Welcome to our late summer issue of PARTING COMPANY, the newsletter of People Against RTZ and its Subsidiaries (PARTizANS).

In this issue, we bring readers up to date with this year’s annual general meeting, and its aftermath: in particular the exciting and productive tour we co-organised (with the Aboriginal Land Rights Support Group and Black Australian Centre) for Brian Samson and Teddy Biljalu, of the Western Desert Land Council. (On page 10 our treasurer reminds us of the costs of this tour which still have to be met. On page 11, a first-time attender at the AGM graphically describes her reactions to the annual onslaught.)

Though summer is usually a time for us of rest and resuscitation, the battle against RTZ has continued on several fronts. Look at page 5 for details of a surprising development in the saga of Capper Pass; page 12 shows how RTZ’s plans in Chile have suddenly enraged the Finnish trade unions and many others.

If it’s a good read you want, go no further than our reviews (pages 8 & 9); if its stupefaction at RTZ’s continuing crassness, stop at page 3. Then kindly take out your pen and re-commit yourself to the struggle (page 12). Thank you!
According to investment analysts Morgan Stanley Capital International, RTZ is now the world's biggest mining company, in terms of market capitalisation: $5,711 million as at June 30th 1988. Although Anglo-American is almost certainly a greater profit-earner, if all the South African companies' indirect investments are taken into account, RTZ's control of natural resources becomes quite staggering when the capital accrued by CRA (49% owned by RTZ) is also taken into account. For CRA is itself (with assets of $3,846 million) the world's eighth largest mining conglomerate.

In an analysis of the rise of the "streamlined" RTZ, since Fram took over as chair, and Derek Birkin as Chief executive, The Economist points out that the corporations recent divestments (oil and gas in the north sea, Everest double-glazing, and cement) leave it with three main money-spinners:

* Borax, largely in the USA where it is the world's biggest producer;
* RTZ Pillar - an engineering and consumer products unit whose turnover in 1987 was actually higher than TI's (Tube Investments);
* RTZ Chemicals - which of course includes CPC's, as well as agrochemicals and biotechnology.

These three areas gained RTZ 54% of its net attributable profits in 1987.

The Economist acknowledges that mining is still crucial to the company's fortunes, while RTZ is still "...good at weighing up the risks and rewards of natural-resource projects, which are usually in exotic places" (i.e. on indigenous peoples' lands).

But, says the magazine, this side of the business has "generated more protest than profit... its annual general meetings are popular with agit-prop demonstrators. Its most yelled-about projects include: Rossing...a mining project in the Hardie River area of South Australia, which has infuriated local aborigines; and the Escudilla project in General Pinochet's Chile.

Says The Economist "Two challenges lie ahead if higher metal prices are to be more than a passing blessing for RTZ." One is to sign up more Asian countries, the second is to "become a major player in the centrally planned economies of Russia and China!"

"RTZ supplies 17% of the capitalist world's uranium, 1.7% of its aluminium, 8% of its copper and 8% of its iron ore!"

(The Economist, 23/7/89)

Australia

CRA and North Broken Hill (NBH), another large lead/zinc miner and processor in Australia are to merge their lead/zinc operations.

This will create the largest single lead/zinc producer in the world, based on the legendary Broken Hill deposits in New South Wales, Comments the Mining Journal "Apart from other benefits, the merger would effectively turn Broken Hill into a one-company town."

CRA and NBH (which itself merged with uranium producer, Peko Wallsend a year ago) will hold 53% each in the new conglomerate. Among the shared assets will be the Avonmouth smelter, near Bristol, the Port Pirie smelter in Australia, and NBH's mines in Tasmania, NSW, and South Australia.

Both companies will put $25 million each into the Bodelco smelter in the Netherlands, and reviving the flagging Avonmouth smelter, which has recently been under strong attack for its appalling pollution.

(The Independent, 1/5/88, Guardian 13/5/88)

Plunder Down under

Mining is to be allowed in the Antarctic once a new treaty is ratified (possibly within the next two years). The news has been greeted with dismay by environmentalists, particularly Greenpeace, which predicts that this will open the door to rampant exploitation. Chris Deeby, on behalf of the Antarctic Treaty Nations (which include those well-known conservationists Britain, France, Chile...) maintains the treaty contains "more protection against mining than any other similar convention. Neither the US nor the USSR recognise any nations' claims to Antarctica."

(Guess who's coming to dinner at Rio Algom? George Albino got the boot earlier this year for fiddling the books. Now the new man at the helm is to be Colin Macaulay. Familiar name? Should be: Macaulay used to be chief executive at the Rossing mine in Namibia. Rio Algom is one of Canada's largest uranium producers, 52% owned by RTZ and with a 10% stake in Rossing.

(Source: Pin. Times, London 21/8/88)
The Earth is flat - says RTZ expert!

When is chalk, cheese? Answer: when an RTZ "expert" says it is. Dr. David Swallow, managing director of RTZ Chemicals has just gone on record - DEFENDING 245-T, the chief component of deadly Agent Orange; OPPOSING UN-LEADED PETROL; and SUPPORTING CONTINUED PRODUCTION of CFC's - the main factor destroying the earth's ozone layer. Swallow opens his big mouth in the pages of "Business" magazine (Sept. '83 issue). It's here that he's quoted as claiming NASA has cleared CFC's of responsibility for holes in the ozone.

In fact, the opposite is the case: the latest NASA report states that CFC's are even more to blame than was previously thought, while the Montreal Protocol - which, if implemented, would cut CFC production by 50% in the next ten years - "can do absolutely nothing" according to NASA scientist Dr. Robert Watson.

FACT: ISC Chemicals, 100% owned by RTZ is Britain's second largest producer of CFC's.

The sunnier boycott is one way of pulling the ground from under the feet of the CFC producers. FoE has produced a useful list of CFC-free aerosols. Contact: FoE, 26-28 Underwood St., London N1 7QJ

PAPUA POLLUTION

As the Brazilian government announces new statutes to compel foreign mining ventures to hand over majority control to Brazilian nationals, RTZ is modestly vaunting its success with the Morro do Ouro gold mine in Minas Gerais. This gold mine, currently 51% owned by RTZ (RTZ Mineracao Ltda) produced its first lot late in 1987. The project, situated at Paracatu - the hill of gold previously worked in the 17th and 18th centuries - has the dubious honour of being the world's lowest-grade gold mine.

Despite this, it is expected to deliver some 4% of the country's total output over a 15-year life. RTZ REVIEW - the company's trenchant house magazine, which spouts nonsense, RTZ directors may be reluctant to themselves publicly convey - claims that extra-special care has been paid to protect the environment surrounding the mine.

The site supposedly was chosen to prevent cloud dust formation; a screen of vegetation has been specially planted to act as a wind barrier; toxic chemicals, like sodium cyanide will be "destroyed" before water used in the plant is returned to the Sao Baiongos River basin, after use.

Just as RTZ was boasting about Morro do Ouro, the government of Papua New Guinea, in the shape of its Environment Minister Perry Zeipi, was describing pollution from RTZ/CRA's Bougainville (copper/gold) mine as "dreadful and unbelievable". (See newspaper clipping reproduced here.)

What's interesting is that Bougainville Cooper Ltd (BCL) recently built a pipeline to transport toxic wastes from its mine well out of the Java River and into the sea. It was supposed to be an answer to the province's problems. Perhaps the inhabitants of Paracatu would like to exchange notes with the Bougainvilleans?
RTZ quits Cornwall

RTZ has pulled out of the Cornish tin mines, only a couple of years after descending on the southwest as a great saviour of a precarious economy (thanks to an unprecedented government loan). Carnon Consolidated has been re-located on a management (80%) and worker (20%) buy-out. Carnon's prospects look reasonable, as the tin market seems to be stabilising. RTZ has provided more than £17 million to cover losses in Cornwall in its 1987 accounts. This includes £10 million as an interest free loan to Carnon. (MJ 13/5/88, FT 23/3/88, FT 11/4/88, FT 22/4/88)

Another CRA mine in New Zealand?

We've belatedly heard from a new organisation representing yet another community suffering at the sharp end of an RTZ enterprise. The Nelson Area Parks Action Coalition (NAPSC)(1) are trying to stop CRA, (RTZ 49%) mining in the Cobb Valley and Mount Tablelands area of Nelson, New Zealand (Aotearoa). Both they and the regional Forest Park Advisory Committee want this area closed to mining and designated a World Heritage Zone. CRA of course has other plans. Despite a proposal for blasting, road building and earth moving, it claims its intentions are "insignificant"! When did RTZ/CRA ever do any thing "insignificant"? (Statement from NAPSC, 1988)

Power Leagues

The CEBG is to build a third PW reactor at Wylfa, in Anglesey, following the British Thatcher regime's re-affirmed commitment to nuclear power. The existing reactor at Wylfa supplies power to RTZ's Anglesey aluminium smelter, at prices which have never been disclosed. (FT 7/5/88)

GOLD IN EIRE.

As previously reported in PC, RTZ is among many companies to be taking an intense interest in new gold finds in Ireland. We recently heard from one of the organisers of a campaign against the mining companies, but alas! - the paper with her name and address upon it flew out of the door during one of those spates of activity characteristic of the Partizans office (though not necessarily Partizans itself!) We've now reform the message-taking system, so that EVERY call is recorded. But we'd still like to make contact with the Irish friend who called us - please!

Did you know?... (part 64)

In the 1970s RTZ wanted to dig for copper at Coed-y-Brenin in North Wales, and test for alluvial gold in the Mawddach Estuary. This was the site of a small gold rush in the last century. The company's plans were defeated by environmentalists and local people. (MJ 19/8/86)
Are the people (and workers) of North Humberside finally on a winning wicket? Within the last few months their allegations that emissions from the huge stack at RTZ's Capper Pass tin smelter have doubled the rate of childhood leukaemias in the neighbourhood have been given short shrift by some of the press, and of course the local management. Alistair Frame was his usual non-committal, bland self when challenged by two members of HACC (Humberside Action on Child Cancers) at this year's AGM: so far as he was concerned the plant had been exonerated by the Leukaemia Research Fund at Leeds University which had seemed to find no direct link between radioactive discharges from Capper (specifically Polonium-210) and cancers observed close by.

In mid-June, after a well-attended public meeting in Hull, members of HACC joined (at their request) by Ricki Shields, representing Aboriginal communities affected by RTZ's interests in Australia, and Partizans' co-ordinator, Roger Moody, visited Capper Pass for a "chat" with the management. Partizans has not yet received a copy of the tape made of that meeting, and the two London delegates had to hot-foot it back to London, within an hour of the start of the meeting. What we do know is that John Mills, Capper's then-managing director had been fully informed of Partizans involvement in the issue, and no doubt briefed on what was said about RTZ at the previous night's meeting. (Two plain clothes policemen certainly were at that meeting: they identified themselves to activists present.)

No doubt fully aware that Ricki and Roger had to leave early - and of their potential for "incitement" among the peaceable folk of Hull (!) - Mills launched into a verbose harangue; condemning Partizans' support for HACC ("you're opposed to RTZ itself!") and trying to limit discussion simply to what he called "local issues!" Fortunately this dose of bullsh*t was rejected by the "local" people themselves, one of whom pointed out that Capper had become a truly national issue. Given that it is the only smelter of its kind in Britain, and that it relies on feedstuff from tin producers in the third world, Roger and Ricki were set to ask questions on the international context in which Capper and RTZ operated.

Fortunately for Mills, his expletives delayed the discussion, until the Partizans representatives had to rush from the meeting to catch their train.

Within two months of this meeting, however, Mills had lost his job (he's been booted sideways to become vice-chair at Capper), and RTZ has put Capper Pass itself on the market. A new technical manager has been drafted in by St James' Square to head up the Capper Pass plant. We can almost hear Frame grinning as he hears about the combative performance put up by Mills, not only before HACC, but also the press and regional TV. After all there's only one captain on the Ship of St James, and Mills was getting dangerously close to locking himself in the engine room. ("Capper is part of the RTZ group" he declared in June, "but it's completely autonomous. I'm in charge").

Of course RTZ's desire to relinquish itself of Capper had nothing to do with the highly disquieting publicity attracted to the plant since early this year. It was for purely economic reasons: it doesn't "fit" with the pared-down, asset-stripping company model pioneered by Sir Alistair since the mid-80's. And, of course, the fact that Comare (Committee into the Effects of Radiation in the Environment) might be persuaded to study Capper; that the highly-influential "business" magazine listed RTZ's smelter as one of the "dirtiest dozen" industrial polluters in the land - this can have nothing to do with RTZ's decision... can it? Conceivably not.

But the corporation can hardly have resounded to cheers when the Leeds study was finally released in July. For - as Dr. Ray Cartwright, the study's main author, has pointed out -

"The report does not exonerate Capper Pass... there is a link between childhood solid tumours and adults GI tumours and the industrial sites (in Capper area!)

Equally important, one of the research assistants at the Leukaemia Research Fund has criticised the exclusion of certain data by Cartwright (which would have buttressed allegations made against the plant).

So, it looks as if the people of Hull have, in no sense, lost their battle against this grim goliath. RTZ thinks it is getting out of under before the going gets too tough. However, it still has to find a buyer for Capper, and memories are not that short. Even if the next skirmish is their's, they have already lost the war. Remember Asbestos...?

Sources: HACC Newsletter, 3/88; Business Magazine, 9/88
Aborigines protest over uranium plan

By Jonathan Biald

TEDDY Billaba, an Australian Aboriginal, stood surveying the proposed uranium mining site on the shore of the Riddell River. He observed his homeland, a vast expanse of untouched wilderness, and he shook his head in despair. "This is our land," he said, "our sacred land." "We are the custodians of this land," he added, "and we will not allow it to be desecrated." The Riddell River proposal was the latest in a series of issues that had threatened the livelihood of the Aboriginal people. "We have been fighting for years," he said, "but the government will not listen to us. They do not value our culture or our way of life." "We are fighting for our future," he continued, "for the survival of our people." The protest was just one of many that had emerged across the country, as the Aboriginal community fought for recognition and respect. "We are not just fighting for our land," he said, "we are fighting for our lives." "We want to live in peace," he added, "and we want our children to inherit this land in the same way we did." "We are not asking for much," he concluded, "just to be heard." "We are fighting for our culture," he said, "and for our future."
Australia and AGM Report

The Western Desert Land Council

Brian Sampson and Teddy Biljabu arrived in Britain on May 20th. They came from a remote area of north west Australia, around Kintyre, where CRA has plans for and is developing a uranium mine. They came as representatives of the Western Desert Land Council, who Partizans have been in contact with for a few years and who supplied material for Partizans' The Hidden View in 1987. The visit was made possible by generous funding from the Onaway Trust, the Methodist Church and the Rowntree Trust among others.

The Visit

During the two weeks they were in Britain they spoke at meetings in Brighton, Woodford, Totness, Hackney, Norwich and of course at the RTZ AGM in London on 2nd June. They also gave numerous press interviews, one is reproduced here. There was a high level of interest from the Australian media, partly due to the fact that the Australian Labour Party was due to discuss its uranium policy at the end of June.

The Uranium Connection

From Partizans point of view the AGM had several threads running through it, which all could be broadly drawn together under the headline: RTZ - a Dirty Business. (Yes, that tired old phrase again!). Concern about radioactive emissions from Capper Pass causing child cancers was expressed by women from Humberside (see update on page 9). The implications for the landscape and community of Rudall River national park were spelt out by Brian and Teddy. GregDROPKIN (of Campaign Against the Namibian Uranium Contracts) gave details of exciting developments involving trade unions in stopping Namibian uranium entering or being processed in Britain. Jup Weber alerted us to major scandals around uranium swopping (we'll report more when we've worked out what it all means!). All these people spoke at a pre-AGM press conference organised by Partizans, which was well attended.

The AGM

At the AGM everyone listened in hushed silence as Teddy made plain his definite NO to uranium mining on his community's traditional land. Most of the important issues got raised, some taking chairperson Frame by surprise. In these cases he denies everything completely...just to be sure - and it takes a shrewd questioner to get any thing out of it. Despite disappointing press coverage post-agm, we feel it was a successful day, and having Brian and Teddy there gave Frame (and hopefully other shareholders) a touch of reality.

What Now?

The campaign goes on, both in Australia and in Britain. We are still in touch with the Western Desert Land Council and will publicise material they send us. Currently available from Partizans is a 7-page Briefing to Dissident Shareholders about Rudall River - most of the material has come directly from Australia. (please send amount for photocopying and postage). And from RTZ is a CRA briefing paper entitled Kintyre Uranium Project (31 pages). This document is aimed squarely at the ALP, which, as it happened, did not discuss it's uranium policy at its conference in June.

Black Australian Information Centre

Very much involved in the visit of Brian and Teddy were the Aboriginal Land Rights Support Group. They have been very active during this Anti-bicentenary year (as reported in previously PCs) and have set up the Black Australian Information Centre for people wanting to know and do more. They have a membership fee of £10 (£2.50 unwaged). They are organising a week of action on black deaths in custody in London from 19th-26 September. You can contact the Black Australian Information at 52A Acre Lane, London SW2 1RW
WOLLASTON
People Resisting Genocide

MILES GOLDSTICK
FOREWORD BY DR. ROSALIE BERTELL


Miles Goldstick has spent years researching the effects of uranium mining on Canada's people - especially the native communities of the north. It's been wholly committed, a model of what people-centred research should be. This book is a blow-by-blow account of resistance to the newer mines in northern Saskatchewan, specifically around the 1985 Wollaston Lake blockade. Profusely illustrated and thoroughly documented, it's more than worth the fairly stiff cover price.

CHOOSING AN ETHICAL FUND: THE EIIRS GUIDE, £2 from Eiris, 401 Bondway Business Centre, 71 Bondway, London SW8

For years people have been wondering where to make investments that don't contribute to certain objectionable activities, ranging from armaments to experiments on animals. This admirable guide sets out criteria for eight 'ethical' funds: a pity it costs 20p a page!

CORPORATE KILLING: Bhopals will Happen
Tara Jones, Free Association Books, £9.95

Despite the plethora of material surrounding the Bhopal holocaust and its aftermath, there is very little structural analysis of the chemical/pollution industry, and why its priorities make 'disaster' inevitable.

Tara Jones not only penetrates the cloud of unknowing and obfuscation billowing out from Union Carbide, some of the Indian participants in the crisis, and many apologists for chem-manufacturers: she looks too at other 'accidents' and those responsible.

This is an invaluable work, and is sure to provide a point of reference for critics of multinationalism, for some time to come.

Tantalisingly, Ms. Jones concludes with a brief examination of 'toxic capital' and the Faustian bargain it makes with our lives. (Existence without chemicals is widely believed to be impossible, yet chemicalisation of our lives is rendering them impossible to live.) Hopefully this issue might provide the substance of another book by Tara Jones and the new, exciting Free Association Books, who've published her.


If 'red' and 'green' politics are merging at one end of the spectrum, then blue and green are getting confused at the other. We've just been treated to a book called "The Green Capitalists" which shows Big Bosses and multinationals how they can carry on corrupting and corrosinating our lives, so long as they hand out the occasional dollar to: dust their front yards. (Never mind their back ones.)

Although ENERGY 2000 is not quite as fraudulent as this, it is nonetheless based on conservative premises: that styles of life will not fundamentally change, industrial control over resources will remain (if reduced), nuclear power will enhance a pollution-free planet, and nobody's boat need be violently rocked.

There is little criticism of so-called alternative energy sources, such as biomass (which can be agriculturally damaging) or solar-cell technology, which is still largely in the hands of the energy corporations.

This is a book by governments, for governments.
Mineworkers of Ghana: a stirring tale

Mineworkers of Guyana: The making of a working class, Odida T. Quamina. Zed Press £21.95 (hbk only) 1987

Too many dissertations end up as books, when they might better have propped up some wobbly academic desk. Quamina's work is a rare example of a thesis which really deserved commissioning as a book.

Its strengths lie in the author's unaffected, detailed, account of what it was like to be an Afro-Caribbean militant, during the period when one of the world's biggest bauxite enterprises passed from private (Alcan) hands into those of the (PNC) government.

Quamina is an acute observer and a pretty good author. He is under absolutely no illusion about the weaknesses of all the organisations and factions he describes; damning criticism is reserved for the Guyana Mineworkers' Union, with its almost total sell-out of workers' causes. But none of the parties to this complex drama come out unscathed - except for the Working Peoples' Alliance (WPA) one of whose leaders, the great Walter Rodney, died in a bomb blast: probably the work of PNC sympathisers.

Unfortunately, "Mineworkers" is too short for its subject. Because of relatively early nationalism, the role of Alcan in colonising Guyana as reservoir of raw materials, ripe for cheap exploitation, is only touched upon. Nevertheless this is an invaluable text to set alongside more erudite analyses of the industry (such as Graham).

During the heady events of 1971, when the government, the GMWU and the workers' own organisation, AASCM, were finally shown to be guilty of numerous acts of betrayal, workers marched under the historic banner: 'Every man is a leader and we are leaderless'.
A message from our treasurer...

WESTERN DESERTS LAND COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES TOUR
MAY-JUNE 1988

STATEMENT OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

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Dear Partizan Supporter,

There can be little doubt that Brian and Teddy's visit was a great success, and the amount of press coverage they got is a testament to this, while their attendance at the RTZ AGM helped to make it one of the most "successful" for many years. This would not have been possible but for the generous donations we received, and our thanks are due to the organisations and individuals who helped in this way as well as to those who gave their time and energy.

However, as you can see from the above Statement, we were still left with a deficit at the end of the day, and the shortfall had to be met from Partizans' already over-stretched funds. This has meant being late on practically every invoice we have received, and has put us in the dangerous position of possibly losing the use of the telephone or photocopier which are so crucial to our operations. At the very least, it can give us a bad name!

Putting the problem in its crudest terms, at the time of writing the situation is as follows:

Money in Bank (30/8/88): £112.46
Invoices already overdue: 83.76
'Phone bill to be paid
  soon: 250.00 (approx.) - We need about £600
Photocopier instalment
  (Due 1/9): 224.00
Photocopier bill (Due 30/9) 50.00 (approx.)
Postage on this mail-out 60.00 (approx.)

We hate to have to plead for money every time we write, but as you can see Partizans is in grave danger. PLEASE PLEASE!! PLEASE!!! HELP US SURVIVE!!!

Patrick Trench, Treasurer
RACHEL GRIMWOOD went along to the RTZ AGM. Here's her story

find the kind of intelligence that discloses the dangers of CFCs - I suppose the profit margins, must counterbalance the evidence against them.

The voting system at the AGM was a complete farce. You just wave your shareholders card in a show of hands, which disregards the rather important fact that one vote equals one share so a card could thus be worth from 1 to 1000s of votes! The only 'written' vote was for elected positions in the company - hardly fundamental.

It wasn't for the dedication of groups such as Partizans, the company would be given even greater licence. In 1985 it was disclosed that CRA were using a method of mining where cyanide is pumped into the ground to yield gold at the other end. This would have affected the water tables of three Australian states! RTZ denied everything, but there was an aboriginal woman present who had been in one of the workhuts in the area and seen the chemical used to treat cyanide poisoning. The mining did not take place. Partizans arrange proxy votes (which are free) and the buying of shares as well as having a wealth of information on RTZ. Write to them at 218 Liverpool Rd, London N1 and find out more.

PARTIZANS (People Against Rio Tinto Zinc And its Subsidiaries) had organised a pre-AGM meeting, where questions to be raised were prioritised. The group had also raised the money to bring two aboriginal representatives from the Western Desert Land.

A shareholding democracy?

At the AGM the Chairman insisted there was good communication with the aboriginal peoples, but he held from allowing a representative to speak for as long as he possibly could. Finally, the aboriginal perspective was given and surprisingly the mike wasn't turned off, as had happened to aboriginal activist Joan Wingfield at BP's (Brittan at its Best) AGM. As Teddy Biljabu was speaking, I felt the huge amount of pain and anguish suffered by indigenous people everywhere due to our expansion and economic growth. Sitting behind me were three men who had a discussion on the quality of their lives throughout Teddy's entire speech and I felt an enormous amount of hatred and anger towards them and their like sitting at the directors' table.

The reception had been even more caustic at the BP meeting. According to people who had been there, the Chairman of the company asked Joan Wingfield, representing the Kokatha people: "How did you get here? Did you swim or did you come here by canoe?" Joan was protesting at BP mining at Roxby Downs, another sacred aboriginal dressing ground. If it hadn't been for the Greenpeace contract for uranium then the mining wouldn't have happened which just shows how responsible we are here for the activities of mining companies abroad. 17% of our electricity comes from uranium. When questioned about the digging up of sacred places, the Chairman of BP replied that there were sacred sites all over the world and that some would have to be mined for progress. "Who knows, maybe we'll have to mine Pooh Corner?" But BP's Chairman is not the only knobhead: back at RTZ you

It is essential to be well-researched if you want to ask 'questions' and probe at an AGM, but then, even if it isn’t enjoyable. It's still vital work. I have never felt more angry, bitter and overpowered than at the close of the RTZ AGM. I know these companies are doing, but seeing humans (I presume) besatted and snug selling our planet and the rights and dignity of people for short-term gain actually seeing them in their ugly beliefs is something different. But we cannot be defeated, for if they go or life on earth does.

I am realising more and more that it's not enough to avoid buying products from these multinationals. Silent boycotts won't do; we have to make public their filthy behaviour. Agitation are one way of doing this and an important way as they are the closest, most public contact you can have with the company. If indigenous people or environmental groups meet with them in private the companies just use the meeting for their own publicity, claiming to listen and have sympathy. We must make multinationals accountable and we must listen to the wisdom of the aboriginal peoples. Their struggle to maintain their cultures and lands and our own struggles against the likes of RTZ are one and the same. We must win.

To withhold a proportion of your electric bill to protest at nuclear power contact Consumers Against Nuclear Energy (CANE) at PO Box 697, London NW1 6YQ

This article is reprinted with grateful acknowledgment from GREEN LINE (July '88)
In Finland its Chile outside!

During July and August, the Partizans telephone rarely stopped ringing. It seemed as if every major paper and TV station in Finland was figuratively coming to our door. The reason? Trade unionists and left-wing parties in the country had, rather belatedly, realised that RTZ held 30% of the huge Escoundida copper mine in Chile.

Contracts were signed between the mine (which holds an estimated twenty percent of western copper reserves) and a Finnish bank syndicate, back in February.

Under the agreement, the Finnish company Outokumpu Oy would receive some 50,000 tonnes of copper concentrates a year, to feed its Harjavalla refinery - a fifth of the plant's total need. Outokumpu has been shopping around pretty aggressively recently for feed: in June, pricing talks failed between Outokumpu and another RTZ-led venture, the Semincom copper project in Portugal.

The Chile deal is clearly more important to Finland - and the rightwing Finnish government - than it is to the Escoundida partner, (BHP of Australia holds 60%, a Japanese consortium, led by Mitsubishi holds 10% and RTZ leads up the middle with 30%).

What has angered many people in Finland is not so much the fact that Outokumpu would be importing copper from the Pinchot regime (whose opposition has never called for a boycott or investment, although it is an option it seriously discusses) as that RTZ is itself so closely entwined with apartheid in Namibia and South Africa. Although, a part, partly at protests, Outokumpu pulled out of talks with Rio Algom last year, over another Chilean copper venture (Cerro Colorado - not to be confused with the Panamanian copper mine of the same name), it doesn't seem that RTZ's control of Rio Algom was a major factor at that time.

Now, the militant Finnish transport workers union (AXT) has said it will block imports from Chile. And the main lever it has been trying to use against the government is South African investment in RTZ. Under Finnish sanctions law, the state cannot permit domestic funding of any operation which might substantially benefit South African investors. If, as is widely believed, RTZ's shareholders include the Anglo-American corporation, or JCI (an Anglo-controlled company), this would be sufficient reason to call off the Escoundida deal.

Unfortunately, it has been almost impossible to prove the extent of South African ownership in RTZ. Charter Consolidated pulled out most of its holding a few years ago, and other investment from the apartheid state is held through nominees; a transparent strategy to disguise its origin. The trail of journalists and activists to no.218 Liverpool Rd has not yet succeeded in breaking this bond of secrecy.

Nonetheless, RTZ's own South African investments now figure prominently in the public debate in Finland - which has been one of the most important in the Scandinavian country over the summer. And Finnish readers are beginning to learn of RTZ's involvement in the uranium-swapping scandal (which itself has involved another Finnish company, TVO.)

The saga is far from over!

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