PARTING COMPANY
Newsletter of People against
Rio Tinto-Zinc & subsidiaries No. 15 May 1982

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 practice is that:

* CRA - through its 45% ownership of Comalco - will now get preferred access to Japanese markets.
* CRA will get a hefty takeoff 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 Tiwi 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 Tiwi Point, CRA's interest in the project will effectively increase to more than a third.

The Tiwi 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 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 Aurukan - one of Australia's major reserves. Aurukan has, since 1978, effectively been controled 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.

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 500 others by polluting the waters of Wigatn 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.
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 Zinco, which supply most of the world's uranium which is used in nuclear weapons.

The Gwent Superannuation Fund, which contributies are made from the wages of local government councilors and district councilors in Gwent, and from the Cwmbran Development Corporation, has 12,000 shares with a current value of about £150,000 in Rio Tinto Zinco.

The company is the world's largest uranium mine, with its main mine in Namibia, which provides uranium for nuclear weapons. They also operate the world's largest mine in Utah, which has a smaller share of the world's uranium supply. They also operate a mine in Ontario, which is a smaller share of the world's uranium supply.

Incompatible - Gwent's investment in Rio Tinto Zinco has faced opposition from employees and unions. The National Union of Local Government Officers, which represents local government employees, has been opposed to the investment.

The Gwent Superannuation Fund is, however, committed to its investment. It believes that the investment in Rio Tinto Zinco is a necessary part of its portfolio and that it is not a conflict of interest.

Nuclear - The trade unions have been trying to get information from the Superannuation Fund about its investment in Rio Tinto Zinco. They have threatened to take legal action if they do not get the information they seek.

The fund has said that it does not want to discuss the investment in detail, but that it is part of its overall strategy. It also said that it would not comment on the specific performance of the investment.

ECON: THE NEWS (Gwent) April 9th 1982. KT does not supply "most of the world's uranium..." It produces about a quarter of the world's uranium; about one fifth from its mining operation in South Africa, and one third from its mining operation in Namibia. The company, which is based in South Africa, is owned by the South African government.

Concern - The situation is obviously of great concern to the archdiocese. The archdiocese is asking the government to reconsider its decision to continue the investment.

The archdiocese is also asking the government to provide information about the investment and its impact on the environment and local communities. The archdiocese is also asking the government to ensure that the investment is made in a way that is consistent with its values and principles.

The archdiocese is also calling for a moratorium on the investment until the government can provide a full and fair assessment of its impact. The archdiocese is also calling for a debate in Parliament on the investment and its impact.
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 (Partizana) on 01-969-5590.

**WOOPS A-DAZEY**

RTZ is being sued yet again, for alleged involvement in a uranium cartel. After Westinghouse — welcome WOPES! (Walt’s the nice agent for Washington Public Power System.) WOPES has the enviable 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 elating pretty and the costs, yet again, will be borne by consumers... (source: MJ 15/1/82)

**CHILE PROSPECT**

RTZ is — for the first time — contemplating mining in Chile. In late February, Metalweek (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 authorize 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. Argentine has always refused to accept 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 Familia, or to observe the rulings of the International Court of Justice. (source: OBSERVER 11/4/82)

**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, keep it, neutralise its residual radioactivity, clean up the tailings ponds and generally make it all hunky-dory are welcome. However you can’t spend more than $4,19 million. And whatever you do— don’t mention the radiated workers...!