columbus landfall in the "new world", which was followed by the murder and exploitation of millions of its inhabitants.

Survival specifically cites RTZ's copper project on Lac Courte Oreilles Treaty land in Wisconsin. Although reference was also made to the huge radioactive legacy left by Rio Algom's Elliot Lake uranium mines, the criticism was toned down after RTZ claimed it had sold its controlling interest in the Canadian company.

Within days of receiving the hit list, RTZ lawyers threatened to take libel action against Survival. (Interestingly, the company did not taken any

action against Partizans' affiliate, Minewatch, which was co-researcher of the material on mining.) The organisation neither ignored, nor acceded to, RTZ's threats. On launching Survival's **Report on the Americas** to a packed House of Commons press conference in mid-September, the group's director, Stephen Corry, made it clear that Survival would not be intimidated. RTZ has taken no further action against the organisation it once threatened to "crush like a fly!"

Several newspapers covered the launch. Rob Edwards in a full-page spread in **Scotland on Sunday** indicted RTZ as a corporation which "has threatened the lives of 100,000 native Americans".

Copies of Survival's **REPORT ON THE AMERICAS** and its corporate "hit list", can be obtained from 310 Edgware Road, London W2 1DY

# Bougainville... A War for CRA

**L**ate last year the Papua New Guinean government, under the direction of newly-elected Prime Minister Paias Wingti, sent troops into the island of Bougainville. It was supposed to be the "final putsch" against the island's independence movement, which had already been forced to cede areas in the south and north. But Wingti's predictions have proved wide of the mark. As we go to press, up to 6,000 guerrillas, apparently loyal to the Bougainville Revolutionary Army of Francis Ona, had repulsed actions aimed at securing the Panguna area. This is the site of the RTZ/CRA mine whose operations were at the root of the determination to "go it alone" on Bougainville in 1989.

At last, the war against Bougainville is being recognised for what it really is, both inside and

outside the Pacific region. That is to say - as a belligerent neo-colonialist action against a community with justifiable political, social and environmental aspirations.

One of the strongest condemnations of the recent PNG invasion (crucially backed by continued Australian military and moral support) has come from Solomon Islands Prime Minister Solomon Malamoni. In a letter to Wingti in November 1992, he said he does not understand why the war continues as "this is a war for CRA, for Bougainville Copper Ltd". This view is very much that of those who have been most profoundly affected by the mine and the war - the community around Panguna. The following statement by the Panguna Landowners Association was made at the end of 1992:

1. We totally condemn the landings of the Papua New Guinea armed forces in central Bougainville. Their presence in central Bougainville is doing more harm than good to the well-being of people's lives.
2. We totally condemn the involvement of the Australian Government in the Bougainville crisis, with the supply of deadly combat helicopters, arms, ammunition, and training of Papua New Guinea armed forces and personnel.
3. Now, the world should be well aware of the fact that the war on Bougainville is purposely sponsored and underwritten by the Australian Government to suppress the landowners, while protecting the Australian multinational companies like CRA, BCL, MINENCO and so forth.

A good example is the Australian Government's continually pressurising Papua New Guinea Government to reopen the PANGUNA mine.

Another desperate move: on 6.12.1992 was the photographing of Panguna mine and Arawa township by Australia and Papua New Guinea Government authorities with CRA personnel, which was purposely done to evaluate the existing equipment and properties which indicate the utmost interest to reopen the Panguna mine. We now understand and have seen with our eyes the destructive effects of the Bougainville Copper mine operations on our land, our environment, our society and our culture.

## **THE MINE WILL REMAIN CLOSED FOR THE REST OF OUR LIVES**

Stop press. In January 1993, CRA Minerals PNG representative Mosely Moramoro was widely quoted (e.g. in Pacific Islands Monthly, February 1993) as saying that the Bougainville mine would not re-open with an armed guard and without

enjoying the support of the people on the island. But when Minewatch asked CRA in Melbourne to verify this statement, their PR department said they knew of no such promise having been made. Was someone flying kites?

# Letter to the Editors

## Handling the AGM

(The controversy surrounding last year's RTZ annual general meeting centred on the degree to which critics should "parley with the enemy" after the event. We have already covered some points of view in Parting Company. Here Lorna Richardson adds her guinea's worth)

*The articles about the 1992 RTZ AGM in the last Parting Company (summer 1992) struck home to me. I was one of the dissident shareholders who, after the protests and the business, duly trotted into the corporate parlour to slurp corporate coffee while arguing - in the politest possible way - with an endless procession of men-in-suits. Afterwards, I felt utterly depressed, co-opted, disempowered with the effort of being "reasonable" with people whose activities revolt me, and whose code of ethics I can barely comprehend.*

*This contrasts sharply with my experience of other AGMs. I've previously quite enjoyed getting my drag outfit and my party shoes out of mothballs and becoming the Enemy Within, spreading subversion and information as I go. But this year I felt far too much of the*

*Within and not nearly enough of the Enemy. I think there is a place for dialogue with RTZ. However, our part in any dialogue has to be done with infinite care, and on our terms, so that we don't get co-opted, don't get used for RTZ public relations ends, don't get side-tracked, mollified, disempowered by corporate bullshit. This isn't easy, and I now think the 1992 RTZ AGM was not the right time for it.*

*At the same time, it wasn't all bad - there was powerful protest, good information, and aware, angry people. It may be that RTZ has simply become better at trying to contain us, and we have to learn how to adapt to this. Or, better yet, to again become the ones to set the agenda.*

*I really like KM's idea of having our own party/postmortem/recovery event afterwards, and I hope that many of us who had felt co-opted by RTZ in 1992 will be a lot more able to resist this process in 1993.*

LR

### The Ins and Outs of Leaching...

Gold is a notoriously un-reactive metal. Thus it can be found free (when panned for) but when in solid rock it requires powerful agents to extract it. This may be cyanide or other chemicals, which may have harmful effects should they seep into the environment. There are three common ways of using cyanide to extract the gold.

First **in-situ leaching** or **solution mining** where the chemicals are pumped into the ground and dissolve the gold in-situ. The solution is then pumped to the surface and the gold removed. This is the most dangerous method - obviously cyanide can get directly into the water table! It was the proposed method of CRA at Eastville, Victoria, Australia in the early eighties, until farmers protests forced the company to abandon its plans. The second method is **heap leaching**, where the ore is mined and placed on a supposedly impermeable sheet, then sodium cyanide is poured over the heap, the run off is collected and treated to extract the gold. But these sheets can rupture and decay while much of the run-off may not be collected or recycled thus getting into local ground water. The safest method is **vat leaching** where the ore and chemicals are processed in an enclosed container, thus ensuring that no pollution escapes by mistake. This is also the most costly method, so not preferred by the industry, and still involves storing dangerous chemicals on site.

# RTZ plays Pilate...

**I**n the summer 1992 issue of *Parting Company* we reported that the Argyll local authority, Nova Scotia, Canada had proposed using the closed East Kemptville Tin Mine as a landfill site for the Halifax area. Until May last year, responsibility for the mine lay in the hands of RTZ. Demanding an environmental assessment and clean-up of the site before it is sold by Rio Algom or used for any other purpose, Nova Scotians for a Clean Environment (NSCE) presented a petition against the landfill proposal with 12,215 signatures. According to NSCE this initiative - along with a statement by the Minister of Natural Resources that he "could not approve of the idea as there was sufficient ore in the ground to re-open the mine" - has now killed the proposal. But the struggle for an Environmental Impact Assessment and reclamation of the East Kemptville Tin Mine continues.

Although the mine was closed in late 1991, the company has still not carried out a clean-up. NSCE has been demanding this, because of concern about damage to the Tusket river. On 25 May 1992 the tailings dam spillway was closed after an acute lethality test showed a high level of aluminium. It is also important to note that, in 1990, heavy metal tests on the crustacean *Daphnia Magna* killed them all. *Daphnia Magna* appears more susceptible to the effects of metals in the water than the rainbow trout normally used for testing. NSCE has grave concerns about the multi-million dollar lobster industry situated at the mouth of the Tusket river if the flow of metals downstream is not stopped. Tests done on water and sediment at this point indicate that metals may be building up. Concern is heightened by a report, leaked to NSCE, which states that the sediments of Duck Pond Brook show elevated

levels of arsenic, cadmium, copper, manganese, and zinc.

Minewatch has also received a copy of a video sent to NSCE anonymously which clearly shows the condition of the site after the mine was closed.

*flashback to 1991*

## Clean-up at mine site will take years and cost millions

by GREG BENNETT  
*Vanguard Staff Writer*

The environmental reclamation of the East Kemptville Tin Mine will be a long and expensive process, taking years and millions of dollars to complete.

In preliminary studies to reclaim the open-pit mine, planners envisaged that the main pit area would be naturally flooded, a process that could take up to seven years. The flooding of the pit would create a deep man-made lake, and would be around one-and-a-half kilometre long and half-a-kilometre wide.

The depth of the lake would reach 60-metres in places.

The main concern for Depart-

### GLOSSARY

Tailings — refuse material separated in the mining and milling process

Hundreds of barrels which the Nova Scotia Dept of the Environment claimed were "buried under tons of rock after being neutralized and cleaned" are visible in open dumps and drainage ditches. The content of many of the barrels seeps through corroded metal into the soil and small streams. The video bears witness to the scandalous irresponsibility of a company which has left a toxic disaster in the wake of their business interests.

From Sept 1992 to 15 March 1993, Nova Scotia taxpayers, through the provin-

cial government, will pay Rio Algom \$80,000.00 a month to hold off on demolishing the buildings on the site. The government feels that such demolition would make it impossible to sell the mine. Two Chinese tin mining firms and a Canadian company are said to be interested in purchase. But Rio Algom has said that, once the mine is sold, they will not accept any responsibility for damage at the site. The cost of clean-up will become the taxpayers burden unless there is an immediate assesment and Rio Algom is forced to take responsibility. Says NSCE: the government of Nova Scotia must ensure that any new company buying and operating the East Kemptville tin mine has sufficient funds to pay for an environmental clean up when it evacuates the site. Meanwhile, by selling its majority holding in Rio Algom - just when the going was getting tough in East Kemptville and at Elliot Lake - RTZ has tried to wash its hands of a legacy of pollution and injury affecting thousands of Canadians.

vociferous of its critics are those furthest from its operations. It would be naive to expect that this gulf in perspectives could be overcome through the favoured north American practice of "round table discussions". For what is at issue is not "the facts" - about whether this process is polluting, or that mineral product is beneficial - but the entire process by which choices are presented and decisions are made, and who is entitled to make them.

**It is in this regard that RTZ's perceptions and practice have not moved on in more than 25 years.**

This is the truth we have to take with us to this year's annual general meeting. The recent Cadbury Report - despite its softcentredness - especially indicts company practice when it comes to responsiveness to shareholders: a lot of what we have been saying for more than a decade is reflected in that report. However, the most important

thing to realise is that, in essence, RTZ is an institution based upon a set of beliefs which most of us repudiate.

Surely we do not want a dialogue. Instead we need to assert the truth as we - and millions of others around the world - see it.

**LITTLE KNOWN FACTS ABOUT RTZ  
No 107**

RTZ is the only mining company which is a member of the Nuclear Forum, a rabidly pro-nuclear consortium set up under the auspices of British Nuclear Fuels. The NF also includes Laing, Costain, Lloyd's Register of Shipping, Philips, Rolls Royce, old Uncle Tom Wimpey and all...old Uncle Tom Wimpey and all!

---

## Women are a girl's best friend...

Or - a diamond is forever, and so is acid waste

Most readers of this magazine probably never listen to Woman's Hour. A pity, perhaps, for this longest-surviving women's radio show has been slowly edging out of the kitchen and into the front room. As we went to press, the programme was putting the finishing touches to an examination of the jewellery trade, from the perspective of its worst-affected victims. Joji Carino, a longstanding supporter of Partizans, was expected to be interviewed just after her return from the gold-mining areas of the Philippine Cordillera.

Woman's Hour had also lined up RTZ to rebut any criticisms of gold and diamond mining (It is, after all, the world's biggest single producer). Surprise, surprise! When the corporation learned that Minewatch and Partizans might be involved, it backed down, saying it would send in just a

written statement. According to a representative of Woman's Hour, RTZ stated that it was their policy not to join in any media event with these two groups. This reaction will come as little surprise to Partizans who have long known that the company's avowed openness to join in public debate was simply a PR fraud.

(Background note: A year ago Edinburgh University Students Union also invited RTZ to speak in a debate on the relationship between industrialisation and the position of indigenous peoples. According to the Union, the company showed initial enthusiasm. But when RTZ learned that Partizans had also agreed to speak, it withdrew without explanation.)

## More Reviews

...cont. from page 7

The Body Shop is also let off relatively lightly: no reference to criticisms made of its divisive influences among indigenous Brazilians, or its indirect reliance on vivisection. Similarly, while long-standing criticisms of the Macdonald's "food" chain are cited, we are left with the impression that it scores high on ethnic employment for largely altruistic reasons. (The reality is that Big Mac targets those sections of the community looking for short-term employment, while sales are also pitched at a polyglot range of consumers. Macdonald's isn't culturally imperialist; rather it entirely lacks culture. Its ethic is non-discriminatory in every sense of the term.)

All attempts to rate corporate operations on a moral scale are unsatisfactory, because they depend on full disclosure of company information (which, as Hamil points out, is rarely forthcoming), a lot of personal judgment and, to a degree, on vague statements of intent. The author quotes Sir John Quinton of Barclay's protesting to Trevor Huddleston in 1985 that the bank was still being boycotted by the Anti-apartheid movement, even though it had sold its stakes in South Africa: "I thought Jesus Christ told the sinner who repented to go away and sin no more. He didn't put him on good behaviour for six months!"

Allegedly, Huddleston laughed and the AAM boycott was swiftly withdrawn. This illustrates the core of the problem in so-called corporate accountability: contrition is often taken as a sign of improvement, when it may be just a ploy. (Barclay's actually continued to benefit from profits in South Africa long after its purported change of heart.) Sean Hamil is also inclined to describe company policies as "innovative". But this may simply mean they're changing the wallpaper, rather than tearing down the walls.

*Ken Gourlay World of Waste (Zed Books 1992)*

Anyone acquainted with Ken Gourlay's **Poisoners of the Seas** (Zed books 1988) will expect not only vivid description, but also thoroughgoing analysis of any industrial horror to which he turns his intellectual scalpel. **World of Waste** does not disappoint. Starting with a radical definition of waste as "what we don't want", Ken Gourlay continually draws our attention to exactly who profits from the disposal of what, and at the expense of whom. It is a distasteful, nightmarish

journey through sludge and sewers, mines and heavy metals, nuclear reactors and repositories, pastures and pesticides.

His conclusions are also typically forthright. The enormous deleterious impact of waste, says Gourlay, "arise not from its disposal, but from failure to dispose of it." Moreover, "...any theory of development must look not only at the beginning of the process - the limits imposed by the availability of resources, but also at the end - the limit determined by the amount of waste produced."

Given the evidence that, collectively, we have paid even less attention to the former than the latter - or rather, that the relationship between the two is rarely defined or recognized - it is scarcely surprising that that Gourlay's conclusions are deeply pessimistic. "As one looks around the world, the effects of greed, short-sightedness and stupidity... there is little to suggest that, apart from a few rainforest Indians, humanity cares very much for the fragile planet on which we live."

But of course this is not true. As a polemicist and rigorous enquirer, Ken Gourlay is in his element attacking the Big Guns. He is apparently less at home among those trying to spike them. Regrettably, very few such movements are mentioned, the success stories are given short shrift (just one recent example: late last year the majority of Native American Nations in the USA agreed not to continue allowing their lands to be used for hazardous and nuclear disposals) and there is no contact list. If there is a second edition of this invaluable work, these defects should surely be corrected.

*Arjun Makhijani From Global Capitalism To Economic Justice (Apex Press 1992)*

*Ernst U von Weizsacker and Jochen Jesinghaus Ecological Tax Reform A Policy Proposal for Sustainable Development (Zed Books 1992)*

Arjun Makhijani, Ernst von Weizsacker and Jochen Jesinghaus present us with two works aimed at improved world management. This is not the term Makhijani would espouse; though I have less doubts about the authors of **Ecological Tax Reform**. The solutions they propose - essentially to the "crisis of capitalism" as a project which denies human aspirations while promoting global profligacy - certainly differ. Makhijani wants



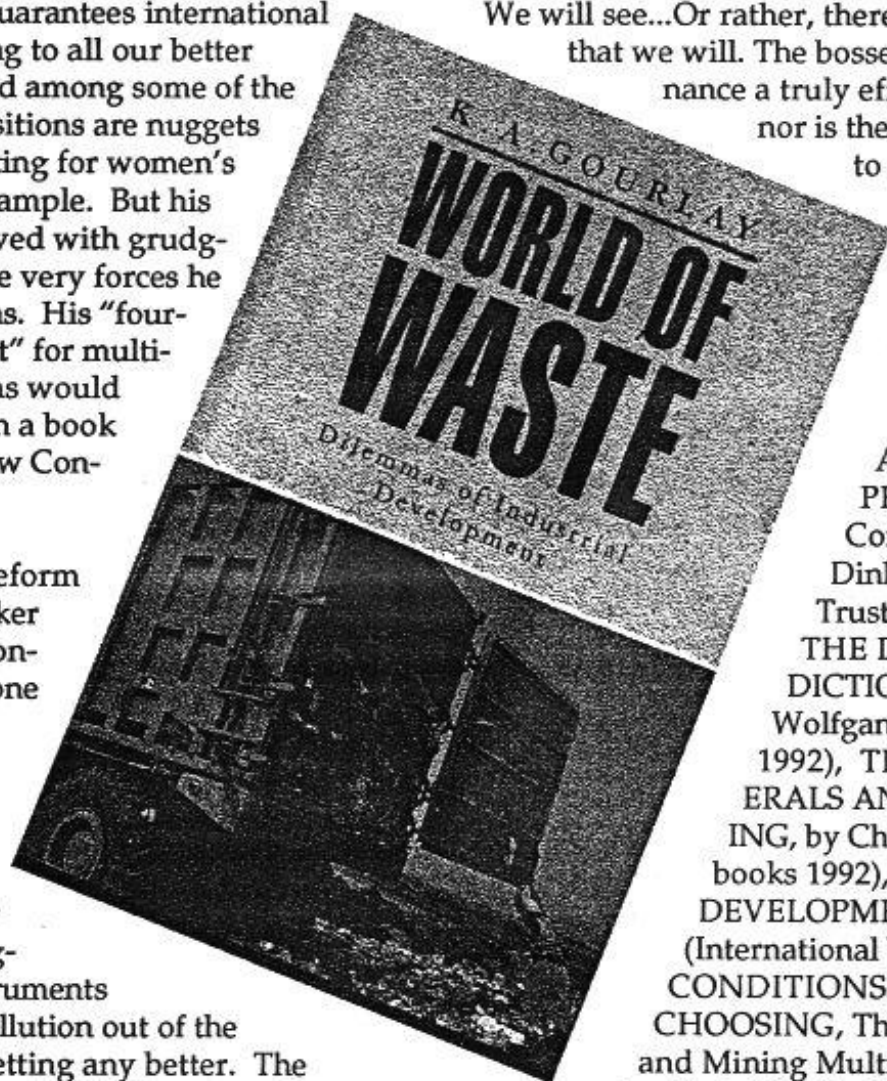
reform inter alia of the world monetary system, and the opening up (under controlled conditions) of international borders. Weizsaker and Jesinghaus have a more modest aim in view: ensuring that we all pay for what we shouldn't be getting free - namely the depletion or contamination of our ecological "capital", primarily that of fossil fuels.

Paradoxically, Makhijani's millenarian menu may actually be less radical than the interim medicine which Weizsaker and Jesinghaus invite us to swallow. His prescription is a curious mixture of bowing to market forces, enlarging the role of the UN (god forbid - to the point where the United Nations militarily guarantees international trade!) and appealing to all our better principles. Sprinkled among some of the more bizarre propositions are nuggets of wisdom - accounting for women's house work is an example. But his road to utopia is paved with grudging acceptance of the very forces he polemically disclaims. His "fourteen rules of conduct" for multinational corporations would have sat far better in a book published by the New Consumer.

The ecological tax reform proposed by Weizsaker and Jesinghaus by contrast examine only one aspect of what is clearly wrong with the contemporary western-style economic system: the fact that, despite various pragmatic economic instruments designed to price pollution out of the ecosphere, it ain't getting any better. The authors conclude that the "polluter pays" principle - while an essential starting point - leaves a lot to be desired. (Not least in ascribing responsibility to particular agencies which cannot be called to account.) Instead they propose a series of tax reforms on those products and services which reduce our global ability to sustain the ways of life to which we have become accustomed. Now if that sounds like a conundrum, it is a central one which the authors don't resolve.

Commissioned as they were to present proposals which would be palatable to the Business Council for Sustainable Development, they recoil from any attack on the social structures and markets which have created the poverty that has led to the profligacy they deplore. Little wonder some businessmen have applauded this slender book. However, there is a prospect that W and J may be hoisted by their own petard. While shrinking from any action that might threaten capitalists, tax reforms, properly geared to "life cycle" accounting for ecological damage, would surely transform the manufacturing sector, to the extent that capitalism might itself be at risk.

We will see...Or rather, there is little prospect that we will. The bosses will never countenance a truly effective ecological tax, nor is the UN any more likely to send gunboats to defend Windward Isle bananas against United Fruit.



In - stitution Press, Washington D.C. 1991), FORGING NEW PATHS, Feminist Social Methodology and Rural Women in Java, by Jutta Berning hausen and Birgit Kerstan, (Zed books.)

We expect to review the above titles in the next issue of Parting Company.

Also received: THE PESTICIDE HAZARDS, Compiled by Barbara Dinham for the Pesticides Trust (Zed books 1993), THE DEVELOPMENT DICTIONARY, edited by Wolfgang Sachs (Zed books 1992), THIRD WORLD MINERALS AND GLOBAL PRICING, by Chibuzo Nwoke (Zed books 1992), THE VIOLENCE OF DEVELOPMENT by Joke Schijvers (International books, Utrecht, 1992), CONDITIONS NOT OF THEIR CHOOSING, The Guaymi Indians and Mining Multinationals in Panama, by Chris M. Gjording, (Smithsonian

---

# Mog O'Dor

---

## Wilson, Birkin and Strachan... a few sheets and a wind-up gramophone

Robert Wilson, Derek Birkin and Ian Strachan are the trio which head the world's most powerful mining corporation. Under grooming as RTZ's mastermind for the next century, Strachan advisedly makes few public statements. But his fellow directors have recently delivered themselves of some gnostic nuggets which are remarkable, even by RTZ's intransigent yardstick.

First came Chief Executive Wilson, interviewed by the US journal **Institutional Investor** in November 1992. He claimed that the greatest political risk for mining companies today comes, not from the South, but the "developed" world - in particular Australia and the USA. These areas, of course, are where RTZ has its biggest projects - and prospects. Wilson was asked what the company could do about the menacing environmental movement (Wilson cited our friends in Wisconsin in particular). The company's Chief Executive said he "open(s) up our books and convince(s) the skeptics that we don't have a hidden agenda". But "at the end of the day we are often faced with people who oppose development at whatever cost, circulate mischievous, inaccurate half-truths and have no intention of making themselves better informed. What can we do to convince them? Almost certainly nothing."

So RTZ has nothing to hide and it tells its critics exactly what it's up to. If they don't then back off, they're ignorant antediluvian fanatics, who don't know the difference between a pick and the picayune. Somewhere along the line, I must have missed out. I'd swear RTZ has never told the truth about its uranium contracts, never opened up all its Rossing health and safety records, didn't tell Western Desert Aborigines for a decade what it was up to on their land, obfuscated about reclamation of the Nova Scotia tin minesite, and still isn't being frank about its intentions in Honduras. But then, I must have blinked...

Certainly I did blink when CRA vice-president for external affairs, George Littlewood, told an American Mining Congress audience in October, that the South was berating the environment movement in the North and not transnationals or the World Bank. Littlewood claimed that "...large parts of the world...become rightfully irritated when they are told to cease and desist in the pursuit of economic growth by those who enjoy the benefits of growth". I won't bother to knock this argument on the head here - there is a whole Southern-based peoples movement which is quite effectively doing so already. However, let's be a little more specific; industry-specific, in fact.

Who precisely is telling whom to "cease and desist" mining in Rudall River Park, Australia? Or on Lac Courte Oreilles Treaty land in Wisconsin? Or up in Mankayan province, in the Philippine Cordillera? Let alone at Panguna on the island of Bougainville? I got the strong impression that, in these and many other cases, it was the local, impoverished "under-developed" community which was inviting the miners to pack their bags. And doing so, because they do *not* enjoy the economic growth brought by mining to date, or anticipate any to come. But maybe I missed something here too.

There must be a mine-dependent economy *somewhere*, whose workers drive around in BMW's, where the landless have land, the streams never run dry, and the skies are not cloudy all day. Fiji?...Hm. Brazil?...Perhaps not. Zambia?...Oh dear no! Australia? Now there's a thought! A developing country where the benefits of civilisation are spread thick on the ground and all are equal before the dollar. Come back, George Littlewood, all is forgotten!

In fact, I'd almost forgotten the most important statement made of late by an RTZ-man.

And delivered by the head-man to boot! No less than Sir Derek Birkin telling the 1992 Annual Dinner of the London Metal Exchange that "Society as a whole, rather than present mining companies and their shareholders" benefitted most from the creation of old mining wastes. So "...the costs of cleaning [them] up [should] be recognised as the taxes they are, rather than disguised as a moral commitment."

At first sight Sir Derek's demand might seem quite reasonable. Why should today's mining companies be responsible for the messes caused by nineteenth century Cornish "tinnies", let alone the Romans or early Britons? But, of course, no one is suggesting that RTZ or Anglo-American, Newmont or Inco, clean up *these* wastes. Nor, for that matter, those of other companies (except in the few instances where abandoned mines or tailings piles are being re-worked for profit - as in Bolivia or the CIS). The behest only has relevance for pollution wholly or partly caused by companies which are still around today. Seen from this perspective, what happened last year at Wheal Jane - when many miles of waterway were drenched in heavy metals - is partly RTZ's responsibility, since the company had their own recent operations at the mine.

Birkin's statement is, therefore, a disturbing and morally irresponsible attempt to get out from under the "polluter pays" principle. Not only that - it also seeks to shift future environmental burdens onto taxpayers away from the corporate sector. This is the man who chairs the company which, as long ago as 1972, said it had an environmental policy in place and is practicing "environmental excellence" today. At any rate, Robert Wilson can breathe more easily now that Birkin has taken his stand. RTZ no longer has to convince its critics the company doesn't have a "hidden agenda." It's now plain for all to see.

There was a favourite Vaudeville act around about forty years ago. Two men and a woman, dressed in hankies and kepis, would

shuffle around a sand-board looking suitably hieroglyphic, while a stuffed cobra followed a length of string out of a Bodyshop basket. The trio was called (I believe) Wilson, Keppel and Betty. Keppel maintained the patter, Wilson pulled the strings, and Betty wiggled her belly while keeping mum.

Some thought it the finest show since Caribs were first exhibited at the court of St James. Others wondered how people could be taken in by a few sheets, a sprinkling of aggregates, and a wind-up gramophone. Personally, I think the trio's very crassness today would go down a treat.

As long as they understood the distinction between fantasy and the real world.

**STILL AVAILABLE**

*We still have copies of this book available at only £6.50p (including postage, Europe-wide)*



**plunder!**

*PARTIZANS is also able to give copies FREE TO BONA FIDE ACTIVISTS ON APPLICATION. (We will still ask for postage). If you're interested contact us at: 218 Liverpool Rd, London N1 1LE*

## HOW WE ARE BACK AT THE RANCH...

It has been half a year since readers of PC have seen its light of day. Truth to tell, Partizans has been going through some changes in that period, and now is the time to tell you a bit about them. First, the travel agent with whom we had booked for Cleophas Mutjavikua to come to the 1992 RTZ AGM, went bust - after apparently taking the money owed us on the unused ticket. (Had Cleophas actually attended the AGM, we are confident we would have raised his fare from one source or another). We are still trying to recover the nearly £900 we lost. The process has already taken months and could take several more weeks. In practical terms, this meant we had to keep Partizans going on income from sales of PLUNDER! (yes, it's still selling).

Partizans has also lost some of its strongest supporters - not for ideological reasons, but because they moved or went to University. Writing articles for **Parting Company** is a skilled job, and some newer recruits have had to ease their way onto the ice. This takes time - and energy. We want to keep PC going. It is the only journal of its kind any where in the world (that we know of). And it will always be guaranteed at least one reader (guess which one?!)

So we have decided reluctantly, and after thirteen years of the practice, to stop holding regular monthly Partizans collective meetings and have editorial meetings instead. Our aim is to get PC out four times a year from now on.

Special meetings for special events - the RTZ annual general meeting is one such of course - will still be held, and we trust that attendance will be higher **because** they're special.

Moreover, as has been the practice for a year now, Minewatch will continue holding a **joint Partizans/Minewatch meeting every third Wednesday** in London, to which Partizans supporters are always welcome.

Just phone us to check it out!

In fact, why not phone us to tell us you're still out there?

We'd love to hear from you.

Thanks - and see you at the AGM!

### PARTIZANS

Strategy/Planning Weekend

27/28 March 1993

in

Haslemere, Surrey

This meeting will be a time for pre-AGM discussion, sharing information on many issues, and sitting down together in a relaxed environment...

If you want more information or details on the Agenda for the Weekend call:

071 609 1852

*Parting Company is the newsletter of PARTIZANS (People against Rio Tinto Zinc and its subsidiaries). It is published four times a year and available on subscription for the ludicrously low price of £3 (nonwaged) and £4 (waged) a year (please don't forget to renew if you need to). We are also very happy to consider reciprocal arrangements with other groups and magazines.*

Yes I would like to commence/renew my subscription to PARTING COMPANY.

I am interested in attending AGMs and I already have a share

I would like to attend as a proxy or to buy a share (please contact us with regard to sorting out share buying)

My particular concerns are:

Name (of individual or organization): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Town \_\_\_\_\_ Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

Please find enclosed a cheque or postal order for the sum of: £3 unwaged  
£4 waged\* sterling made out to PARTIZANS.

Return To:

PARTIZANS

218 Liverpool Road, London, N1 1LE

Tel: 071 609 1852 Fax: 071 700 6189

*Parting Company*

**STOP PRESS MARCH 1 1993**

**We've just learned that RTZ is about to take over two major coal companies in the USA (see article this page).**

**This follows Hanson plc's acquisition late last year of Sante Fe, another major US coal miner.**

## **RTZ TARGETS POWDER RIVER COAL**

**What does this mean?  
In the USA it means  
further struggle against  
the growing encroachment of  
British companies on domestic  
- and often native American -  
resources.**

RTZ Corp. has announced the acquisition by its wholly-owned subsidiary, Kennecott Corp., of two U.S. companies which produce low-sulphur coal from the Powder River Basin. At the end of last week Kennecott agreed to pay \$12/share to acquire Nerco Inc., which owns three large and profitable steam coal mines in Montana and Wyoming. Nerco is owned 82% by Pacificorp Holdings, which has agreed to vote in favour of a merger to effect the sale. The \$470 million deal is subject to formal approval from Nerco's shareholders and the relevant governmental consents.

**In Britain, it considerably increases the fear that the fate of the country's deep pit communities has already been decided between government and Big Business.**

**Hanson and RTZ have long been mooted as prime candidates for parts (or all) of what would be left of BRITISH COAL upon its privatisation. But both companies have long had interests in overseas coal mines which would compete directly with British pits.**

This week Kennecott followed up the Nerco announcement by revealing that it has agreed to pay Sun Company \$120.5 million for its subsidiary Cordero Mining, which operates a 12 Mt/y open-pit mine 40 km south of Gillette in Wyoming. Since opening in 1976, the Cordero mine, which is the seventh largest coal operation in the U.S., has produced 134 Mt of low-sulphur coal, and has a remaining reserve of 349 Mt. Following the installation of a dragline last year, there is the potential to expand the mine's production, at little extra cost, to 15.4 Mt/y. Long-term contracts with Mid-Western and Texan electricity utilities account for 63% of Cordero's current production.

Two of Nerco's three coal mines, Antelope and Spring Creek, are 100% owned and operated by Nerco and are in the lowest cost quartile of mines in the Powder River Basin. The third, Decker, whose coal has the highest energy content in the district, is 50% owned but operated by Peter Kiewit Corp. Nerco's share of reserves at the three mines amounts to 580 Mt and its share of 1992 production was 16.6 Mt. Over 60% of the output from the three mines is secured by long-term contracts.

**Now both companies, within weeks of each other, have taken over some of the most important, low-cost, low-sulphur reserves in the western hemisphere, much of which could be sold to British power generators.**

**For those who doubted it so far, don't doubt it any longer. It is not simply the Tory government which is an enemy to the mining communities and their fight to maintain a viable, clean, industry.**

*Mining Journal*, London, February 26, 1993. Volume 320 No. 8213

**(Historical footnote: When Thatcher wanted to break the National Union of Mineworkers in the early eighties, she asked Alistair Frame of RTZ to head the Natinal Coal Board. It was only his prior allegiance to RTZ which prevented him from doing so.)**