

PARTING COMPANY

1 & 2 1984

20p



GREENHAM WOMEN CLOSE RIO TINTO

Greenham women against RT-Z is a new initiative, taken by three Greenham women to dramatise the links between weapons and big business. Already they've succeeded in closing down the main entrance to 6 St. James' Square. They'll be outside the HQ every Monday - indefinitely. Women (only) can contact the group at the Main Gate to Greenham base, or through Partizans (tel 01-609 1852)

RED LIGHT DISTRICT MARCH 29th!

On September 29, over 1,500 people peacefully disrupted the financial heart of the War Machine; the "city" of London - talking with workers, blockading the Stock Exchange, picketing and performing street theatre and music.

Encouraged by our (relative) success, we're repeating the action. The theme is PEOPLE NOT PROFIT - "the city" creates and thrives on Poverty, Ecological destruction and international Repression. Country wide organising, and agitating in all social movements has already started. JOIN IN! Inter-regional contacts: Box 37C, c/o 6 Endsleigh St., London WCI tel: (01) 281 0719

"...withstand any conceivable economic shock"

Anywhere that dubious profits are to be made - and RT-Z (Rio Tinto Zinc) can't be far behind.

As witness the attempts by Britain's biggest multinational mining corporation to diversify into oil and gas exploration on its (our) "home ground".

RT-Z Oil and Gas is a relatively recent cult in the company's stables and while there's no doubt RT-Z is following the normal pattern among more successful mnc's, of spreading its investment over a wide portfolio, there's more to it than that.

By acquiring interests in working oil fields, RT-Z can achieve three things.

First, it gets immediate cash. Second, it can offset the costs of its own explorations offshore, against the petroleum revenue tax it has to pay on its new ventures.

Third, and most important, by expanding its domestic interests, it can generate capital investment which it then uses as a tax cover for profits repatriated from abroad.

In other words, RT-Z can burn the candle at both ends: creaming the cake in areas of low tax, low costs, cheap labour overseas - and boning in on the banana back home.

So far RT-Z has bought 1% of stable-mate BP's holding in the famed Ferties' field, but been stymied in its attempt to get hold of 5% of the Maureen field, also in the north sea. Originally its £60,000,000 bid appeared to be acceptable to British Electric Traction (BET), but in December 1983 BET chose instead to sell to two of its existing partners, Ultramar and Century.

Not to be outdone, RT-Z now appears to be bidding for the whole of Candecca Resources, an oil and gas group which not only has part of the Ferties field, but also substantial onshore oil and gas interests. According to the Financial Times (31/12/83) RT-Z has leaked Candecca over, along with Trafalgar House.

RTZ long ago outgrew its popular image as a copper stock, subject only to the fluctuations in the price of that one metal. Interests now include uranium, precious metals, aluminium, diamonds, chemicals and cement, to name only the most significant.

The latest acquisitions should go a long way towards convincing shareholders that RTZ is now a mature natural-resources group, with an earnings base which should be sufficiently widely diversified to withstand just about any conceivable economic shock.

Financial Times 12/11/83

Whatever comes out of its current manoeuvrings in the north sea, one thing is new beyond dispute.

RT-Z has more than fulfilled the dream of its original backers twenty years ago.

It has become the most diversified "natural resource" company (based on mining) in the world, thanks to a breath-taking repertoire of tactics which range from land-theft, through blatant violation of international law to deception and chicanery.

(sources: FT 12/11/83, 16/12/83, 31/12/83, MJ 11/11/83 et al)

WHO SAID..?

" Since the mining region was occupied by General France's forces, there have been no further labour problems. With a smaller workforce than before, production has increased by 30,000 tonnes per month. Miners found guilty of trouble-making are court-martialled and shot!"

ANSWER: Sir Auckland Geddes, speaking to shareholders of Rio Tinto, quoted from Controversy (Dec. 1977). Thanks to Dave the Barret for this Gem! Rio Tinto was the company which amalgamated with Cons-Zinc nearly 30 years later to form you-know-who.

Farms to be probed

Almost all the farmland in the Westport area is under prospect by mining companies. By far the largest licence holder is CRA. Conzinc Rio Tinto of Australia. The main target mineral is gold but they are also interested in ilmenite and zircon.

CRA is prospecting Butler Minerals licences under a joint venture agreement.

CRA whose head office is in Melbourne employs 42,000 people and has a turnover of \$2.5 billion. But CRA is just a pup compared with its parent, Rio Tinto Zinc, one of the largest mining corporations in the world.

John Foster, senior geologist for CRA Explorations in NZ started work with Geological Survey in Greymouth. He has worked for Kennecott and other large scale miners, both here and overseas.

His vision is to see the mining industry re-established in NZ. He says we once had a very strong tradition of mining, especially on the Coast.

CRA is working on an agreement to compensate farmers for prospecting on their land. It has been thrashed out with the Westport branch and national executive of Federated Farmers over the last three years.

According to local chairman Bruce Hamilton only one point still requires settling.

"We've learnt to be careful," says Mr Hamilton. A few years ago CRA sent a geologist around all the farmers in the Fairdown area who had Victorian titles. They wanted them to sign an agreement to prospect. The Victorian title gives the farmer ownership of the minerals under his land but once he's signed an agreement to prospect he's also given them the right to mine. I actually had to go on the radio to warn farmers not to sign.

John Foster admits that CRA made a strong effort to

get consents, but with no luck. He sees the Victorian titles as a problem for mining industry.

The agreement also makes provisions for a land liaison officer appointed by Federated Farmers and paid for by the company. His job is to advise landowners of their rights, to make sure the company meets its condition and to liaise between the two. He will also make sure that land restoration is satisfactory.

Mr Hamilton points out that these agreements represent a bare minimum. Any farmer who wants more protection is welcome to go for it.

Several local farmers did last that at the Planning Tribunal held in Westport last week. Mr & Mrs Tony Vesie milk 100 cows at Fairdown. "We wanted much stricter conditions than the standard ones laid down by the Ministry of Energy.

The Vesies say their whole farming operation would be disorganised by the prospectors. And they believe the nation benefits more from the exports they produce than it ever would from mining the land.

MR Vesie while giving his own testimony also called Mr Cunliffe and Miss D Hooper to give evidence on his behalf.

However Judge Skelton ruled Miss Hooper's evidence inadmissible on the grounds that it would not help the tribunal in making its recommendations.

Before that the judge had received a copy of Miss Hooper's proposed testimony which involved details of CRA's and its parent company Rio Tinto Zinc's alleged bad mining record in New Zealand and overseas.

The judge told Miss Hooper she was raising a very serious matter which could pose all sorts of questions.

He believed if her testimony was to be heard, then CRA whose integrity was being placed in doubt, should be allowed the opportunity to reply in full.

Mr Vesie's grounds for objection were:

1. The operation of the farm would be disorganised by prospecting within the limitations of the standard conditions set by the Minister of Mines.

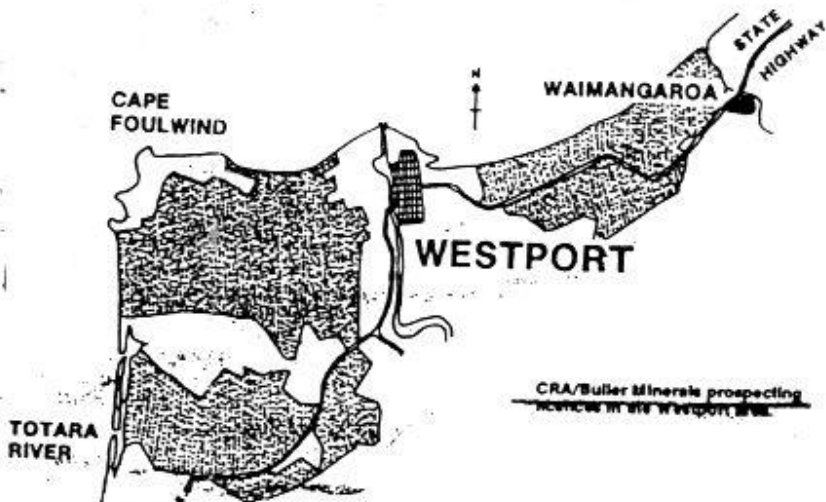
The chance of finding commercial quantities of minerals in the licence area is low.

Exports generated by milk and beef from the objector's farm and from the area of application is already considerable, is growing steadily, and will continue into the indefinite future.

The balance of national advantages lies in maintaining the productivity of the farmland and the confidence of the farmer to continue the development as planned.

2. Prospecting within the standard conditions could cause severe damage to the remaining native bush and shelter belts and extra conditions are asked for to protect these. This can be done with little loss of information as the bush areas are small in relation to the rest of the area.

3. The record of the company and its associated members in operations throughout the world indicate that it will follow the letter of the law and operate to the limit allowed. Any ambiguity, omission, discretion or vagueness in the wording will be exploited to the full in the company's favour.



CRA ORDERED TO STOP EXPLORING

Environmentalists, Aborigines and local farmers have won the latest round in a battle to stop CRA, RT-Z's major subsidiary, solution mining for gold in Victoria, Australia. (see PC last two issues).

A preliminary meeting of the state Planning Appeals Board has ruled that the company must wait for a permit to explore. The Shire of Malden which initially let CRA on its land has now agreed with the objectors.

In the absence of the permit, says PeE (Aus) spokesperson John Kirby, a strict legal interpretation suggests that "...all the operations of CRA Ltd including the erection of buildings, drilling rigs and the injection of exploratory chemicals, has been illegal!" CRA may now appeal to the Supreme Court

(Thanks to PeE Melbourne for this story)

GLEE FOR GEEVOR

Geevor - a Cornish tin mine in which our favourite company holds 17.87% along with south African interests and others - has made a killing, thanks to a quirk in international trading practices.

Since Britain is classed as a consumer of tin, it's not bound to reduce production in line with cut-backs recently agreed by the International Tin Council.

So - the price has risen, and Geevor's profits have as well.

(FT 7/12/83)

KOKATHA RESISTANCE GROWS

The Kokatha people, with Aboriginal supporters from other communities, are continuing their seven month occupation of Canegrass Swamp in the Roxby Downs mining area (see PC last issue). A meeting attended by 150 Kokatha people - the first such meeting since the late forties when the tribe was forcibly removed by British and Australian governments to make way for the Weemera rocket range - has called for a national (Australian) boycott of BP and Western Mining.

BP holds 49% of Roxby Downs. Meanwhile the Australian Labor government (so-called) has given Roxby Downs the green light, though holding the moratorium on development of new uranium projects, until a government Enquiry reports by May.

(Thanks to ALRSG newsletter Dec 83)

Eiris: a new ramrod!

Ethical Investment Research and Information Service (funded by the Quakers, Rowntree trusts, Oxfam and some churches) has monitored more than 500 British companies for their involvement in South Africa and with the arms trade. The information (and basic company details) are on computer and available to trade unions, public interest groups and others.

In the future EIRIS intends to monitor company performances in the fields of environment and employment. Contact: EIRIS, 266 Pentonville Rd., London NI (tel: 01 837 8656)

STOP PRESS! Birmingham WOMEN OPPOSE THE NUCLEAR THREAT (WONT) are planning a major conference to examine local authority investment in RT-Z and specifically get the West Midlands CC to disinvest. Speakers/films from PARTIZANS, CANUC, SWAPO etc. MARCH 17th 1984, 11 - 5 pm at CENTRAL HALL, Corporation Street BIRMINGHAM 4. telephone Heather (021) 449 - 7729 or Helen (021) 449 8854 for further details. CRECHE and DISABLED ACCESS

DON'T FORGET: PARTIZANS TAKES ON RT-Z
IN WESTMINSTER COUNTY COURT FROM FEB.
28th. BOOK YOUR PLACE OUTSIDE THE COURT
NOW!

RT-Z RE-OPENS KILLER MINE

CHILE CON CARNAGE

Workers have clashed with police during protests over Chile's new mining law, which opens the door to foreign multinationals.

Traffic came to a standstill in Santiago on December 13th, as protesters were pursued by police using water cannon and batons.

One of the chief foreign mnc's to benefit from the new law is RT-Z with its Cerro Celerrade copper mine (see PC last issue)

source: Jamshiriya Int.Report
Dec.24th 1983

As uranium mines fall like 9-pins throughout the USA, RT-Z's Rio Algom subsidiary is about to open one which has lain dormant for several years.

Mi Vida in southeast Utah was one of the major mines during the uranium boom of the 1950's. It was run down in the 70's.

Rio Algom's current mine in Lisbon, Utah is being run down too - Mi Vida will be re-opened using workers from Lisbon and supplying ore to the Lisbon Valley mill. (E&MJ (USA) October 1983)

PALABORA: IT'S THE PITS!

It's already produced two thousand MILLION tons of waste and ore. It's the world's second largest man-made open pit. It's the largest part-owned foreign mine in South Africa. It's the only foreign part-owned uranium mine in the apartheid state.

Yes, folks, it's all in the hands of RT-Z, so we can sleep easy at nights, knowing that problems of radioactivity, acid contamination, let alone political rights, are all being taken care of.

In fact so confident is RT-Z, that it's expanding the Palabora mine in the north-east Transvaal.

way beyond its original life.

The pit could be made even bigger, pushed to further depths - and another thousand million tons of waste thrown up around.

In the first 9 months of 1983 - while other uranium producers in "traditional" areas experienced slumps in uranium sales, Palabora actually increased its production (161,296 kgs) 39% owned by RT-Z, Palabora is one of the west's most successful mines. Let's hope it goes down with a Big Bang in the area where it really counts..!

(MJ 28/10/83)

GOING DUTCH

Rio Tinto-Zinc Finance, a Netherlands based subsidiary of RT-Z has issued bonds worth \$100 million, to raise money for group companies. They'll be issued on the London Stock Exchange. Don't all rush at once! (MJ 7/10/83)

Marshall Farts

"I expect to get approval in about a year's time. By that time the British public will be bored to tears by nuclear power. That, of course, is the purpose of having a public inquiry" (Walter Marshall, chair of the CEEB quoted in FORBES magazine- reprinted from the Guardian 7/12/83. Of course he's talking about Sizewell)

Parting Company is published by People against Rio Tinto-Zinc and Subsidiaries at 218 Liverpool Rd., London N1 1LE. (tel : 01 609 1852)