

POLLUTERS UNITE

RTZ - through its Australian subsidiary, CRA - is to take what the London Financial Times calls "...a giant step beyond the concept of the further processing of local resources!"

It will buy a half share in Showa Aluminium Industries. It's the first time that an Australian company (so-called: in fact CRA is 57% controlled by RTZ) has made such a large direct investment in a Japanese company.

What the deal means in practise is that:

- * CRA - through its 45% ownership of Comalco - will now get preferred access to Japanese markets.

- * CRA will get a hefty rakeoff for supplying Australian aluminium to Japan - most of it from Aboriginal land at Weipa, northern Queensland.

- * CRA will now (also through Comalco) get a bigger chunk of the expanded Tiwai point smelter, in New Zealand. Comalco already holds 50% of the holding company, New Zealand Aluminium Smelters. This was anyway due to increase to 56%. Since Showa Denko (parent company of Showa Aluminium) also has a 22% interest in Tiwai Point, CRA's interest in the project will effectively increase to more than a third.

The Tiwai Point smelter has been the subject of tremendous controversy in New Zealand as the beneficiary of ridiculously cheap electricity, at the expense of ordinary New Zealanders.

- * CRA's hold over Comalco itself will increase. At the same time CRA announced the Showa deal, it also announced that Kaiser Aluminium of the US (its partner in Comalco) had agreed to buy aluminium on similar terms.

- * Perhaps most important, the Japanese-Australian deal not only represents a major setback to Australian attempts to control mineral



○ SHOWA DENKO is a pretty unsavoury piece of work in itself.

In the mid-sixties it killed 71 Japanese women, children and men and crippled at least 600 others by polluting the waters of Niigata with mercury: the so-called Minamata disease. In 1967 victims of Showa Denko sued the company. The following year the Japanese govt. officially acknowledged that the chemical company Chisso, and Showa Denko were responsible for these murders and deformations.

development - it gives the green light to a huge expansion in bauxite mining which is bound to strike at Aborigines first and hardest.

We would now expect to see a go-ahead for mining at Aurukun - one of Australia's major reserves. Aurukun has, since 1978 effectively been controlled by the near-fascist regime of Joh' Bjelke Petersen. Petersen has close, though undeclared, financial links with CRA Comalco and other mining companies in Queensland.



INDUCING THE CHAIRMAN TO FACE THE SHAREHOLDERS

square over the last month. In early April a shareholder phoned RT-Z's HQ and asked for a date for the annual general meeting. "June 3rd" came the confident reply. The following week the shareholder decided to check again. After being shunted through the switchboard and an inner sanctum, he met a brusque "Well, it's not been fixed yet. Late May or early June - that's when it usually is. We'll inform shareholders at the end of the week, or the beginning of next." That was April 12th. On April 19th, an Australian shareholder - who'd come over primarily to be at the AGI-phoned too. "Late May" came the shaky response. "We'll announce the actual date next week when the annual accounts are published." So - shareholders eager to make sure they don't miss the opportunity to question the activities of Britain's leading mining company - are still left hanging as this newsletter goes to press.

Either things are all a-dither at St. James Square. Or else the company doesn't really care a s--- about its most important annual event. We doubt the latter. And if it's the former - we wonder why?

RT-Z's pre-tax profits fell by about £160 million last year. The board once again blamed high interest charges and low metal prices. Yet again, Chairman Tuke looked forward to an 'upturn' in the second half of this year.

Of course these results - leastways in the short-term - won't mean a transformation of RT-Z's structure or nature. They do mean that the big capital-intensive projects planned for the eighties (notably Cerro Colorado in Panama and the Quartz Hill molybdenum mine in Alaskan National Parkland) will probably be put "on hold."

Meanwhile operations will, if anything, expand and diversify in Australasia; Rossing will be pushed to the limit. And while the company's MKU mine in Australia and Lisbon uranium mine in Utah will close earlier than once expected, the huge Elliot Lake mine - shored up by safe, long-term contracts - will carry on polluting the Serpent River, endangering its workforce and contributing to the general malaise of the living world.

(sources: FT (various); Mining Journal (various); S. Times 18/4/82; Guardian 16/4/82)

ROW OVER interests

Edinburgh councillors have clashed over the city's financial interest in Rio Tinto Zinc - because of the mining company's alleged exploitation of African workers.

Labour members want the district council to dispose of the city's entire holding in the firm, but a meeting of the council's Trinity Hospital committee who are responsible for the stock, came out against such action.

Only part of the investment should be disposed of meantime, they decided. The bid to force a complete sell off, involving disposal of, 3400 ordinary shares and 17,000 convertible loan stock shares, was led by Labour Councillor Alex Wood.

The company, he claimed, were making substantial profits out of their mining operation in Namibia, profits only made possible by the illegal occupation of a country by South African forces and the imposition of apartheid policies.

EDINBURGH EVE-
-MINING NEWS APRIL
1982

look after the poorest of the pensioners in this city. "But what we are doing is making payments of the backs of workers who earn barely that much in an entire year." The city should retain only one share in each portfolio - to allow the district council to be represented at the company's annual meeting.

Duff

Conservative finance spokesman, Councillor John Crombie, said the Conservative administration favoured selling the 3400 ordinary shares - but for different reasons.

For the time being at least, they were opposed to disposal of the loan stock.

"We are only too happy to see the ordinary shareholders, since our financial advisers say they are a dull investment.

Whether South Africa is good, bad or indifferent is completely irrelevant. We are here to get the best possible return we can from the investments

PENSION SHOCK FOR LOCAL GOVT EMPLOYEES

MOST local government employees in Gwent are unaware that part of their pension fund contributions have been used to buy shares in Rio Tinto Zinc, who supply most of the world's uranium which is ultimately used in nuclear weapons.

The Gwent Superannuation Fund, to which contributions are made from the borough and district councils in Gwent, and from Cwmbran Development Corporation, has 109,000 shares with a current value of about £500,000 in Rio Tinto Zinc.

The company operates the world's largest uranium mine at Rossing in Namibia, which provides about one quarter of the world's entire supply. They also operate Canada's largest mine at Elliot Lake, Ontario, and a mine at Queensland, Australia.

Uranium is used in nuclear weapons, and as Gwent has been declared a nuclear-free zone, many people could be unhappy about the situation.

Istwyn borough Plaid Cymru councillor Aneurin Richards has written to

County-councillor Jon Vaughan Jones, chairman of the Gwent Superannuation Fund, requesting the management group to get rid of its shares.

Councillor Richards said there could be no nuclear bombs without uranium, and there was no doubt that RTZ uranium had gone into nuclear weapons after processing.

Incompatible

"Gwent county council's investment in Rio Tinto Zinc facilitates the existence and spread of nuclear bombs and is clearly incompatible with the council's policy of declaring Gwent a nuclear-free zone," he said.

Councillor Richards said there was another strong reason why the county council should get rid of its shares, and that was

Linda Simmonds reveals that while Gwent has been declared a nuclear-free zone funds are invested in a firm who mine ore for nuclear weapons.

because RTZ operates the mine in Namibia in flagrant contravention of the international court of justice ruling as well as the United Nations council for Namibia decree which bans mining, processing and exporting of all Namibian natural resources without the permission of the UN.

He said that South Africa's illegal occupation of Namibia was given support by the RTZ operations there.

Organisations which have already disinvested from RTZ because of its activities include the NSPOC, The Salvation Army and the Methodist Church. Tyne and

Wear county council's Superannuation Fund which holds 318,000 shares has also taken a decision to sell.

Councillor Richards said he had received his information from a group who have been investigating Rio Tinto Zinc for some time.

Nuclear

"The trade unions have been trying to get information from the Superannuation Fund and representation on it, but without much success. I'm sure that most employees don't realise their money could be going to finance nuclear weapons," he said.

Mr Bob Burns, acting

Gwent branch secretary of the National Association of Local Government Officers, said that they had been trying for some time to get information from the county council on their investments and representation on the fund as it was their money that was being used.

"We don't know where our money is being invested and I'm sure most members are not aware that any is being used to buy Rio Tinto Zinc shares.

"What we are hoping to do is to go through national channels so that we can get the law changed to allow us representation on the fund."

He said they had put their case to the superannuation fund on March 26 and were still waiting the outcome of that meeting before deciding their next step.

"The branch can't make a decision about Rio Tinto Zinc shares because we haven't got any information about it at the moment, but I'm sure that most members don't know about this."

County-councillor Jon

Vaughan Jones, chairman of the superannuation fund explained that the fund was not part of the normal day to day finance of the county council. All investments had to be done in the interest of the fund itself.

He said that contributions by employees and the pensions they were paid were set nationally. The only element that could vary in level was the amount of contribution paid by the employers, that is the rate-payers, through the county council.

Pay less

"If the fund does well it means that the ratepayers pay less, and if it does badly, they pay more, and have the right to challenge the management of the fund."

He said the fund was established in 1974 with local government reorganisation, and had to be seen by a professional actuary every five years. This had been done when the fund was set up and again in 1979.

"We have just received

the figures of the last examination and they show that the fund has been so successful during the last five years that the rate-payers contribution can be reduced by £1 million a year for the next five years - in total a saving of £21 million, because of our wise investment.

"We are trustees for the fund and must act in its best interest, and have advisers acting for us," he said.

County-councillor Vaughan Jones said that Rio Tinto Zinc were not the only company involved in nuclear power and weapons and quoted such names as Ferranti, Plessey and Lucas Girling.

"We could have put all our money in government stocks and gilt-edged security, but that would be giving money to Margaret Thatcher to pay for Trident missiles," he said.

County-councillor Vaughan Jones said that Gwent had taken a decision not to invest in any firm normally based in South Africa, or whose

main business was in South Africa, but this was very difficult to define.

He said about ninety per cent of the firms on the London Stock Exchange had some dealings with South Africa, and very, very few had no dealings with them at all. Those dealing with South Africa included Barclays Bank and British Leyland.

"We have declared Gwent a nuclear-free zone and are doing all in our power to make that a reality.

"We are making representations to America on chemical and biological weapons and calling seminars on the subject, but as long as we have a government that's committed to nuclear weapons there's no way that we can be separated from the system."

County-councillor Keith Griffiths, chairman of Gwent county council, said the shares situation was a difficult one as the county employed brokers who were briefed to obtain the highest return on capital.

"Naturally we do expect to win at all times, and obviously the brokers are under scrutiny and as a result they buy and sell at the best appropriate time. "They move on occasions without the involvement of the council, and perhaps, as a result of this, we will have to reconsider their brief."

Concern

The situation is obviously causing the council hierarchy concern.

County-councillor Lloyd Turnbull, leader of the council phoned The News on Monday morning expressing his annoyance over the story and the fact that the chairman had been contacted for his views as well as County-councillor Jon Vaughan Jones, chairman of the superannuation fund.

According to County-councillor Turnbull only one spokesman should have been contacted for comment. The News were only trying to split the Labour Group on the issue, he suggested.



FROM: THE NEWS (Gwent) April 9th 1982. (NB) RT-Z does not supply a quarter of the west's supplies: about one fifth from Rossing.

"most of the world's uranium..." It produces about

218 LIVERPOOL ROAD, LONDON N.1. (01-609 1952)

SHORTY O'NEILL, one of the key members of the North Queensland Land Council -key Aboriginal body in the fight against CRA, is now in London..Details of meetings etc. please 'phone ANGIE (Partizans) on 01- 969 5590

PARTIZANS (People against

With its penchant for trying to mine in National Park areas (Many people will remember the big battle to save Snowdonia in the 1960's) RTZ must be pleased at recent changes in the National Parks board. According to an article by Alan Dunn in the Guardian (April 4th 1982) six conservationists have been dismissed, probably to be replaced by Tory party adherents who will look favourably on (among other depredations) "...increasing demands by international mining concerns"

Rio Tinto Zinc and its subsidiaries

WOOPS A-DAZEY

RTZ is being sued yet again, for alleged involvement in a uranium cartel. After Westinghouse - welcome WOOPS! (That's the loose acronym for Washington Public Power Supply System.) WPPSS has the unenviable record of building the most expensive, and useless, constructions in human history - three nuclear power plants which haven't produced a single watt of electricity. And never will.

Rio Algom and RTZ Services - along with 6 US uranium suppliers - are said to have violated antitrust legislation in the supply of uranium. Both RTZ divisions are strenuously denying responsibility. The likelihood is that settlement will be made out of court (as it was in the Westinghouse case last year): the miners will be sitting pretty and the costs, yet again, will be borne by consumers...
(source: MJ 15/1/82)

Indians welcomes support...

CHILE PROSPECT

RTZ is - for the first time - contemplating mining in Chile. In late February, Metals Week (US) reported that Rio Algom (RTZ's Canadian subsidiary) had reached agreement with the private owners of Cerro Colorado Copper, in northern Chile, to undertake exploration and possible development of their copper deposit. RTZ has asked the Chilean junta's Foreign Investment Committee to authorise a \$250,000,000 investment to construct a mine and mill.

source: MJ 12/2/82

WHO SAID..?

"...we have an obligation to help our fellow subjects and to ensure that international law is upheld. ...Argentina has always refused to accept taking the case before the International Court of Justice at the Hague...hardly the behaviour of a party confident of its case"

ANSWER: Lord Shackleton, vice-chair of RTZ, the company which has consistently refused to observe UN decrees in the case of Namibia, or to observe the rulings of the International Court of Justice.
(source: OBSERVER - II/4/82)



Open pit mining at Mary Kathleen.

MKU: hole with no mint

RTZ is putting up for tender an important hole - the leftovers of its uranium mining at Mary Kathleen Uranium (Queensland), due to close this year.

Offers to rehabilitate the site, seed it, neutralise its residual radioactivity, clean up the tailings ponds and generally make it all hunky-dory are welcome.

However you mustn't spend more than \$A 4.19 million. And whatever you do- don't mention the radiated workers..!