GLC Debacle

As the demise of the Greater London Council draws near, it is becoming clear that the country’s biggest public pension fund will not withdraw its support for apartheid.

In a special publication entitled "Where there’s brass there’s muck", the GLC-funded Partizans group last December revealed the true extent of GLC investment in companies named by the UI as key props for the South African regime. They include BP, BTR, GLC, Flessey, Shell and (of course) RTZ. About a quarter of the GLC Pension Fund (nearly one billion pounds total) is invested in such indicted companies.

Worse - in the eyes of Partizans - new investment was actually made in companies like Rowntrees and BTR in early 1985 - some two years after Ken Livingstone declared London an 'apartheid-free zone'.

And the promised disinvestment from RTZ (first promised back in 1981!) still hasn’t taken place.

MR. LIVINGSTONE'S, I PRESUME!

Partizans launched its report with typical flair - by showering copies on members of the Finance and General Purposes Committee (FGP) on December 5th. The action was supported by members of the GLC staff Anti-apartheid group, a petition at the same time, signed by more than 10% of the entire GLC staff.

Banners were displayed in the Committee Room, and despite threats of ejectio, Partizans supporters managed to engage some of the Labour members in spirited debate. When challenged on his failure to implement a promise to pass control of the GLC Pension Fund "from officers to members", GLC leader Ken Livingstone simply smirked, "It’s the bureaucracy!" he weakly protested. "It’s the nature of the state my friend!"

(Were sincerely wonder whether Livingstone would have made a similar statement, had he been facing a black group of protesters?)
Remember Stanley Adams? He was the former employee of the Swiss drug producer Hoffmann-LaRoche, who blew the whistle on the company's price-fixing practices in 1973, but was arrested by the Swiss police and charged with "economic espionage" after the European Commission disqualified his name. In November 1985, he finally won damages (reduced because of his own supposed "negligence") against the Commission in the European Court of Justice. As theFT remarked, in a surprising display of solidarity with Adams: "In the world of business...a good big 'un almost invariably beats a good little 'un." This time, they didn't. Good on you, Stan!

BILLIONVILLE

In September last, RTZ's Bogainville Copper Ltd subsidiary dug up its one thousand millionth tonne of material after 15 years of operation. This was the mine which started in the face of intense opposition from local indigenous land-owners and has ended up in the middle of an embarrassing conflict between the Papua New Guinea government and the North Solomons provincial government, over royalties and control. Not that this is of much concern to BGC or RTZ. After all, 1000,000,000 tonnes is a billion tonnes, isn't it?

Other Labour members were less self-seeking and two of them - Tony Hart and Disinvestment Panel chair, Michael Ward, with half a dozen Partisans supporters the following week, to follow up the group's complaints.

At this meeting, it emerged that the GLC has been even more dore-jit in its duty than originally suspected.

* The GLC has been accused of investment advisors three years ago (when some local authorities have in fact done the Labour majority on the PFG lacked the moral courage to force the issue).

* The Pension Fund could not have sold its RTZ shares when the share price was still above par early in 1983. It's still not clear why it didn't - except that no-one made it a priority to do so.

* Under present arrangements, the Pension Fund Investment/Disinvestment panel doesn't know what new investments have been made until six months after new shares have been taken up.

* As a sop to critics, the Panel has now commissioned a report on the activities of six major companies with apartheid investments, to determine whether the Fund would have done as well (or badly) as it has done, were these companies excluded from the portfolio. But as Michael Ward admitted to Partisans, this research might not be completed in time, and anyway might simply "prove that nothing can be proved by computer simulation.

Ironically the GLC has, for some time now, been paying a Disinvestment officer, to look at its pension fund holdings and recommend disinvestment on moral grounds. That advisor, Cosmas Desmond (a white South African refugee from the apartheid regime) has presented several reports to GLC members, which show conclusively that investments in South African-related companies are not necessary for the overall wellbeing of pension fund participants. Of course the financial advisors currently used by the GLC don't agree with Cosmas Desmond, Partisans, the ANC or anybody else, except for the City of which they are an integral part.

So long as these men are in charge of the GLC's investment, there is no substantial disengagement from South Africa, nuclear power, or anything else that threatens the wellbeing of this planet and its custodians.

With only three months to go before the GLC and other metropolitan authorities are abolished, it is too late to rid the board of these advisors using "proper channels." What can we do now then, expose their self-interest and help consolidate a mass movement which will prevent immoral investments ever being made again behind our backs.

(THIS ISSUE OF PARTING COMPANY IS MAINLY DEVOTED TO SOUTHERN AFRICA, both because of the ongoing Partisan campaign for disinvestment and the over-riding importance of the resolution against racist government.)
Rossing workers meet to join trade union

Workers of the Rossing Uranium Mine at Swakopmund were to hold a meeting at the Arandis Town Hall to discuss dissatisfaction with certain working conditions.

Workers also expressed dissatisfaction with the management-employee relations, claiming that the present relationship was comparable to a child listening to his father.

According to a representative of the workers, decisions taken at the meeting would be relayed to the NUM who would in turn take the matters up with the Rossing management.

The meeting also planned to elect 22 representatives to negotiate with the NUM with a view to joining or forming their own trade union.

The workers also had problems with the fact that most of the decisions of management were relayed to them by the foremen, and that workers had no direct access to the Rossing Council.

Mr. Kaurisa said the Mine did not oppose trade unions but would not be going to assist in the formation of such a union.

Mr. Kaurisa also detailed the system of six committees on the Mine (Production, Metallurgy, Personnel, Administration, Engineering, and Residential committees). Workers also disagreed with this system, feeling that it created division in the Mine.

The Arandis town, built by Rossing, falls under the Damara administration, and it was not known at the time of going to press whether the workers had informed the Magistrate of their intention to hold a meeting.

Workers, however, said that the workers were not in a militant mood, but were firm on their decision to join or form a trade union. The worker's representative said he did not expect any trouble at the meeting "unless there was action from the side of police or management."

June Advertiser
6/12/85

Macaulay urges: "*13%* the unions!"

- THE London based institute of Mining and Metallurgy, an international professional body of mining engineers, geologists and metallurgists, has set up a so-called "South West African section", with Gordon Freeman, General Manager of Rossing as its chairman.

Speaking at its inaugural dinner, Colin Macaulay, Rossing's Chief Executive, said that it would be tragic if any "first class" industrial relations were damaged in the process of unionisation of mine employees, and that it was essential that the present channels for consultation were not replaced by communication through union officials only. He described industrial relations in more developed countries as having a basis of agreement between the authorities and the Chamber of Mines as being underway for some time and warned that increased government control over the industry without the blessing of the companies themselves could be "extremely expensive and damaging to the mineral wealth of this country..." - WO 28/9/85, WO 19/9/85.

Junior News Briefing
Oct. 1985

COMPANY PROSPECTS

Our favourite company reported satisfactory results for the first half year of 1985, with industrial activities contributing 43% of earnings, metal 39% and "business" the other 18%. Correspondingly the corporation's major activities are now in North America (36%), Britain (29%), with Australia at 27% and South Africa at 12%.

Australian iron ore and coal have done better than expected, the company said (PT 28/9/85).

In September Anglo American and London Nickel (ADD: CRA 53.8%) sold its first year's production from the notorious Arandis Nickel mine, the output of which will however, be sold through De Beers Central Selling Organisation (CSO). By the year-end ADD was reporting a 26% increase in diamond recovery at the venture (Mining Magazine, Nov. 1985).

Riso Tinto Zambesice mining more than tripled its pre-tax profit in the nine months to September, with PT 72/85, and a couple of weeks later, Consolidated Goldfields (CGAF:PT) launched a bumper $200 million - the first floating rate note to carry a guarantee from the Australian government. (PT 21/11/85)

Meanwhile Rio Tinto Finance and Exploration had been granted a one-year lease to explore for coal in the Isle of Man (PT 17/11/85).

And in December - in the biggest surprise of the last quarter - ATZ announced that it would exchange its 29.8% stake it was in Enterprise NL (obtained with much acrimony about a year ago) for a 26.5% stake in Lasmo. Lasmo, which itself has a substantial stake in Enterprise, has offered two shares to Enterprise's management (who is executive), Derek Birkett, 26, to get the price to $56.2 million. (PT 21/12/85)

BP+

CRA

- EK

BP Indonesia has at last announced plans to dig coal in East Kalimantan (Borneo) along with CRA as an equal partner. Development costs will be more than $400 million for a 4 million ton/year operation (PT 8/11/85).

Meanwhile, CRA has entered into agreements with two upstream companies to develop two oilfields exploration properties in Kalimantan. CRA will manage both. (PT 29/11/85)

BP+ Eagle-7
RTZ—the uranium connect

A report compiled by the Namibia Support Committee looks at Rio Tinto Zinc's uranium mining interests in Namibia and its links with Britain's nuclear power industry.

The nuclear power station at Bradwell. Large stockpiles of Namibian uranium still exist in Britain to be processed by the Central Electricity Generating Board.

contracts

However, the tax paid on that, along with corporate and other tax and income generated, finances the South African state's electric corporation and the country's resources rather than sending profit abroad. This led the mining minister to express the world uranium market at 'a disaster. Development.

The sharp fall in last year's profits partly reflected the continuing low world market price of uranium, which was $35 per pound in 1984, having been $60 per pound at the first time in 1983. At the 1983 AGM for Alstom the directors set a figure of $35 million as being more realistic, and the directors still believe that this is possible despite the fall in prices.

Uranium prices were lower than they ever have been, provided that $15 dollars and 14 dollars a pound, but Rolwing-Rossum has been suffering from having long-term contracts that it can't get out of. Additionally, it is reported that Rolwing-Rossum has been threatened with legal action by the British government because it is pulling out of a potentially lucrative deal with British Nuclear Fuels. Its writs profit has fallen last year by 4.8 million on the £34 million and £4.6 million in the export market, which was worth £24 million to £13 million.

Bomb material

BNFL operates the URENCO enrichment plant at its headquarters in Windscale, which is under construction and is expected to produce up to 300,000 tonnes of uranium per year. The plant is expected to come into operation later this year and will provide uranium for both domestic and export markets as well as for BNFL's reprocessing operations.

Speculation

British companies claim that reprocessing is essential for the country's future, and the British lobby groups are pushing for the development of nuclear power in the UK. However, despite these claims, BNFL's reprocessing facility is only licensed to process up to 300,000 tonnes of uranium per year.

Namibians

The Naibiar, December 1985

This year Rossing Uranium had contributed £356 million in cash to the Namibian economy, and Rossing is actively involved in the development of the uranium industry in the country.

Mr. Algar was reacting to a report in last week's edition of THE NAIBIAR, which is a private sector radio station run by journalists and activists in Windhoek.

The report said that the mine has become a future government of the uranium was not used for any other purpose, and that social policy should be based on the interests of the affected communities. The report claimed that the mine may be closed by a future government of the uranium was not used for any other purpose, and that social policy should be based on the interests of the affected communities.

Mr. Algar's statement was as follows:

"Our country has invested heavily in the uranium industry in Namibia, and we are committed to the development of the mine. We have always maintained that the mining of uranium is a fact of life in Namibia, and we believe that it is in the best interests of the people of Namibia. We are fully committed to the development of the mine and its potential to bring economic benefits to the people of Namibia."

The report went on to say that the mining of uranium is a fact of life in Namibia, and that the future government of the uranium will not be able to close the mine. It is also stated that the mining of uranium is essential for the country's economic development and that it is in the best interests of the people of Namibia.
The impact of shareholder action groups

BY CHARLES BURCHELL

WHEN Sir Michael Edwards, chairman of Chloride, the British battery maker, openly declared that the company was not his, he can be fairly certain that Dr Maurice Gillibrand, a former director and now sitting in the hall.

When Mr Ken Siddle, chairman of EurexInfos, the cross-Channel operator, meets his shareholders next June, he will be surprised if Mr Steve Lourie, an accountant and SDP councillor for Richmond, is not among his audience.

And when Mr Patrick Sneath, chairman of BAT Industries, the tobacco-based conglomerate, pauses to light up his traditional State Express 555 at next year's annual meeting, he can be pretty certain that a representative of the World Development Movement will start to question BAT's cigarette marketing policies in the Third World.

Dr Gillibrand, Mr Lourie and EurexInfos (WDM) which lobby on trade and development issues, have all orchestrated shareholder action campaigns against a range of US and British companies in an attempt to influence their policies.

None would claim their efforts alone have achieved a great deal, but they believe that the knowledge and the skills of others can be employed to focus the spotlight on issues which affect our lives. The campaign against Eurex Infos is currently facing some heavy criticism from shareholders who believe that the company directors are not being adequately represented at the annual meeting, usually the only time that a board meets its shareholders face-to-face.

If the Government's attempts to bring British closer to shareholder democracy are successful, many companies could find more and more of their shareholders uniting to form groups to criticise their boards.

Significantly, British Telecom has already spawned a similar group calling itself the BT Circle. BT, which is trading as BT Group, has 17 directors sitting on a board which overseas a workforce of 230,000.

Organised shareholder action groups are not a new development. They have been the target of many companies on both sides of the Atlantic for over 30 years.

Brooke Bond, the tea and foods company, was the target of a shareholder attack last year which led to a £160m takeover bid from the WDM which was eventually rejected. The attack on Brooke Bond was one of the first instances of a shareholder action group being used in the UK.

Barbara Banks has long had to live with criticism of its involvement in the tobacco industry. The company has faced many challenges over the years, including the use of shareholders' meetings to vote down proposals to increase the company's involvement in Southern Africa.

The latest wave of protests has come in the form of a campaign by private investor participation in stock markets

Sir John O'Grady, who took over as Brooke Bond chairman last year, has been one of the most vocal critics of the company's policies. He has been critical of the company's treatment of local communities in the Third World, and has called for changes to be made in the company's investment policies. O'Grady has also been a vocal critic of the company's decision to sell off its stake in a Chinese company in 2014.

For this reason professional action groups are becoming more common. The WDM, which began as a concern for the treatment of workers in the Third World, is now a powerful group of shareholders who are determined to use their power to bring about change.

The group has a powerful track record, having successfully campaigned against companies such as BAT, which has been the target of shareholder action groups in the past.

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MULTINATIONAL PESTS

Did you know: * at least 750,000 people are poisoned each year by pesticides, of whom 14,000 die (OXFAM). * Most pesticides used in the third world are not employed on food crops, but items for export. * The Pesticide Action Network has named twelve killer pesticides (the "dirty dozen"). Among the key manufacturers are ICI, BASF (yes, they make those famous tapes), Royal Dutch/Shell, Ciba-Geigy, and Pillar International Co, Taiwan.

We presume the last-named is part of the Pillar "empire," a wholly-owned subsidiary of RT-Z. (If it isn't, we'll publish the refutation in our next F.C.) As for Ciba-Geigy, this ubiquitous Swiss-based multinational has recently been investing money in various campaigns against "child abuse." Perhaps it should look closer to home. For, after withdrawing Chlordimeform from the European market in 1976, after animal tests "proved" its toxicity, Ciba-Geigy went on to employ it in the third world. According to the Multinational Monitor (August 15, 1985)

"...the company asked six Egyptian boys between the ages of 10 and 18 to stand in a field and be sprayed with the carcinogenic pesticide. The boys were to wear no protective clothing. After the test, confidential Ciba-Geigy documents leaked to the public in 1982 showed that some of the boys were exposed to levels of the pesticide 30 times higher than the Acceptable Daily Intake.

Contact: OXFAM, Banbury Rd, Oxford, England and P.O. Box 1045 Sansome St, Rm 404 San Francisco, CA 94111 USA. (Thanks to Multinational Monitor for information)

Austrian Greens Initiative Osterreich 2005 - is raising money to buy the country's mothballed Wuentendorf nuclear plant, to turn it into an ecology centre. (PT 6/11/85)

The Mauville Corporation, which owns Mauville, was responsible for massive asbestos poisoning and was forced into bankruptcy. Finally, two payments of $2,250,000 and $2,000,000 were made to an insurance company, which was allocated a trust fund for victims. The compensation will be paid over the next 25 years. (PT 23/12/85)

PARTIZANS '86

Partizans is now entering its most critical period, as the SLC grant becomes exhausted (with no prospect of renewal) and our supporters' list has been drastically cut. Nearly a third of the names we've accumulated since 1980 have been excised, since - despite several appeals and "last chances" - their owners have failed to contact us. Unfortunately, some might say, unprincipled - these names include a significant number of ATZ shareholders who still hold their shares, have not attended AGMs and have not bothered to arrange for the transfer of their holding to an activist. (Many thanks to those of you who have sent us your share certificate or a notification.)

As we enter 1986, it's more crucial than ever that we should hear from you all out there. Yes, we would like your money - but we have not "chopped" supporters, simply because they can't afford the £3 a year sum. More importantly, we'd like your promise to attend the 1986 AGM in May or June and your hands around the office. If you can type or file, your energies will be especially needed. Just make sure you're able to read to do most of the work.

SO - DEAR FRIEND, WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR?

.................. Please send to Partizans, 218 Liverpool Rd, London W11 1HF

Name ........................................... Address ...........................................

Phone ........................................... Are you an ATZ shareholder? YES/NO.

If not, would you like a share or proxy for 1986? YES/NO.

Can you help out in the office (or take work home) at any time? Please state when and how ....................................................
FOR THE RECORD

THE MOODY-FRAME CORRESPONDENCE

22nd November, 1965

Mr. Roger Moody,
PARTIZANS
218 Liverpool Road,
London, N.1.

Dear Mr. Moody,

It is some time since I wrote to you suggesting
that you might like to call in to see me to discuss the
various differences of opinion between your group and
RTZ as to the conduct of our operations.

If you feel able to come, I would like to take this
opportunity to point out some of the very gross
distortions or fact contained in your various
publications.

Yours sincerely,

Alistair Frame

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20 St. James’s Square
London SW1Y 4AG
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