

# A KILLER DIES

Mary Kathleen Uranium (MKU) - for a long time Australia's only producing uranium mine - is to close this year.

MKU (controlled by RT-Z's Australian arm, CRA) was bailed out by the Australian government in the late '70's and produced just over 800 tons of uranium oxide in 1981.

Though hardly as notorious as RT-Z's Rossing mine - or the Ranger mine operated by ERA in Australia's Northern Territory - MKU has nonetheless been the focus of much controversy in the past few years.

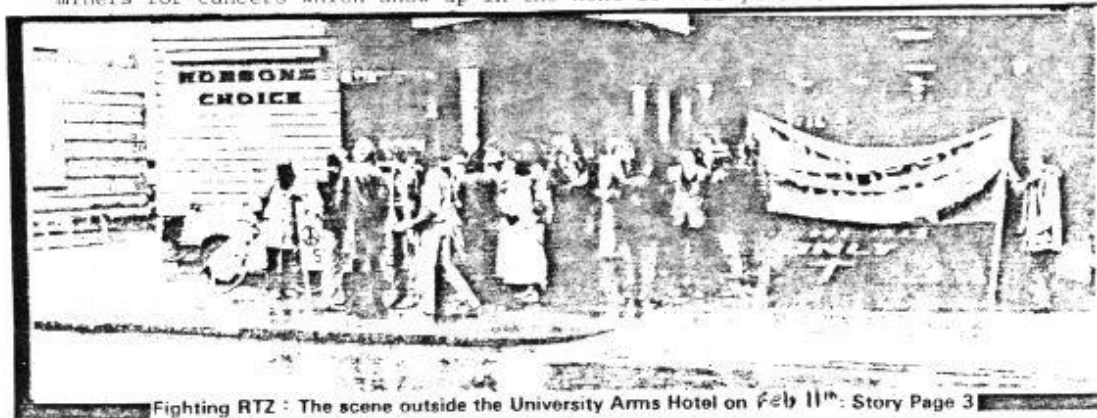
\* In 1976 Friends of the Earth (Aus) 'obtained' copies of documents from MKU which showed that RT-Z had been instrumental in setting-up the infamous *URANIUM CARTEL* in 1972#73. The Westinghouse Corporation later sued MKU and other RT-Z subsidiaries on the basis of this documentation.

\* In 1980 several tons of uranium ore concentrate ("yellowcake") was stolen from MKU and hasn't yet been found. RT-Z treated the whole incident as if it were a prank. Commented the company's house journal *SPECTRUM* (Sept. 1980) :

"there is not much one can do with a few tonnes of yellowcake when there is no market for the stuff in Australia...if the material were indeed appropriated by an employee, it's no different in principle from someone taking home office stationery for personal use!"

\* After the Australian Seamen's Union re-imposed a ban on uranium exports in early 1981, MKU broke the Union blockade by secretly trucking supplies to a small fishing wharf, using white-leg labour to transfer the yellowcake to a barge bound for Singapore (*The Australian* 11#12#8)

So - it's one down, but many more to go! (We'll also be concerned to know what provision RT-Z is making to rehabilitate the MKU site and compensate miners for cancers which show up in the next 20 - 30 years.)



# RTZ "ONLY HERE FOR DE BEERS"

What could become the world's biggest diamond mine is expected to open before the end of the year in Western Australia - on Aboriginal land. What's more, it's now virtually certain that the South African-controlled De Beers corporation will market the output, despite strenuous objections from Australia's Labor Party, pro-Aboriginal and anti-apartheid campaigners - and many Aboriginal organisations themselves.

The Ashton Joint Venture (AJV) is effectively controlled by RT-Z's Australian subsidiary, CRA. (see our story, PARTING COMPANY no.9). De Beers - or rather its masters, the Oppenheims, also have an important indirect stake in RT-Z itself.

CRA has now announced publicly that it wants De Beers to handle 10 per cent of its gem output from Ashton and 75 per cent of the rest. The Federal government could withhold its approval - but it's doubtful it will.

And so the stage is set for De Beers to strengthen its hold on the diamond market; for South Africans to increase their influence in Australia, and for RT-Z to forge yet another profitable link with apartheid.

(Sources: FT 20#2#82 and Mining Journal 26#2#82)

## UNHOLY ALLIANCES...

The Bechtel Corporation - notorious for building the Da Nang US airforce base in Vietnam (it's also constructed half the world's nuclear reactors) - is to construct RTZ's QUARTZ HILL molybdenum mine in ALASKA, due on-stream in 1984 (MJ 19/2/82)

The Fluor Corporation - equally notorious for constructing South Africa's SASOL II - is also constructing RT-Z's Cerro Colorado mine in Panama, but recently reported a "reduction" in activity, while talks continue between RT-Z and the Panama govt. (FT 12/2/82)

## CANUC PLAN STRATEGY MEETING

CANUC (Campaign against Namibian Uranium Contracts) is holding a National Strategy Conference in Birmingham on Sat. April 17th. All sympathisers are welcome.

Please contact (immediately):  
CANUC c/o NSC, 53 Leverton Rd.,  
London NW5 (tel: 01-267 1941)

## PARTIZANS TO MEET IN APRIL

PLEASE DON'T FORGET THE VERY IMPORTANT PARTIZANS NATIONAL MEETING TO BE HELD ON APRIL 3

(Details enclosed with P.C.)

## RIO TINTO-ZINC EXPECTS ONE-THIRD PROFIT FALL FOR LAST YEAR

Almost all Rio Tinto-Zinc's operations reported a drop in profit for 1981. The only exceptions were US Borax - and Rossing Uranium. These results aren't surprising: many metal producers are suffering from what they see as the "recess" - but which many of us would rather describe as a "process". Indeed, RT-Z's chief executive Alistair Frame late last year predicted the turn-down - and significantly blamed "political" as well as economic factors, in an interview with the Financial Times.

# Milk round: LOTTA BOTTLE

Our favourite corporation has, once again, started what (among cognoscenti) is affectionately known as "the milk-round! Along with other pillars of the nuclear (War & Peace) "industry" - like GEC and BNFL - RT-Z has started trying to recruit University graduates. Not just to dig holes under black and red peoples' lands...but act as economic advisors, computer programmers - even environmental protection authorities.

For, as multinationals become diversified - and as old-style mining companies turn into "natural resource companies" - there's very little talent they'll not try to co-opt.

Alas for RT-Z, it's not having much success. Only three interviewees turned up at Cambridge on February 11th (reports CHRIS ANDERSON) to be confronted with a picket by local Partizans and Third World First supporters, offering information on alternative careers. At 3 o'clock, despite driving rain, 60 people gathered at the University Arms Hotel for a peaceful demonstration. (photo p.1)

A counter-presentation on RT-Z was organised in Sheffield (no reports have reached us yet) when the company turned up there last month. And there was picketing of a similar attempted seduction in Newcastle (writes Miki Armonstrong).

What's more the company seems to have given up hustling the good students of Edinburgh (reports Clare of SCRAM) - and the sharp-witted brainees of Sussex (according to Rob, formerly in SANE).

It's now conceivable that RT-Z will give up direct University campus recruitment altogether. A valid victory - but only temporary. For if the going gets too tough here, the corporation will simply shift its talent-spotting overseas. (One reason why Partizans from the start has been transnational.)

WOULD YOU BELIEVE IT? (OR: WHO MADE THE GAFFE THIS TIME?)

"What really broke the class barriers with me was when I found that head-hunters in Borneo were human, and from that I deduced that the English working classes were human"

RT-Z reported Daily Mirror 25/6/81  
(Answer: Lord Shackleton, vice-chair of)

## AFFILIATE - MY DAUGHTERS!

PARTIZANS has received new affiliations from HULL UNIVERSITY STUDENTS UNION and MALVERN ECOLOGY PARTY - for which many thanks! Has your group considered affiliating yet?

## DARK AT THE END OF TUNNEL

Cement manufacturers Tunnel Holdings have now effectively been acquired by RT-Z, after the battle for Thos. W. Ward (see last 2 issues of Parting Company)

HAVE YOU GOT A SHARE IN THE ACTION...?

WHAT THEY'RE DOING ABOUT THE LIKES OF US...

BUSINESS SYSTEMS INTERNATIONAL - a

"think tank" for corporations - has published a guide on how to counteract pressure from groups like Partizans. Cost? About £2,000!

(source: De Groene, January 1982)



"PROMOTE INDEPENDENCE - BUT FOSTER THE OPPOSITE!" That was the advice handed out to mnc's at a recent Washington seminar on "International political risk!"

Sponsored by the Wharton School of Business (Uni. of Pennsylvania), delegates were told to make themselves "indispensable" to third world governments; to control local access to world markets; to produce only part of the finished product in any one country - and to control technology and marketing.

(source: Economic and Political Weekly (Bombay) August 1981)

# A leak beyond bounds

By BOB BROWNING\*

\*Browning, formerly with the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO), is now an industrial security consultant.

There is ample evidence of the growth in Australia of whistle-blowing as distinct from unorganised leaking. For example, the October Newsletter of the Campaign Against Nuclear Energy (CANE) advertised for "sympathetic workers" at "AMDEL, WMC, Carpenteria Exploration, CRA, CSR (Mineral Division), Department of Mines and Energy, Department of Environment and Planning, Thompson Drilling Co."

CANE established a secure hotline for potential whistle-blowing public servants and company employees in these nominated areas by inviting them to remain anonymous and to make contact even if their information is "only remotely connected to the uranium issue."

This should come as no surprise, at least to CRA which has been for years a prime non-government target of whistle-blowing organisations. For example, a document supplied by a CRA employee in Melbourne to an Aboriginal mining rights association was the subject of joint action in London organised by the "Colonial and Indigenous Minorities Research and Action Group." The document was a CRA policy statement on Aboriginal land rights and royalties, worded in expectation of circulation only among senior executives. Suddenly produced during the Rio-Tinto Zinc annual stockholders meeting, it caused a minor sensation, helped by the then Left-wing Greater London Council and some other organisations publicly disinvesting themselves of RTZ shares.

In another incident, Friends of the Earth (FOE) presented the Fox Inquiry with a complete Mary Kathleen mines file. The inquiry refused to accept the file on several grounds, including "irrelevance" and, as it was the original and not a photocopy, passed the file as stolen property to the police. With foresight, FOE had kept copies and sent one to a former FOI member who had become an assistant to the Californian Energy Commission. Subsequent publication of the file prompted the big Westinghouse Corporation to launch its billion dollar anti-trust action against rival companies operating in Australia.

These two internationally publicised incidents did nothing to dispell latent fears of the conspiratorial and anti-social nature of "big business." Using dis-

closed "secret" information, whistle-blowing organisations alleged that the companies involved had racist attitudes and exploitative policies towards Aborigines, as well as collusive and illegal financial agreements with other uranium mining companies to avoid fair competition.

Unorganised leaking direct (say) to the mainstream media is essentially a value-neutral technique. Each incident needs to be assessed on its individual merits or demerits. It is a technique used, as we all know, by many government ministers, departmental heads and managing directors of various political persuasions. On rare occasions disclosures may come from individuals acting predominantly in the public interest. Refusal to act anonymously is sometimes an indication of such motivation. Although unorganised leaking is escalating, it is hardly novel and cannot in itself be regarded as a threat to democratic and free enterprise institutions.

Contemporary whistle-blowing is different. It can usefully be thought of in terms of New Class-based organisations attempting to establish forms of counter government. New Class is a term used by neo-conservatives to describe those industrially and commercially non-productive sections of the middle class, enlarged by the trend to service industries in the post-industrial Welfare State, who are mainly employed in knowledge, welfare or public service "industries." The effects of whistle-blowing are less to improve the public accountability and social responsibility of government and big business, than to make government and business accountable to the New Class, a New Class preferably ensconced in official regulatory and monitoring positions, but when not, then through self-appointed private organisations.

Whistle-blowing organisations encourage disclosure directly to themselves of real or suspected corruption, illegality, irresponsibility or abuse of power. They prefer to determine which particular government departments and corporations should become principal targets and to monopolise subsequent publicity and political action. Such campaigns tend to discredit the official power structure and its office holders in favor of the self-appointed, public policy formulating organisations of the New Class. The tactic might be described as a New Class adaptation of worker control, with non-productive rather than industrially productive workers the beneficiaries.

Whistle-blowing occurs within a so-

cial climate in which organisations of a particular sort encourage whistle-blowing not only as morally defensible, but as a moral duty. Campaigns are organised to increase public acceptance, union support, legal protection and, somewhat ironically, to denounce any counter-monitoring by government agencies as an invasion of privacy and a breach of civil rights.

Terms such as "accountability," "social responsibility," "research groups," "policy studies," "monitor," "trans-national" etc abound in the titles of organisations associated with the Institute of Policy Studies. Newspeak thinking also prefers "whistle-blowing" to the Australian term "leaking," mainly because it suggests the legitimacy of the empire signalling a halt to penalise foul play or the policeman signalling Stop, Thief! The role of moral adjudicator has obvious appeal to the New Class, who

tend to be more interested in business "ethics" than in industrial production.

American whistle-blowing organisations claim that their efforts have been rewarded. They claim that public opinion polls indicated declining public confidence during the 1970s in government and business leadership and a spreading belief that corruption is a systemic problem in American institutions.

Whistle-blowing could have a significant effect on business, government and the democratic process in Australia if it continues to be unappreciated for what it really is and continues to go unchallenged. It can unsettle business by bringing a new kind of class conflict into industry at the management level (American studies have produced a profile of the typical whistle-blower as a middle manager with no vested interest in keeping the information quiet and often with no previous history of political activism). It can erode some of the professional trust, *esprit de corps* and organisational privacy necessary to the smooth functioning of business. It can even rattle short-sighted and uninformed managements and drive them to policies of appeasement, and to avoid commercially valid and industrially productive operations for fear of "exposure" and denigration by organised adversary groups. □

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