

PARTING no.2/83 COMPANY

20p

FOILED!

Local farmers, Aborigines and environmentalists have won a victory in their fight to stop CRA (RT-Z's 57% Australian subsidiary) poisoning water tables in the state of Victoria. (see PC #15)

The company had intended pumping a cyanide solution down to gravels in the "deep lead" river beds about 100 metres below the surface. Gold would dissolve, and get pumped out through another hole.

According to a map released by the Aboriginal Mining Information Centre in Melbourne, such "deep leads" cover nearly two-thirds of underground Victoria.

But now CRA has dropped its plan-though it still threatens to use other process solutions to satisfy its gold

RTZ FAILS: - IN AUSTRALIA...

fever.

Frank Collins, Secretary for the Groundwater Protection Society, an organisation of local farmers and groundwater users claims: "Now that we have knocked them off on cyanide, it makes it so much easier to knock them off on anything else that they try to use."

Friends of the Earth in Victoria have called for a permanent ban on leach-mining in the State. Says Ms. Vivien Dews of FoE:

"We cannot afford to tolerate any further these experimental activities of transnational mining companies in their lust for this fool's gold"

sources: FoE (Melbourne); AMIC; Age (Melbourne) 23/2/83

- IN PANAMA ...

As another appeal reaches the west from the Guaymi 'indians' of Panama - urging support for their struggle for land-rights - President de la Espriella has said that the Cerro Colorado copper project is "indefinitely postponed!"

Although the main reason for this is world recession, and low copper prices, world pressure certainly played a part.

Cerro Colorado was a joint project between RT-Z and the government owned Panamin corporation.

In 1982 RT-Z chair, Anthony Tuke, confided that the company had received more protest about its trespass on Guaymi land than any other (except, presumably its robbery of Namibian uranium.)

sources: FT & MJ Jan/Feb 1983

- GLASGOW

Glasgow University has dis-invested its RT-Z shares - softly, softly, without informing the world at large. This followed a concerted campaign by the University's Anti-apartheid, CND and other groups

AND - RTZ's other big southern American venture for the 80's was development of the Paragominas deposit in Brazil.

That too has been "frozen indefinitely!"

However, production from the Trombetas bauxite mine in Para (in which RT-Z holds 5%) continues.

sources: FT 25/2/83 and McGraw Hill's Int M and M annual, 1982.

HITTING THE SHAREHOLDERS

The names and private addresses of Rio Tinto Zinc's directors and top shareholders are being circulated throughout agitpop music circles in an interesting twist on the chain letter.

The idea began with pop nonconformists Poison Girls, whose powerful distaste for the internationally-outlawed British mining conglomerate manifested itself in a song — 'Rio Disco Stink' — on their current album.

With the help of PARTIZANS (People Against Rio Tinto Zinc and its Subsidiaries) they have produced a leaflet describing the company's 'polluting and profiteering' activities throughout the world and by way of targeting these complaints, six copies of a purple-bound brochure called 'Naming Names 1'. This hit list has so far been circulated to fanzines and a pirate radio station and it was the idea of one of these recipients to reproduce six more copies and, in turn, circulate them.

Among the notables in 'Naming Names' are 11 board members, to-

gether with their 1980 'Who's Who' entries. On subsequent pages are a host of religious organisations and clerics including an Archdeacon and a Bishop, representatives from the worlds of medicine and university education and, significantly, a number of local councils, many of whom have declared themselves Nuclear Free Zones (NFZs).

RTZ, it should be remembered, produce about a quarter of the West's uranium stocks, much of it derived from the notorious Rossing mine in Namibia where black labour operates in dangerous proximity to radiated materials.

The most prominent NFZ with RTZ shares is the GLC (630,000 held by its pension fund). A GLC spokesman stressed this week that, while disinvestment is a priority, the fund is actually managed by outside financiers whose binding 'advice' to County Hall politicians is that shedding shares cannot take place on political grounds. But, be assured, they were working on it.

PARTIZANS accuse the GLC of 'pussyfooting'. They say the Council

is not tied to its RTZ shareholding, as disinvested councils Fife and Tyne & Wear have recently demonstrated.

A more humble 'named' shareholder is the Rev MS Napier, a Kensington Catholic priest with 350 RTZ shares. His rationale was, nonetheless, approximate to County Hall's: 'Well, of course, one is guided by one's stockbrokers and lawyers in these matters.'

Now that increasing numbers of agitpoppers have the Rev gentleman's address and those of RTZ heavies Sir Anthony Tuke, Baron Shackleton, HM Queen et al, what did instigators Poison Girls expect or hope might happen? Most definitely, said the group's Richard Famous, they were not advocating violence — rather 'some form of direct action'.

As the 'Naming Names' leaflet says, 'If you don't like what Rio Tinto Zinc are up to, this hit list could give you some idea where to hit back. And how? That's up to you...'

Andrew Tyler

TIME OUT 25 FEBRUARY 3 MARCH 1983

U-turn?

Rossing uranium has been in the news again.

Research carried out by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) shows the importance of the illegal mine to France and West Germany. But above all, it reveals that no less than 30,000 tonnes contracted to Japan for delivery from 1977 to 1990. This is all the more anomalous, given Japan's declared intention in 1974 to cancel its Rossing contract.

WHO SAID...?

"There are no armed units in place at Bougainville Copper or any other RTZ mine..." (1)

"You ask whether (the)armed units are members of staff at Rossing. The answer is 'yes'" (2)

2)Anthony Tuke in letter to Namibia Support Committee, quoted Guardian

Holiday, 27/10/82

The second piece of "news" is that the Central Electricity Generating Board (CEGB) isn't intending to renew its criminal contract with Rossing beyond the end of 1984.

Chances are, the CEGB isn't lying (for once.) Uranium can be got cheaper elsewhere. And Rossing Uranium Ltd itself puts the life of the mine at 5 more years.

However, be warned. As CANUC (the Campaign against Namibian Uranium Contracts) puts it in its latest newsletter:

* One third of the CEGB's illegal supplies have yet to arrive

* Even greater quantities of Rossing uranium oxide is being imported by British Nuclear Fuels (BNFL) for processing and re-export to Japan, FRG and other countries

* In the 1983/84 tax year, RT-2's Rossing mine will become the largest single source of revenue for apartheid South Africa's occupation regime.

sources: Martin Bailey in New Statesperson 28/1/83; FT 2/2/83; Canucnews no.3 available from NSC, 53 Leverton St London NW5; price 30p.

DON'T WEEP FOR WEIPA -ORGANISE!

A "devastating attack on black hell"! Sounds like the blurb for a horror film?

Not a bit of it! The phrase was used recently by the Mebourne Age over a review (by noted Aboriginal activist, Henry Reynolds) of BLACK DEATH, WHITE HANDS, by Paul Wilson.

Says Reynolds: "Wilson reports on research pursued in order to build up a picture of the social environment of Alwyn Peter, a young Aborigine from Weipa South, who was charged with the manslaughter of his girl friend. The Public Defender decided to make the trial a test case to see if Alwyn Peter's actions could be explained by the events which had shaped his life and that of his family and kin. To prepare the case it was necessary to investigate the destruction by the Queensland Government of the Aboriginal settlement at Mapoon in 1963 and the deportation of the remaining members of the community"

Partizans supporters will already be aware that the Aborigines of Mapoon were evicted at the request of COMALCO (now 70.3% owned by CRA). Weipa South is the company hell-hole so eloquently condemned by Joyce Hall at the RTZ International Tribunal in 1981.

Now Wilson has scrutinised Weipa using documents provided by Aboriginal legal services. Among his findings are:

- * homicide rate is 12 times higher among blacks than whites in Queensland

- * Death from infectious disease was no less than 89 times higher!

In an historic decision, the Judge in Peter's case acknowledged that responsibility for his crime really lay with the society he was forced to live in.

At root, however, the original - and the ongoing blame - clearly belongs with Comalco - hence RTZ.

When will Tuke, Shackleton, Frame Madigan and Carnegie meet their Nuremberg?

"MONSTROUS" TUKERY IN SOUTH AFRICA

"The ideal channel for the opening of secret talks with South African cricket authorities." That was the London EVENING STANDARD's view of Anthony Tuke in early February. (see ES 2/2/83)

For Tuke is not only chair of RTZ - he's also new President of the MCC.

As the Standard put it, any MCC tour of the apartheid state would breach the Gleneagles Agreement on sporting ties with South Africa. Tuke went to "private talks" with Lord Chalfont and other MCC officials in early February

And, the following Sunday - he was off to South Africa on a "normal business visit!"

Did he talk with South African cricket officials? According to the Sun he did - "apparently re-opening negotiations to get South Africa back into world cricket!"

Said one county committee man: "It's monstrous!"

ES 2/2/83 and Sun 7/83

SCRAP METAL...

Guenter Sassmanshausen, president of the West German Metals Association has predicted that AM & S - RTZ's large zinc smelter at Avonmouth - will close this year.

He made the prediction as controversy developed over a companies' scheme (submitted to the EEC in 1982) to cut surplus smelting capacity in the "community!"

Although RTZ's view isn't clear (as usual the company is refusing comment) it seems AM & S may have already agreed to close Avonmouth, thus throwing 850 people out of work. The company wouldn't lose (of course!) as there's an automatic compensation fund.

source: Reuters 7/2/83 and FT D/2/83

NB. New head of RTZ Bristol is none other than Craig Gibson, former managing director of Rossing Uranium Ltd, and of RTZ-Rhodesia under the illegal Smith regime.

How Kaiser and RioTinto are flooding Tasmania for cheap power

by Peter Thompson

On the island of Tasmania (population 420,000), an Australian state off the southeast coast of the continent, Comalco's Bell Bay aluminum smelter is big business. Comalco's after-tax profits amounted to nearly \$A40 million for the last six months of 1980. Since Tasmania has only a handful of large industries, and unemployment is relatively high in Australian terms (over six percent), multinationals like Comalco have significant—and currently controversial—economic leverage.

Comalco's presence in Tasmania goes back to 1955, when the Australian government established a home-based aluminum plant as a defense measure. A joint agreement between the national and the Tasmanian governments led to the building of a Comalco (Commonwealth Aluminum Company) smelter at Bell Bay (see map). The Australian government sold its shares in Comalco to CRA (Conzinc RioTinto of Australia, a British-based firm) and Kaiser Aluminum Inc. of California. The Tasmanian government retains only a small preference shareholding.

Comalco's present output at Bell Bay is 112,000 tonnes per annum, making it Australia's largest alumi-

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num smelter—although competition for this title will soon pass to the present host of smelters being built in Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland.

The aluminum industry directly employs about 1300 Tasmanians. A recent Comalco study claimed that direct and indirect employment due to the Bell Bay plant totals 2,922 jobs. The same study states that the plant's output was worth \$A188 million (\$U.S. 220 million)—or about six percent of Tasmania's gross domestic product.

Comalco's thirst for electricity—no matter the environmental costs—has created resentment in Tasmania. Comalco accounts for 40 percent of all electricity usage in the state, far outstripping the total residential sector use. The smelter employs only one half

What with David Bellamy getting arrested, Bob Hawke flying into power in Australia, and major demonstrations by Aborigines and environmentalists at Gordon River, Tasmania's hydro-power is headline news again. This article, though two years old shows that the issue isn't all that new—and that RT-Z has its sites fixed on this part of the world too. Surprise, surprise!

Lake Pedder in south-west Tasmania (before flooding).

of one percent of the state's workforce.

The price which Comalco pays for its electricity is a state secret. Nevertheless, Tasmanian Premier Doug Lowe has suggested that Comalco pays only about 0.7 cents per kilowatt hour of electricity, representing an annual subsidy of \$A6 million to Comalco, taken from the pockets of Tasmania's small power users and households.

The environmental costs of the hydropower projects which supply

Comalco's electricity have also never been quantified. The Tasmanian Parliament sparked great public protest in 1969 when it approved the damming of Lake Pedder and subsequent flooding of the lake's scenic environs. The power plant built near the site provides less than 70 megawatts of additional power to Tasmania's electricity grid, all of which was contracted to Comalco and one other energy-intensive industry.

The loss of Lake Pedder and the adjoining Gordon River gorge (one of Australia's steepest chasms) led conservationists to redouble their efforts to save further areas of the southwest from flooding. Currently, government plans to dam the Franklin River, the last major wild river in Southeastern Australia, are being held up on environmental grounds after 80,000 of the state's 250,000 voters joined a letter-writing campaign to pressure the state legislators.

Despite the public outcry, Comalco continues to fight for the river's flooding. The company is 90 percent controlled by non-Australian firms, par for the course in most sectors of Tasmania's economy. Over 80 percent of mining, and 60 percent of manufacturing projects on the island are controlled outside Australia.

An excellent articulation of Tasmania's dilemma comes from the multinational's own Australian mouthpiece, Sir Roderick Carnegie, chairman of CRA:

"People don't realize the cost. If you get \$2 in 1979 from overseas invested in equities, these owners want a dollar a year from 1980 onwards forever. What I'm saying is this: that's a very high price, but in political terms it doesn't seem a high price because they see the \$2 coming in today, but in 10, 11, 12 years time, a dollar a year going out is an enormous price to pay... I think that at the present time the attitude is too often that we should continue our reliance on the international oil companies for a source of capital. That's an easy way but in the long term I don't think it's going to create the kind of jobs for young Australians which I want for my kids."

The Tasmanian economy has become a victim of the very process which Carnegie warns about. □

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