GLC: ONE DOWN, HUNDRED TO GO.

One of the final acts of the late GLC was to put into effect a policy decided more than a year ago: to sell its RTZ shares.

This was the culmination to five years campaigning by PARTIZANS and other anti-apartheid activists in the metropolis. Ken Livingstone himself counted it one of the "positive" acts of the GLC in its closing week.

Strangely, no press release was put out about the disinvestment and no champagne corks popped out over the muddy Thames.

But is it so strange? As a GLC advisor put it to Partizans "They must be feeling quite a bit guilty that they disinvested in financial, rather than moral grounds."

Indeed, the GLC would still have the shares (or rather, its Pension Fund would still be using them) had the market price not risen to nearly £3 a share in mid-March; thus putting into effect an automatic selling mechanism agreed in 1985, as a compromise between outright disinvestment and preservation of the status quo.

So - one handclap to the late lamented brethren and sothens south of the river. It was too little, too late. But it was not insignificant. And the sale will well have aided RTZ shares in the steep decline they experienced the week afterwards.

But, we can't, unfortunately, find much positive to say about the GLC's other disinvestment initiatives. Put bluntly, there weren't none!

In the closing week of GLC business in March, the results of a much-vaunted computer simulation study were presented to the Finance and General Purposes Committee. It showed that performance in six huge British companies was 73% below what was expected, had those same holdings been spread throughout the rest of the Pension fund portfolio.

Did this mean funds should be pulled out of those six companies? Alas, no. The Fund Panel decided they were too big, and the investments too significant. Taking advice (though by no means unanimous) from specially commissioned legal and financial experts, the Panel decided it couldn't pull out from companies like BP and Shell - for where else would it put its investments in oil?

A bithie hope was expressed that the L38 (London Residuary Body) which adopts some of the old GLC's mantle would look anew at disinvestment.

AHEM, AGM!

Yes, it's AGM time again. Do you have a share? If not - do you want one? Turn to the back page and fill in the form if you do.

Alternatively, you might already have a share but not be able (or not want) to come to this year's AGM as usual, it's almost certain to fall in the last week of May or the first week of June.

If you can't come (and we DO need you, so please try), let us know in plenty of time and send in your proxy card, signed, so we can pass it onto someone else.

Bhopal's Other Face

"I'm an American lawyer. Let me through!"

See P.6
In the Right Mind of Frame

Rumours swept the Stock Exchange today of a takeover bid for the giant British mining group Rio Tinto Zinc, in the wake of a climb in share prices to nearly £8 a share.

This is not the first time that RTZ has been beset by takeover rumours: the world's largest oil company Exxon and British Petroleum have been cited in recent years as contenders for a bounty which boasts one of the world's largest copper mining complexes (Palmboys and Boughville), one of Australia's largest companies (CSG, 535 held by RTZ), and important interests in several other metals, notably bauxite, tin and uranium. However, the rumours have always been discredited by RTZ as strategic importance for the British government.

But with a slimmed down company under new chair, Alistair Frame, and the company's new found interests in North Sea oil and gas, plus its unyielding interests in iron ore (its the world's biggest producer) and some of the best returns for some years from its own under and South African subsidiaries, it is an attractive proposition once again, while the Thatcher government's predication for privatization may make the government relax its takeover position.

According to market analysts, a takeover bid may soon be in the offing from a group of minority shareholders who have been vocal at past AGMs, and the extent of whose holding has never been revealed. Assumed to be negligible, the company was rather shaken recently when one of the minority group - known colloquially as Folk After Rio Tinto Zinc - a Mr Robert Rosenthal, declared that he held close to 1% of the company, thanks to holdings built up over the last six years through various nominees.

Mr Rosenthal could not be reached at his north London house last night, but friends say he is "a financial wizard of the ilk of the Boss brothers and T. Boone Pickens". Unlike these US raiders, however, Mr Rosenthal is not thought to be about to sell his stake without using it to secure some change in the company's board and policies at the next AGM in May.

Once again, of course, the Queen has been cited as RTZ's largest shareholder - and once again, we can dismiss speculation that she is about to mount a takeover herself. More likely she has already sold a sizeable part of her holding, needing liquidity at the present time to resell Hampton Court, rather than a ride on a wind which could blow itself into nothing very quickly as these things go in the mining world.

Indeed, it is more likely that the Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher - whose small stake in BHP, a company not wholly unlike CRA, was recently the subject of heated discussion in Parliament - could put together her own, through MAD (the outfit set up by her son, Mark, and husband Dennis, in 1984 with Saudi Arabian petro dollars).

Spokesmen at RTZ HQ in St James's Square are fully dismissive about the rumours, which have previously been dismissed as idle gossip. "It's true that a vocal group of shareholders has shown interest in tendering for shares they don't already own and doing so with little concern for the health and prosperity of the group", said Sir Alistair last week. "However, I can safely say they'll be resold at every turn and our longstanding institutional shareholders aren't likely to take the carrot. Indeed, when it comes to ruthless takeovers of underpriced energy concerns with no thought for the public interest, I take a lot of beating myself".

WHO SAID?

"...The prototombists of multi-national companies that their activities result in bringing prosperity to the host country reminds one of the cynical observations of Jeremy Bentham, "I am a selfish man, no selfish as any man can be. But in nosmouth or other, so it happens, selfishness has taken the form of benevolence"..."

AND - in case anyone still wasn't sure what the moral of the story is - added:

"...The overriding object of multi-national companies is to make a profit and all other considerations are subordinated to this one aspect..."
CORPORATE leaders met in March to warn
their banks at the injustices of apartheid -
and work out how they could carry on
investing without stirring up too much
flak.

Although the proceedings were secret
(as they were at a similar meeting a year
ago), it was known that Akistan Fane of
79-25A representatives of Mobil, Bar-ley
Bank, Shell UK, Barlow Rand (SI) and
Anglo Vela (SI) were probably invited.
The meeting was preceded by calls
from the Transcera movement to boycot
all Shell products, and an announce-
ment from General Motors South African
subsidiary that it would provide legal
help to workers penalised for defying
apartheid laws, including Joyce Brown.
(Financial Times 27/2/86)

WHERE YOUR TREASURE IS, THERE WILL
YOUR HEART BE ALSO

Investors In Apartheid, the report
published by Durham Students' Union
in January is well worth taking a look
at. It calls for:
- Immediate disinvestment by the Univer-
sity from BTO, British Petroleum, CEC,
Plessey, Shell Transport and Trading,
and Standard Chartered Bank
- the closure of the University's account
with Barclays
- and end to investment or the transfer of
investment to creditors,Goldfield
- and the preparation of an alternative
investment portfolio which excludes
all companies with subsidiaries or
holdings in South Africa and Namibia,
- as reported by UMS and the United
Nations, with reallocations of those
investments within five years.

The report was presented to the student
university council, a staff body with student
representatives, who agreed to set up
working parties to see what sort of
moral disinvestment would have on
the University's finances. An initial
position from the Registrar at Durham
is that "we have to look at the effects
he would have on the university. It's
just a question of changing our share
portfolio, as soon as those companies
live up to it.

"We move by the Students' Union. It is part
of a nationwide campaign for dis-
investment coordinated by the National-
ization of Students. It has received
support from the Shell JCCs where
members in support of South Africa have
paid over.

INVESTMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA CHALLENGED

by Peter Aspden

A lecturer and a group of students
studying South African history at Brit-
ton University mentioned that the
company's extensive mining operations
in Namibia. This company, known as
commonwealth prime minister's conference and the
United States government had agreed
on a limited action in this sphere, and
said the letter.

"While disinvestment may not be a
long-term solution to the region's
conflicts, it has become a central issue
in attempts to hasten the process of
political change in Namibia. Africa's
last colony, and to preserve some of
the mineral wealth of that country for
future generations."
Sahabat Alan Malaysia (FoE) as Bhopal Solidarity Day.

Officially, nearly one year after the disaster, officials still claim that irreversible damage is restricted to between 2,000 to 10,000 people. The large scale of the disaster is seen as an attempt to downplay the scale of the crisis.

The Prime Minister has appointed a special scientific committee under Indian toxicologists, Dr. C. R. Kishorekumar to go into all the questions raised by the gas disaster and its aftermath. Though the committee was appointed in August, it has yet to have its first meeting. The committee has not yet come to any conclusion about the cause of the disaster, despite Union Carbide providing its own version as early as March.

The gas disaster has not compelled any re-examination of development strategies that demand such hazardous technologies. Six months after the Bhopal disaster, toxic gas escaped from a factory in Bombay, killing people and injuring many. The death of three people has been recorded in the city.

The Bhopal gas disaster demonstrates that not only are industries using such technologies dangerous, but also that even relatively advanced countries like India have not the inclination or the will to manage the aftermath of such disasters. The situation in Bhopal is indicative of the need for a more comprehensive approach to environmental and safety management.

BLOODY PIRATES

Roxby Downs - potentially the world's largest uranium mine - is about to seal contracts with the Swedish State Power Board, and it is expected, Britain's CEGB.

Production is due to begin at the mine, despite vociferous protests from Aboriginal land-holders, Labor party activists and environmental groups around the world - in 1988.

The European deals would tie up about 30% of Roxby's initial planned production of around 2,000 tonnes/year uranium.

Although the CEGB still has its major uranium contracts with RTZ, it has been seeking a more diverse supplier since the Uranium Procurement Organisation was set up some years ago.

(Western Australian, 22/2/86)

Contact: CANE, 291 Morphett St., ADELAIDE, South Australia
In Britain: NFIP Women's Network.
THREE IN A BED

Attempts by third world and landlocked nations, to establish an international authority over mining on the sea bed have moved a little closer to fruition when, in March, France, Japan and the USSR agreed to settle conflicting mineral claims with the preparatory commission of the UN Law of the Sea Conference.

However, Britain the US and West Germany still refuse to assent to an international authority: indeed West Germany has begun licensing exploitation by domestic companies.

The British government's support for "pirates" from multinationalseabed consortia shows no sign of diminishing. Both BP and RTZ are involved in one of the major consortia, the Kennecott.

Financial Times 21/3/86

LETTER

Dear Sirs,

Please could we have some stickers for my collection some of my friends, and I have just started. We think the world needs people like you who have a good job and know what their on about. And could we have some information.

Tim Pearl, Sasha Pearl, James Davies, Graham Pearl, Marcus Walton, Rowan Smith, Ben Hutchens Walton St. Mary, Clevedon, Avon.

(If any readers have stickers, we'll gladly pass them on to Ben and his friends)

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............................................................
tel:...........................................

I enclose £3 as membership sub to Partizans for one year.
Here is another £____ for general funds. Oh - and I don't have a share in RT-Z, so here's another £5 to get me one / /. On the other hand, I don't want a share but I could use a proxy for this year's AGM. Kindly provide me with one / /

PEOPLE AGAINST RIO TINTO ZINC AND ITS SUBSIDIARIES is at 218 Liverpool Road, London N1 6LE tel (day and night) 01-699 1852.