RTZ: The Reagan Connection  •  CFCs to go
GOLD in IRELAND  •  BOUGAINVILLE
Meet RTZ’s NEW BOSS  •  INDONESIA
PARTING COMPANY is the newsletter of PARTizANS, the People Against RTZ and its Subsidiaries. We are a voluntary collective of individuals who liaise with other groups, worldwide, to campaign against multinational mining companies and the effect that they have on indigineous peoples, the environment and on all our healths.

RTZ make up the biggest and most powerful mining conglomerate in the world, with its hundreds of subsidiaries. In this issue we focus on just some of the contentious issues that surround RTZ, and bring you up to date on the operations which have branded them as the most disreputable of all the mining companies.

Good reading, and if you wish to learn more about RTZ or PARTizANS, or if you want to become involved in our collective, then drop us a line.

PARTizANS
218 Liverpool Road,
London N1 1LE.

The PARTizANS phone has been pretty hot the last couple of months. Everyone seems to want advice on how to go about buying and using shares. How do we transfer a block of shares? How do we approach the AGM? How do we frame the questions we want to ask?

The impetus, of course, has come from the impending privatisation of water and electricity. We've given what advice we can, and are happy to give further advice to anyone else. Although the privatisation of BP and British Gas did get a few people taking shares, the tactic didn't really catch on. By the time the Thatcherist regime starts doing out the coal shares, we'd like to think the tactic will be redundant - at least as far as privatisation is concerned. Maybe those who've recently got so excited by it all could turn their energies to those corporations, which for years, have been wilfully exploiting those resources which should have lain in the public domain (i.e. the ground) all along. Anyone new for a share in RTZ...?

ASKING FOR THE RENT....

Since the Australian Bicentennial of 1988 this has been a key demand, as expressed in this poem by Iris M. Smith. The concept of "rent" isn't a vague or purely symbolic one; when it comes to collecting the dues, RTZ and CRA will be responsible for coughing-up more compensation than any other corporate body that's trespassed on Aboriginal land.

200 Years of Injustice

They're having a big celebration, celebrating the length of their stay, Yeah! They're having a big celebration, two hundred years they say.

It was only a blink of an eye lid, and they spread like a cancerous sore, it was only a blink of an eye lid, to our forty thousand years and more.

Two hundred years of injustice, is what they fail to tell, two hundred years of blood shed, where many a warrior fell.

It's hard to fight a battle, when your enemy can't be seen, hidden in the flour, and in the infected blanket seam.

They celebrate their bravery against the harsh Australian wild, we commemorate the slaughter of every man, woman and child.

Yeah! They came as convicts and overstayed, now overdue rent is yet to be paid, for all the suffering and injustices rendered, for cultures lost, and genocide intended, so now we're asking for the rent, we've nothing to celebrate, under your ridiculous tont.

Iris M. Smith
As part of this year's take-over of BP's mining interests, RTZ acquired one of the world's biggest (and most notorious) copper companies, the Kennecott Corporation. (Remember the overthrow of Allende in Chile - Kennecott was thick in there, manouvoring to oust the democratically-elected leader.)

Kennecott's biggest single mine is Bingham Canyon in Utah - probably the world's largest man-made pit on planet earth.

But the company has also been investigating copper, gold and uranium deposits in Wisconsin, close to the Flambeau River. Now it wants to open up a large mine at Ladysmith, in Rusk County. The mine would exploit a huge sulphide-type deposit and inevitably lead to sulphuric acid, other toxics and heavy metals, leaching into the Flambeau River itself.

Although the proposed mine is not itself on indigenous Treaty land, it is plum in the middle of 'ceded' territory - on which the Chippewa people (Anishinabe) have the right to fish, hunt and gather. Some of the Chippewa don't want to disturb the collusion which exists between the state and Kennecott. But in November, one of the Chippewa leaders announced that he and his people, the Lac Courte Oreilles, would be joining the action against RTZ/Kennecott. A new organisation has been formed to lead the battle called ANISHINABE NIJII, and it is likely to gather a lot more support in the coming months.

Mining foes join forces with treaty supporters

By BONNIE STOWERS

A coalition of mining opponents, treaty rights supporters and Chippewa is forming to protect environmental quality, particularly in regard to proposed mining in northern Wisconsin. Wa-Swa-Gon Treaty Association leaders say.

Wa-Swa-Gon is an unofficial group largely made up of Lac du Flambeau Chippewa who oppose any curtailment of Indians' court-confirmed treaty rights, including spearfishing and timber gathering. Wa-Swa-Gon does not have the Lac du Flambeau tribal government's support.

Wa-Swa-Gon was instrumental in defeating a proposed pact between the state and the Lac du Flambeau band aimed at defusing protests by banning all ceremonial spearfishing and all gill netting on off-reservation waters in exchange for $50 million in aid and programs.

Nick Maulson, a Wa-Swa-Gon spokesman, said that the coalition might focus on how waste from a proposed copper mine in Rusk County could harm fish in the Flambeau River. The proposed mine is within the territory Chippewa bands ceded to the US government in 19th century treaties. The tribe has retained rights to natural resources in the territory.

Maulson and Tom Haakstad, a Wa-Swa-Gon leader, said Lac Courte Oreilles Chippewa Tribal Chairman Gaashikabos would head the coalition.

At a Nov. 11 powwow at the Lac Courte Oreilles' reservation near Hayward, Maulson said Gaashikabos "made it very clear that his tribe will stand up and use treaty rights" in the context of environmental protection.

Representatives of anti-mining and pro-treaty groups and of four state Chippewa bands - the Lac Courte Oreilles, Lac du Flambeau, Moie Lake and St. Croix - attended the powwow, Maulson and Haakstad said. They said representatives of Minnesota's Mille Lacs band and Michigan's Keweenaw Bay and Lac Vieux Desert Chippewa bands also attended.

Gaashikabos could not be reached for comment Thursday.

Wa-Swa-Gon members plan to continue exercising their court-affirmed rights to spearfish and gill net on off-reservation waters "and we'll be out there in the spring," Maulson said.

Despite the group's determined stance, Maulson said that calling members militant is "inflammatory because it makes people think of violence" and the group is non-violent.

The group has been working with Al Gedicks, who opposed the development of an Exxon mine in Forest County and now serves as a spokesman for the Wisconsin Resources Protection Council, which also opposes development of the Rusk County mine, Maulson said.

Friday, November 17, 1989
THE BATTLE FOR BOUGAINVILLE

In our last few issues of PARTING COMPANY we have covered the events at Bougainville, the North Solomons Island under Papua New Guinean sovereignty. It is here that the huge open copper mine controlled by CRA has sparked a war between the traditional landowners, who have always opposed the mine, and the PNG government, who, together with the mining company, refused to take the landowners’ claims for compensation seriously. The conflict has now developed into a much wider issue of secession for Bougainvilleans, the government are now using helicopters lent by the Australian government to stamp out the rebellion. The mine has been closed for most of the last year, but at a meeting on November 29th in Port Moresby, the government and the mining company decided to continue to attempt mining, rather than to close the operation down. Our next issue of PC will have a full report.

Diary of a rebellion

1988

22 November: Three masked men steal 228 pieces of dynamite, grenades and detonators from Panguna mine explosives magazine; Bougainville Copper Ltd offers a K10,000 reward for information; phone threats to blow up mine installations.

29 November: Police reinforcements guard Panguna mine; CRA threatens to pull out of Papua New Guinea because of “acts of terrorism.”

2 December: Arsonists destroy a donga (single workers accommodation block) at the company’s Camp 6 at Lokole; more explosives stolen from the Matini quarry magazine.

4 December: Power pylon blown up at Policeman’s Corner on Panguna mine road.

6 December: Mine shuts down after saboteurs blow up second pylon at Waterfall Corner. Prime Minister Rabie Namaliu warns of “Rambo-style terrorism.”

7 December: Police Commissioner Paul Iohian gives “shoot to kill” order against saboteurs.

9 December: Deputy Prime Minister Asaka Doi and government troubleshooters hold talks with militant leaders.

17 December: Three mineshaft explosions are reported at Aropa Plantation.

22 March: Aropa Airport terminal and an aircraft burnt out; police and rebels exchange gunfire, killing one Bougainvillean; PNG Defence Force troops arrive to help police restore law and order and to defend mine installations.

24 March: National government bans diplomats and journalists from North Solomons province.

27 April: Two PNG Defence Force soldiers and landowners killed in gun battle at Orami.

1 May: “Please stay firm because I will surrender only in a coffin,” says Oma in a handwritten letter sent to Perpetua Serero, chairperson of the Panguna Landowners Association.

15 May: Panguna mine shut down again after a series of attacks by militants on company employees and properties — two employees shot with arrows.

23 May: Kabui reveals death threats have been made against him and several other prominent Bougainville leaders; eight BCL employees wounded; another pylon sabotaged.

25 May: National government guarantees Oma and rebels immunity from prosecution in an attempt to put an end to the crisis.

1 June: Mediator Bishop Gregory Singi meets Oma in a jungle hideout and talks for four hours — then flies to Port Moresby to meet Namaliu.

29 June: Autonomous government of Sideron is declared, led by a militant stronghold, and arrested 50 villagers.

3 July: Premier Joe Kabui and provincial Primary Industry Minister Michael Laimo beaten up by not squad police; wounding of three others in Aropa Plantation.

7 July: Troops capture strategic fortified ridge near Guava village; discover a military-style trench and bunker system stretching from the village to the ridge.

18 July: Ambrose Leo, a younger brother of Francis Ona, shot dead by security forces between Guava and Kupi village.

7 September: Mine reopens again after being closed for 16 weeks; militants ambush two BCL buses carrying workers, mine shuts again after being closed only eight hours.

12 September: Provincial Commerce Minister John Bika shot dead by marked rebel gunman at his Toboroi village home.

14 September: Minister of State Ted Diko offers a K200,000 “dead or alive” reward for Oma; authorises security forces to plant booby traps around pylons.

18 September: Soldier blows himself up while planning a landmine, an 18-year-old villager is wounded by another landmine.

22 September: A special Royal Australian Air Force C130 aircraft flies in 16 tonnes of emergency tents for villages evacuated during the Bougainville crisis.

3 October: Two more New Zealanders leave, taking the total of evacuees to 13 in two weeks following incidents of harassment and death threat by both militants and soldiers; one New Zealander fired at by a drunken soldier — protest lodged with the military; a second soldier is killed while setting a booby trap, this time in Kongoa, ragged limestone country south of the mine.

4 October: Militants shoot dead four men shot in an attack on a buscrew near Arawa; in a “payback” another squad kills the nearby home of a Bougainville family, killing an elderly woman and a 12-year-old girl.

5 October: Namaliu makes an emotional radio plea for peace, saying the militants do not represent the majority of Bougainvilleans.
East Kalimantan, Indonesian Borneo, is the site of CRA's joint venture with BP. When complete, the 700 million tons-a-year Kaltim Prima coal mine will be the biggest in South East Asia. The mine has already taken its toll on the Sangatta river's indigenous community: outsiders have flooded into the area, transforming the town of Sangatta into a mining boom town. Environmental consequences of dumping waste and washing the coal in the river are major concerns: even BP admitted recently that they were worried about their waste disposal system. The high sulphur content of some of the waste is acidifying the local water supply, (and this is some time before full production has been reached).

As construction at the mine progresses, the social and environmental impact will become more serious. It is not as if the local population only have the mine itself to contend with. The coal will be cleared in a 250 tonnes/hour washing plant (are the days of the coastal mangroves and coral reefs numbered?) and taken on an overland conveyor belt to the coast, where Kaltim Prima is building a port.

Except for what is used to fire Kaltim Prima's own power station (also part of the development), all the coal will be exported to Japan, Europe and the US. One shipment has already arrived in West Germany, although the mine will not reach full production until about 1992. When this first shipment arrived there was much backslapping all round. German buyer BP Stromeyer said that the coal was 50% to 75% better than most they'd been using, while Indonesia's consul in Hamburg explained that Indonesian coal was very competitive due to "cheap production costs". (Not surprising when environmental destruction is not included in their accounting).

RTZ has taken over BP Minerals' interests in Indonesia (but not BP's share of the Kaltim Prima project which would have given the RTZ/CRA conglomerate a 100% interest). There is evidence that RTZ is not taking much interest in these acquisitions, having operations of its own in these territories, through RioTinto Indonesia and CRA joint ventures. RTZ/CRA have at least 13 contracts in Indonesia. The largest (and also the largest gold mine planned to date) is CRA's Kelian mine in East Kalimantan which will produce 190,000 ounces a year. The Indonesian government is encouraging foreign investment to "go east" to the western half of New Guinea (renamed Irian Jaya by the Indonesians after it annexed the territory, but referred to as West Papua by Papuans who favour independence). Could RTZ find the government's tempting tax incentives irresistible and move eastward? The Indonesian press recently announced that six contracts have already been granted for gold projects - one, an unidentified UK joint venture.

At the same time RTZ is also facing a legal battle over its lack of interest in an ex-BP Minerals diamond project in Central Kalimantan. In January, BP signed an agreement with the mine's main investor Acorn Securities Ltd (Australia) with the right to earn 40% interest by matching Acorn's US$6 million and by carrying out further drilling and recovery testing. RTZ's failure to fulfill this commitment has prompted Acorn to take them to court and claim for damages.
they can either
open their societies
to the freedoms
necessary for the
pursuit of
technological
advance, or they
will risk falling
even further
behind.

One is the most powerful mining company in the world, and the other was, until recently, the most powerful political puppet in the world. But RTZ shares more than that in common. Both have practised the same style of belligerent expansionism, invading and colonising with the same stubborn ignorance and willful deception about other cultures; both ruthlessly engineering politics to the advantage of their own empires. Both have viewed the world as their oyster: a rich, untapped territory which doesn't belong to anyone else, but could belong to them, and would be better off for belonging to them.

"My friend, what an intoxicant is democracy, what a stimulant is economic freedom......." Guess who spoke at the annual Churchill lecture sponsored by RTZ, earlier this year? Yes, you've got it. And he's right about one thing: RTZ's and his own brand of "democracy" have been intoxicating our planet for too long. RTZ reprint his entire speech in their quarterly review, under the title "Democracy's Elixir"......"I am convinced that the world is moving our way......Breezes of electronic beams blow through the iron curtain as if it were lace......they shall know the truth and the truth shall set them free....."

But this isn't Reagan's only association with RTZ. Borax Consolidated, with its mines situated in the "wild west", was built-up, before RTZ took it over, by a highly successful advertising campaign of TV shows which featured the young cowboy actor. The "Death Valley Days" series encouraged American housewives to buy a huge range of borax products marketed under the "20 Mule Team" label. (See inset picture of R.R. with mules).

Nowadays Borax is used mostly in glass, glass fibre, enamels and ceramics production. RTZ earned 55 million pounds in the first half of 1989 from this operation alone.
The Nuclear Activities (Prohibitions) Act - A scrap of paper?

Mineral sands are usually associated with the sandy shores of eastern and western Australia. Environmentalists have struggled over many years against the sand miners to save sand dunes and beach vegetation from their ravages.

In 1985 CRA discovered an extensive mineral sands deposit lying beneath Wimmera farmlands around Horsham. The sands are ancient seasheds laid down over a million years ago. CRA now holds exploration licences over 15,000 square kilometres of Western Victoria. The Wimmera deposits are possibly the largest in the world.

Mining Wimmera mineral sands will pose serious groundwater and other environmental problems for the farming area. Importantly, the monazite concentrate, extracted from the sands, contains uranium and thorium.

The presence of these radionuclides creates special occupational and environmental problems. Their removal from any mining site raises questions of legality under the Nuclear Activities (Prohibitions) Act. Legality is a fundamental issue that must be dealt with before other matters are considered.

When the Labor Party came to office in 1982 it moved with commendable speed to pass the Nuclear Activities (Prohibitions) Act. Since then the Government has given much publicity to its principled stand against those nuclear activities, other than nuclear medicine, under its jurisdiction.

When the Minister, David White, introduced the Bill into the Legislative Council it is clear that he was guarding against the situation where uranium or thorium are produced "incidentally" in a mining operation. He said: 'Clause 6 of the Act provides that incidental mining or quarrying of uranium or thorium is permitted under a valid lease ... provided the material remains in the tailings and is adequately treated according to regulations'.

David White is now saying that the incidental uranium and thorium in monazite from Wimmera mineral sands can be legally exported. No official explanation is forthcoming about an earlier comment he made on how David White once described the purpose of the Act and his defence now of shipping materials containing uranium and thorium out of Victoria.

Mining will be done by Wimmera Mineral Sands (WIM), a CRA subsidiary. WIM set up a pilot plant in 1988. Before even completing its pilot studies, WIM applied for a licence to mine one million tonnes of mineral sands to feed a demonstration plant producing mineral concentrates. Unquestionably this 'demonstration' project is intended by WIM as the start of its commercial production.

The pilot plant was approved on the basis of a Preliminary Environmental Report. Public consultation was thereby deliberately minimised. This mining project like others promising financial returns to the State is being given fast track treatment by the government. This was clearly shown in state parliament recently when White referred to the project as 'one that is well worth strong support from the government during the planning process'.

Environmental groups have expressed grave concern over many aspects of this project. A major concern is the lack of safeguards concerning the export of ore of uranium and thorium. Uranium extracted from Australian monazite has been sold to both French and American nuclear companies. Both of these companies supply fuel for both nuclear reactors and weapons. It is totally unacceptable that the 'Nuclear Free State' should even consider, far less actively support, such a project and CRA is going to get sand in its face over this one.

As we recently reported, Comalco (managed by CRA) and Martin Marietta of the USA (with which CRA has been associated for some years), have been investigating, along with some other Australian companies, the establishment of a seven billion dollar space station on Cape York province, Queensland.

As we go to press, the Australian cabinet is expected to approve the proposal - which is designed to launch Soviet-made rockets carrying commercial payloads. However, the leading Australian organisation the Australian Conservation Foundation, and the Wilderness Society, have joined with Aboriginal organisations in vehemently opposing the project.
For more than a year now, people living in the Irish counties of Galway, Mayo and Tyrone have been worrying about the the mineral prospecting boom which is taking place in their area. The Mining Awareness Group contacted PARTIZANS last year, eager to find out about the RTZ subsidiary, Riofinex, who now hold prospecting licences for 57 separate areas in Ireland, and are at the vanguard of the new goldrush in Ireland.

They are concerned that their fragile and (for a mining area) densely populated environment will suffer drastically at the hands of the mining companies. Vast quantities of rock would have to be processed inorder to extract the low-grade ore, and a leaching process using the deadly cyanide would probably be employed to separate gold from its ore.

On November 15, Riofinex officially announced that gold had been discovered near Omagh in County Tyrone. That, in itself, is not news; a group campaigning against mining this reserve has been in existence for some time. What is news however, is that Riofinex have said that commercial mining could start as early as the early 1990s. This comes as a surprise (perhaps it shouldn't) after Sir Alistair Frame informed shareholders in the 1989 a.g.m. that gold mining in Ireland would not take place for a good ten years, or so, IF AT ALL.

Sir Alistair was asked whether cyanide leaching would be used, since it could have a dire effect on people living in close proximity to any possible mines, as well as polluting water supplies. His reply was that the questioner should really know better than to ask such a question: we all know how long it takes a project to progress from the drawing board to commercial production, how could he say?

Riofinex have already removed 40,000 tonnes of waste material to carry out their examination, and discovered an average of 7.6 grams of gold and 19.9 grams of silver per tonne. But RTZ do not consider that they would operate this mine themselves. According to a Riofinex employee, a mine would be brought up to development stage and then sold-off to another company. With an estimated yield of 25,000 ounces of gold a year this mine would be small fry for RTZ; their major gold interests lie in the vast, rich deposits of Indonesia and Papua New Guinea, and the large low-grade operation at Moro do Ouro in Brazil.

Selling-on will prove to be an astute move. Already kicked out of Ireland once, when they prospected for uranium in Donegal, and now being recognised as one of the most active of the new wave of prospectors, Riofinex could well take-the-money-and-run by the time that the full extent of the damage that this mine will cause to the environment and to peoples' health is realised.

If this trend is followed, Riofinex will be the ones who initiate and clinch the dirty deals. As the Financial Times says, "Riofinex intends to add value to its find by completing an environmental impact study and then to seek planning permission for a mine, probably by the end of next year". The issue of Environmental Impact Assessments (E.I.A.s) has been one of the major campaigning points of the Mining Awareness Group. They have been lobbying the Dublin government for E.I.A.s to be carried out independently, and not by the very companies who stand to profit from the mines. They say "An EC (European Community) directive on E.I.A.s became law on July 3rd 1988. Ireland's Minister for the Environment has been widely criticised for not incorporating this directive properly into legislation."

---

---
He has failed to define fully in what circumstances E.I.A.s will be required. He has ignored arguments that E.I.A.s, to have credibility, should be independent of developers, and should allow all interested parties, including the public to be involved in deciding the scope of such studies.

The Tyrone prospect is in that part of Ireland governed by Britain, but the issues are the same regarding E.I.A.s. But also, in addition to the risks normally associated with gold mining, security and the use of explosives in this highly militarised area could create a further threat to local people. With this in mind, Enniskillen attempted to develop its Sperrin Mountains project without using explosives. But its unorthodox methods proved to be slow and expensive, so development was suspended in June this year while Enniskillen considered what other methods it might use.

Sources: Financial Times (16/11/89), Mining Awareness Group (who can be contacted at: Cloon, Cleggan, County Galway, Ireland).

As we pointed out at the time, RTZ's costs in acquiring BP Minerals were staggering, increasing its debt "gearing" to nearly 100%. Prudently, it has already off-loaded some of its newly acquired South African assets, announced it's going to sell off most of the Indonesian assets, is not taking over the highly controversial share which BP had in the Jacunda tin mine in the heart of the Brazilian Rainforest, and has already sold off RTZ Chemicals to Rhône-Poulenc of France.

Now Rhône Poulenc wants to get rid of many of the RTZ Chemicals 'interests' it has just acquired - including the Staveley Chemicals operation, RTZ's ISC division, and the CFC side of the business. Now who is likely to buy the CFCs division? Answers, please, on a postage stamp, to Rhône Poulenc......

RTZ likes to give the impression that when it takes over a company, it walks in softly with a big carrot, rather than a thumping great stick. But the personnel at BP Minerals' London Headquarters are not likely to see it that way.

In the bare six months since RTZ took over the company, it has effectively sacked, or accepted early retirement from most of the 120 staff, keeping only a very few exploration and technical staff based at Newbury, Berkshire. It would be interesting to know how many environmental scientists were taken on by RTZ: our guess is.... none.

(Source - Mining Journal 3/11/89).
Sir Alistair Frame, chair of RTZ for several years, its chief executive for longer, and the main architect of its uniquely aggressive strategies for the 1980s, is resigning.

But before you pop the champagne, we hasten to add that he is only throwing in his pick and shovel as the executive chair of RTZ. He will still be non-executive chair, so we should still see his happy, smiling visage, peering out from those rose-tinted spectacles as May or June comes round, and the growing band of dissident shareholders jostle for what one business newspaper once called "the Henley of the Left" - the RTZ annual general meeting.

Derek Birkin, who came to RTZ as a result of the corporation swallowing up Thomas Ward some years back, now assumes his rightful position as Top Dog at St. James' Square - a position he has, in fact, been adopting during the last year, as the BP deal took shape. After all, it was Frame who pioneered the corporation's astonishing diversification into oil, gas and various "downstream" activities in the late 1970s and early 1980s. The BP deal marked a 'U turn' as RTZ moved back into mining with a vengeance. It was a deal that couldn't have been pushed through without Frame, but which Birkin obviously took on board as a personal concern.

Little is known publicly about Derek Birkin. Personable, affable, rather dull, has been a characteristic outsider's impression of him. (He's the only RTZ director ever known to have smiled at demonstrators as he walked past.) It might be that RTZ will open up to discussion, even dissent, in a way that Tuke, Frame, Turner, and Duncan, in their arrogance, never could. Time will tell....

Meanwhile, Sir Alistair is moving on to the chairpersonship of Davy International, a British-based engineering corporation, with numerous fingers in many pies around the world. Its subsidy in the US, Davy-McKee, has been one of the world's biggest constructors of nuclear plant - a fact which will endure it to Frame, whose first and greatest love has been all things nuclear. He was a deputy director of the British Atomic Energy Agency before moving to RTZ. If the bottom hasn't dropped out of the British nuclear power industry by the time this Davy affair comes along, it's possible some of us might see him there as well...eh?
HIGH ANXIETY OVER COPPER

It looks as though copper prices are about to drop drastically over the next few years because of over-production. Analysts blame this drop on the huge and rich new mine in Chile, La Escondida, which RTZ has a 30% interest in, which will be producing 320,000 tonnes of copper a year, making it the third biggest copper mine in the world.

Prices are already down this year, as the non-communist market slowly returns to surplus after five years of deficit, and they are expected to fall even more sharply as the market anticipates output from around the world. RTZ's Neves Corvo mine in Portugal should reach 80,000 tonnes next year against 25,000 this year, and an eventual capacity of 135,000 tonnes. Many new projects in North America are scheduled to begin production, and many others due to re-open. The biggest is the Bingham Canyon mine which RTZ acquired from BP. This could be producing 185,000 tonnes in 1990, as against the 45,000 it was producing in 1987.

Analysts believe that the net increase in capacity during the next three years could be as much as a million tonnes, with La Escondida contributing nearly a third. So what does it matter if the greedy multinational mining companies produce so much that the price plummets? In the last recession of 1981-1983 many companies survived by cutting the costs of production. By limiting wage increases and making modernisations to plants, US producers cut average production costs from about US$90 cents per pound in 1981 to US$54 cents by 1986.

RTZ are now one of the biggest copper producers in the world, with some of the cheapest copper sources in the world. They, and other companies will start to heap what is becoming an over produced product onto the world market, trimming down production costs as the going gets tough.

However, another report says that in the short term stocks are low, and copper producers will enjoy a continued bull run. This, says the Mining Journal is largely to do with Japanese sources of copper concentrates being subject to a spate of disruptions this year. Presumably they are referring to the war which has stopped production at Bougainville.

In the latest edition of "Base Metal Concentrates" produced by London based Metals and Minerals Research Services, reference is made to the "quite astonishing degree of importance" that the enlarged RTZ group now has in the custom copper concentrate market. They say that in five years time, RTZ will have copper operations in all the world's major areas of production, and that in 1993 RTZ will be supplying 44.5% of the world supply of custom copper concentrates.

Sources: Mining Journal (13/10/89), South magazine.
MOG O'DOR'S CHAMPAGNE COLUMN

It might have escaped my notice, but the Financial Times is my favorite morning read. The "pink" goes out with me and my black mongrel for our constitutional. Midway between the baker's and the candlestick maker's I came across a major article on one of my least favorite mines. "Technology gives Argyle the cutting edge" was the title.

Argyle, of course is the world's largest diamond mine. It was constructed on a sacred Aboriginal women's dreaming place, the Barramundi: "on" being a euphemism - in fact the whole hillside was sheared and bulldozed away by RTZ/CRA, like a breast under the surgeon's knife. When my colleague from PARTIZANS, (who shall remain nameless, but he's well known to RTZ who think that he masterminds the entire worldwide opposition to the company, from selling T-shirts to the Bougainville Liberation Army, to putting cyanide in the drinking water of Victoria, and blaming it on the company! - when this small cog in the wheel of mining's critical public visited Western Australia earlier this year, he met with CRA's Aboriginal liaison officer from Argyle. This particular fellow had turned up in the Western Desert to convince the Aborigines there that a uranium mine at Rudall River would bring them exactly the same benefits that Argyle had brought their brothers and sisters further north.

Needless to say, they were not convinced - nor did the CRA "good neighbour" help the party along, when he reminisced about his time spent uranium mining in Canada. "I'd send my wife and kids down a uranium mine, anytime", he boasted. "Your poor wife and kids", a few cynical, and no doubt ignorant, Aboriginal elders were heard to rejoin.

But I digress. The FT article I held shivering in my fingers that morning was all of another boast: how Argyle was planning to expand, dishing in another 8.5 million pounds of shareholders' funds, seeking new markets in Japan and the USA, and selling the coloured stones which many of us would consider worthless chaff, but which, thanks to a brilliant advertising campaign, have captured the necks of over-dressed women everywhere. While their husbands, (like me), scrutinise their pink in the morning, they are fondling their "browns". "These brown stones", remarks Kenneth Goding of the FT, "were previously not regarded as gem quality, but Argyle found rapid consumer acceptance when it marketed them as "champagne" or "cognac" diamonds!"

To satiate this rapidly developing alcoholic clientele, Argyle is naturally digging up more and more Aboriginal land to put through the crushers. But it has encountered one problem: The water level of the Ord dam, which serves the mine, has dropped to its lowest-ever point. (Mr Goding, being the gentleman that he is, didn't say that Argyle's operations had caused the dehydration. But to my knowledge, not many Aboriginal swimming pools have been built in the area, since Argyle's "good neighbour" programme got under way).

So what is RTZ/CRA doing about it? Finding alternative supplies? Recycling the water? Not a bit of it: instead, it's extending its pipes and pumps even further out into the dam. So the area gets even more dewatered, and the prospects of survival, let alone self sufficiency, among the true owners of all those champagnes and cognacs are dealt yet another savage blow.

MOG O'DOR

page 12
FOUR TONS OF DEADLY MERCURY STOLEN

FEARS are growing as to the whereabouts of four tons of deadly poison stolen from a West Ham chemical works during Sunday night.

Police are trying to locate the batch of mercury (0.5 per cent of the world's output)—valued at £1,000—stolen from RTZ Chemicals, Canning Road.

"We are concerned the thieves will find it almost impossible to get rid of. They might abandon it where children will find and play with it, with fatal consequences," said a spokesman for West Ham police.

The deadly liquid, which gives off toxic vapour and can be absorbed through the skin, is contained in 106 flasks, some of which are leaking. They are secured with a screw stopper and are approximately 16in high by 5in in diameter and are all painted black.

"The amount taken represents about a year's supply for the company because it has very restricted uses," said the spokesman.

"If anyone should discover where the mercury is dumped they should contact West Ham police immediately on 9938232."

THE WORLD'S LARGEST URANIUM PRODUCERS

RTZ is the largest privately-owned producer of uranium in the entire world. The only two companies which produce more uranium than RTZ are the state-owned Canadian company Cameco, and the French state-owned Cogema. Together with RTZ, these three companies produce 65% of the entire world output according to Nuxeco's March 1989 report.

The Mining Journal (December 1989) reports that uranium prices have now fallen to their lowest ever - $10/lb, compared to $43 in 1980. This, the report says, is because of subsidised production in certain countries, namely China and the Soviet Union.

CRA TAKES BP COAL

One curious aspect of the midsummer extraordinary RTZ meeting, held to O.K. the BP Minerals takeover, was Frame's answer to the question about BP's coal interests. Although not officially included in the package taken over by the barons of St James Square, it had been widely assumed that BP would offload its coal interests, as well as most of its minerals assets, and that the RTZ group would be the first in line.

In answer to a question put by a PARtIZANS supporter, Frame curtly maintained that there had been no discussion with BP about the matter. Then, lo and behold! The very next day BP announced that it was selling off its coal mines. So far the South African interests have gone to companies registered in the apartheid state. But, not surprisingly, CRA has gobbled up the company's Australian coal interests at a price of just under $300 million. While these mines represent only 16% of BP's total coal output, the reserves of coal in Australia comprise one third of BP's total of nearly 2,000 tonnes.

The Sengatta (Sangatta) coal mine—otherwise known as Penang, on Kalimantan (see article by Carolyn Marr in this issue) is not part of any deal, and BP seems likely to hold on to this mine (and its Canadian coal operations) to keep its hand in.

Source: Mining Journal 27/10/89 and Weekend Australian 21/10/89
Let's be quite honest at the start: the majority of books received for review by a small-circulation magazine, like PARTING COMPANY aren't exactly tailored to sit under a Xmas tree. They are either specialist studies, with a tiny prospective audience - or populist books which most of our readers will have heard of anyway.

What a review like this can valuably do is point its audience in the direction of ideas they might otherwise pass by. And try to bring a slightly different perspective to commonly-received notions.

Let's start with the small-press output - and in particular that of ZED PRESS. This London-based publisher is virtually unique for its survivability and breadth of concerns. For many years it has produced quality reading, both on, and from the so-called "third world." More recently its titles on indigenous issues have led the field (not that there was much of a field to pasture in, anyway.) Several important volumes have resulted from Zed's collaboration with ICHI of Geneva, and the United Nations University.

S.C. Dupe's MODERNIZATION AND DEVELOPMENT: THE SEARCH FOR ALTERNATIVE PARADOXES is one of these. It is workperson-like, rather than dramatically inspired. For all that, it is admirable clear and succinct demolition of western-dominated concepts of development and economic growth. Short on examples, it is nonetheless a very timely statement of basic decentralist/sustainable/community-controlled options. And the bibliography (prepared by Agnes How) is superb.

Faysal Yachir has already contributed three studies to the Zed/UNU series. His latest - THE MEDITERRANEAN: BETWEEN AUTONOMY AND DEPENDENCY - is frankly, a disappointment. Yachir is a remarkable economic analyst and his ability to interpret a wealth of bewildering statistics would leave most other academics at the starting post. But while illustrating well the degree to which southern European and north African states are subordinated to northwestern Europe (a dependency which is fated to increase as 1992 looms nearer), he offers little by way of alternative political direction. Nor is the reader helped by an introduction from Samir Amin, which isn't signposted in any way, yet takes up nearly a third of the text, and whose strident rhetoric is at variance with much of the more careful text which follows.

MINING AND AFRICA TODAY: STRATEGIES AND PROSPECTS, Yachir's second volume in the Zed/UNU series, is much better organized. Indeed, it is indispensable to anyone concerned with the continued dominance by multinationals over the world's natural resources. Although the work is little more than a year old, some of its data is now redundant: more important, perhaps, the structure of world mining is changing, even as these words are written, and its doubtful that Africa will play anything like the key role it did until the 1970's. Nonetheless, so long as states like Zambia, Zaire, Guinee, Niger, and of course Namibia - depend so critically on foreign mining capital, technology and price-fixing, their "development dilemmas" need to be squarely faced. Yachir brings enormous insight to this task and doesn't content himself with pat answers. For example, he doesn't equate the location of processing plant in an African country with the bringing of "added value" or more independence to the state concerned: there are both cons and pros to consider.

Now to three slim offerings from groups which aren't primarily publishing houses, but have already established a high reputation in the field. The Latin America Bureau has come out with a highly-readable, well-illustrated account of the work and life (at least the latter years) of the martyred Chico Mendes. By now, everyone will be aware that Mendes led a rubber-tappers union, and forged an alliance with indigenous Brazilian communities, which so angered the rubber barons (landowners and businessmen) that they had him shot in December 1988. What FIGHT FOR THE FOREST: CHICO MENDES IN HIS OWN WORDS doesn't do is turn this emblematic story into a Hollywood saga where only villains, and a lone Nico Novote stalk the jungle paths. (It looks like Hollywood may still do that job itself.) Mendes' own doubts, criticisms of other trade unions (specifically CONTAG) aren't glossed over, and because so much of the book is written by him, the contributions of hundreds of other people come through quite clearly - particularly in the empates, or non-violent blockades.
In October 1988 "the most far-reaching health and safety legislation since 1974," was introduced in Britain. Among other things, the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations required employers to control all workplace substances which could be hazardous to health. Labour Research Department's WORKPLACE HEALTH: A TRADING UNIONISTS' GUIDE, while heralding the new legislation, shows graphically how ill-equipped the current Occupational Health Service is in meeting the new criteria, the degree to which employers and the government black (or at the very least, are unenthusiastic about implementing) existing guidelines - and the appalling toll to human health, as a consequence. For example, an estimated 2-30% of all cancers are caused by workplace exposure: this would account for up to 40,000 deaths in Britain every year. This powerful and convincing indictment should be on everyone's booklist.

Unfortunately, it is difficult to be so enthusiastic about LOOKING BEYOND THE FRAME: RACISM, REPRESENTATION AND RACISM, just published by Links, which is the quarterly journal of Third World First. This is an avowed attempt to "explore...the relationship between power and black representation," mainly in the photo-media. However, it ranges far too wide, with corresponding lack of depth: trying to cover images used by aid charities, the multi-cultural versus "anti-racism" debate, the independence movement in Britten, and the convergence of gay/lesbian/black/women's issues - all in a bare sixty pages. Much of the task has already been performed more methodically by Ten, 8, the radical photo-journal. There is an assumption throughout that Asian-Black - itself, surely, a conflation of image and history, which should be rigorously examined by Afro-Caribbean and Asian writers.

It is assumed throughout that photography is an appropriate medium for issues of colonialism, racism and development to be represented by: what mainly matters is who controls it. Is this actually true? Why do so few indigenous movements choose to mediate their struggles through images of direct representation, rather than painting, sculpture, theatre, dance and poetry?

Free Association Books is not a household name - even among radicals. A pity, because FAB has published some ground-breaking work. (We reviewed their excellent study of the Bangladesh "disaster" earlier this year.) Two works have come our way which we'd like to draw to the attention of readers. Their only direct connection with Partizans is through the author, Margaret Gardiner, whose kind donation of 50 RTZ-shares to GMRA, about nine years ago, got the group into ACP-campaigning in a big way. Her autobiography A SCATTER OF MEMORIES is a stimulating, never dull, account of a remarkable and long life which has touched (among others) W H Auden, Barbara Hepworth, and even D H Lawrence. Her memoir of the ethnographer, Bernard Deacon, FOOTPRINTS ON MALEKULA is an intriguing little book, inevitably raising questions about the "heroic" white man intervening among "natives" in the South Seas, which aren't answered in the space of around 80 pages.

Not so Phyllis Grosskurth's MARGARET MEAD: A LIFE OF CONTROVERSY (Penguin Books), the latest in the Penguin series "Lives of Modern Women." This is an extraordinarily rich and frank biography of the most controversial woman in modern anthropology - one who (it is now generally agreed, thanks to Derek Freeman's devastating 1983 research) completely - and possibly wilfully misread most of the signs offered to her by Samoan society, in order to fit received notions about "free adolescence" and unfettered child-rearing. Notwithstanding this - and Mead's infuriating, self-opinionated, posturing throughout her life - Grosskurth's triumph is to portray someone who clearly enriched, rather than impoverished, the lives of those around her.

A book to savour.

Lastly, a good survey, of undoubted interest to our readers, which unfortunately to date has only been published in Dutch, Jaap Waterling's PESTICIDES, MULTINATIONALS AND THE ENVIRONMENT IN THE THIRD WORLD. Let's hope it's soon available in English.
PARTIZANS is to launch a new project: Minewatch. At a group collective meeting held in London on September 1st, it was unanimously agreed to set up "Minewatch". This will be a service to communities affected by mining operations worldwide, and organisations acting in solidarity with them. The aim is to maintain a constant watch on the plans, activities and track records of hundreds of multinationals (and others) encroaching on third world and indigenous land, or whose operations affect land-based peoples.

It sounds a huge task - and one which PARTIZANS might seem ill-equipped to perform. After all, we have functioned without any full-time staff, and on a budget that would make a canary turn to the RSPCA. On the other hand, PARTIZANS people have been doing a similar job for some time: on average each month, hundreds of pieces of information and off-prints of our files go out to various groups worldwide - ranging from the National Coalition Against Mass Burn in the USA to land councils in Australia.

So far between six and seven hundred prospectuses have been mailed out. Each recipient has been asked whether it can contribute to the running costs of "Minewatch" or needs to be subsidised to use it. They have been invited to help to set-up the service, and asked how it should be run, so that they benefit from it. The service will not be open to professionals - whether TV companies or mining executives - although PARTIZANS will continue to provide information when requested, and charge for it at appropriate rates.

Underlying the scheme is a belief that has been growing in PARTIZANS and sister organisations for some time, that we need to look at mineral resource extraction with the same incisiveness that, for some years, has been applied to food production, energy production and the arms trade. We need to know not only who is doing what, but how the overall picture is likely to change in the near future, and what alternatives can be developed to bring the prosperity that land-based peoples want for themselves, without reliance on employment by, or income from multinational mining corporations, whose legacy is so often one of destruction, exploitation and betrayal.

Anyone who wants a copy of the Minewatch proposal can write to PARTIZANS and receive one.

IF YOU'RE NOT A PARTIZANS SUPPORTER, WE'D LIKE TO HEAR FROM YOU. EVEN IF YOU ARE...

* I would like to take-out/renew my subscription to PARTING COMPANY (f4 per year. (£3 unwaged. Five issues per year). Please tick


NAME........................................ADDRESS...............................

We are always interested in hearing from you, and are happy to answer questions or queries. The PARTIZANS collective welcomes input from newcomers. Please write to:

PARTIZANS, 218 Liverpool Road, London N1 1BE.