So, what's new?

Quite a lot really. Here are the social and environmental issues which should concern you as a shareholder and the RTZ board but of which you will find scarce mention in the Annual Report. These are the questions which are of most concern to people at the sharp end of RTZ and its associated companies operations; but they will also affect the companies profitability and so should concern you as shareholders and all of us as we live and depend on the same earth.

We have presented criticisms of RTZ at its annual general meeting for several years now. To what extent you may ask? The company has certainly sharpened up its public relations and we hope the constant chipping away has made the company aware of a different view. For the first time this year we have printed the questions others want asked of RTZ. This is so shareholders can be aware of all the issues facing RTZ the world over, even if we don't get to ask all the questions...

We present a full statement from the Western Desert Land Council about Aboriginal culture and their relationship to the land. That the land owns the people, not the other way round, should help explain why mining and Aboriginal interests conflict so much of the time. (BUFF pages)

Also in Australia the aboriginal community at Ellendale (near Argyle) want to know about CRA plans there. (GREEN page)

The emergence in Namibia of the Union of Mineworkers raises questions about contract labour, working conditions and trade union recognition. There are still the questions of compensation and military use of Namibian uranium... (GREEN page)

Also on the nuclear front we investigate RTZs plutonium connections in West Germany and ask how this squares with the chairpersons previous statements about nuclear weapons. (YELLOW page) In-house environmental problems are also in evidence at NUKEM - as the Umweltschutzgruppe Hanau is aware.

Nearer to home, Carnon Consolidated in Cornwall are preparing to reap profits from Greenstone and sell the waste for road improvements. Local people ask about the implications for jobs at other quarries... (PINK/White page)

Waste disposal isn't nearly so neatly handled in Bougainville, where tailings from the CRA copper mine have silted up a river and killed all marine life. Is the tailings pipe the solution or will it just move the pollution? (BLUF page) Friends of the Earth in Papua New Guinea need to know.

Meanwhile in Spain environmental problems of a different kind rear their ugly head... (WHITE page) The material has come from Accion Ecologistica.

We're sure that these issues will be of concern to all conscientious shareholders. You may not share our philosophy; you may doubt our politics. We hope you do share our desire TO KNOW.

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Western Desert people were one of the last in Australia to be affected by European encroachment. Periodically, exploration parties ventured into the Great Sandy Desert, but contact with Aboriginal residents of the land was sporadic. In the early 1900s however, Canning traveled southwest across the desert investigating the viability of a stock route from the Kimberley in the north to the railhead at Wiluna in the southern part of the state. Aborigines were encountered, and misused, in his search for the water sources that would make the droving of cattle possible. Gradually, as the stock route was increasingly used migrations north and south along it took place. Other Manjiltjarra speakers who lived along the route moved west into the Warrnambool country of the present-day park, as the latter were increasingly drawn towards the small mining centers of the Eastern Pilbara in search of rations and other material goods.

Our knowledge of the region comes from those people who only just left it and who, in recent years, are beginning to move back to their traditional country. The Rudall River National Park is considered to be Warrnambool country, a language group that inhabited a large expanse of the Western Desert. But strict forms of "land ownership" were not appropriate for the requirements of nomadic travel, scarce water and a variable food supply. Other language groups particularly the Manjiltjarra, Mangala, Walmajarri and Karadjarra, frequented the region, often travelling in small family units. But when natural conditions allowed often after summer cyclonic rains, larger groups would gather at reliable water sources for sustained periods of time. It was during these intervals of intensive contact that the essence of Western Desert culture flourished. Social ties were renewed, betrothals arranged and ceremonial responsibilities acquired. And it was in the context of larger gatherings that the spiritual relations between the animate and inanimate worlds could be confirmed and sustained. The Dreaming and associated Law provided a remarkable homogeneity of belief and practice for groups scattered throughout the Western Desert. The Rudall River and associated watercourses provided the physical format for such activities to be seasonally renewed.

Lake Dora, a large salt lake in the northeastern corner of the Rudall River National Park, is part of a vast paleo-drainage system that stretches eastward into central and south Australia. Emptying into Lake Dora is the Rudall River, a large and usually dry watercourse that drains rugged hills in the southwestern region of the park.

But there is another aspect to these systems' history, at least as far as the delicate balance between flora and fauna is concerned. While nothing could stem the invasion of eolian sand and the gradual diminishing of surface water, Aborigines did their best to ensure that food resources remained in the vicinity of these riverine systems. This they did with their firing regimes. Indeed certain scientists suggest that paleo-drainage systems owe their longevity to just such practices. Periodic and well managed burning provided precisely the ecological gradients that fostered a varied and plentiful food supply. This mutual relationship ceased as recently as two decades ago, when the last of the Aborigines were brought out of the Rudall River region.
An Aboriginal perspective on Rudall River/Page two

Although archeological investigations in the Rudall River region has not occurred as yet, other inquiries suggest that Aborigines have been living in the Great Sandy Desert and the Gibson Desert for over 10,000 years, and quite possibly for much longer. What is known is that survival in such an environment required very careful attention to seasonal fluctuations and ecological diversity. Small nomadic groups moved in close concert with the ebb and flow of known water sources and the corresponding availability of food. The Rudall River and the chain of lakes stretching southeast from Lake Dora were crucial economic registers in this round of daily and seasonal life. Not surprisingly the two riverine corridors also figure prominently in the social and cultural geography of Western Desert religious belief. Dreaming Tracks, the paths of mythological ancestors, criss-cross the region, and ceremonial life revolved around periodic gatherings of large numbers of people when conditions warranted.

Desert dwelling people had been drawn to Jigalong, then a maintenance depot for the rabbit-proof fence, as early as 1907. By 1947 when Jigalong became a mission, many Western Desert people, particularly the Warnamun, Manjiitjarra, Putijarra and Karadjarra were residing in settlements along the fringe of the desert.

Nevertheless if certain segments of the desert population were drawn to the wages and material benefits of the European periphery, others preferred the traditional life in their natal country. Groups of Aborigines remained in the more isolated and inaccessible areas of the desert. But it was not long before even they were forcibly removed to the European administered missions, stations and towns. By the late 1960s, the Native Welfare Patrols had gathered up all the Aboriginal people still resident on the western side of the Western Desert into government controlled settlements. Some of the last to leave had been camping in the sanctuary of Yandagooge Creek - now the focus of massive uranium exploration.

In the early 1980s after decades of living in institutional centres on the desert's periphery, those with traditional ties to the Rudall River region began returning. The community of Punmu, on the edge of Lake Dora, was settled in 1981 and three years later approximately 80 residents of Jigalong relocated to Pangurr in the southern part of the Park. The reasons for moving back to country are numerous and complex. For some it represents a means of distancing themselves from the social and physical ills of excessive alcohol use. For others it is seen as a last opportunity to acquaint the middle-aged and younger generations with the physical environment upon which the Aboriginal world view is based. For those who returned to Pangurr it meant saving their traditional land from miners.

Establishing communities in the remote expanses of the Western Desert has not been an easy task. Both Punmu and Pangurr are days away from the centres of distribution they must rely upon to supplement traditional hunting and foraging. Both receive only marginal medical service. And because the State of Western Australia refuses to recognize Aboriginal rights to traditional land, neither community has the security of tenure upon which the provision of essential services can be guaranteed. But the populations of Punmu and Pangurr continue to grow and, with their own initiative the communities have constructed the essential infrastructure that will ensure their continued survival. Despite the neglect shown them, Western Desert people have made the decision to return to, and remain in, their country.
An Aboriginal perspective on Ruddall River/Page three

Within the last 12 months however, a different type of threat has come to concern both Punnu and Pangurr. Aware that they live in a National Park and wary of the implications of a tourist regime, the communities nevertheless are protected by the very remoteness and inaccessibility of the region. Visitors are rare and the Aboriginal people of the Rudall have enjoyed, to date, the privacy of their preferred way of life. But in late 1985, CRA Exploration, a company long associated with the abuse of the world’s indigenous peoples, discovered uranium in the western part of the Rudall River National Park. Ostensibly only involved in exploration activities, the company has in reality established a small-scale mining operation - in the mountainous catchment basin of the Rudall River, a river which flows to Punnu. Convinced that other uranium deposits are to be found in the region, CRAE has taken out exploration licenses on virtually the entire southern half of the Park, including the land on which sits the Pangurr community. Aborigines fear the mining of this "poison" and the proximity of Punnu and Pangurr to the experimental mine is cause for great concern.

CRAE's antagonism toward Aboriginal communities is legend. Obliged by law to respect and protect sites of Aboriginal significance, the company shows extreme reluctance to enter into agreements guaranteeing such protection. Its preferred method of operation is to single out inappropriate spokesmen for country, minimally reward them for their services and then claim it has satisfied provisions of the heritage legislation. Western Desert people have consistently resisted these tactics but they pay the price for their united stand. CRAE threatens to "reclaim" the water bore upon which the Pangurr community survives. And while it is unclear who is responsible, Pangurr's residents periodically complain of fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters buzzing the community.

Taken off their land as recently as 20 years ago and now having returned under the most arduous of conditions with little government support, the communities now face a concerted onslaught by a multinational company wishing to mine uranium. Over and beyond the dangers that the company's activities pose for the pristine Rudall River ecosystem, they now threaten the social welfare of people who have gone to extraordinary lengths to reassert their cultural integrity and vitality. Continued mining and exploration may once again drive Aboriginal people off their homeland, and back to the social dislocation of institutionalized life on the desert's periphery. Will the policy of forced assimilation that the government pursued and eventually abandoned, be realized once again by the activities of mining operations that respect neither the National Park nor its lawful inhabitants?

Western Desert Land Council
PO Box 2358, South Hedland, WA 6722, Australia.
RUDALL RIVER: THESE QUESTIONS MUST BE ANSWERED NOW!

The preceding statement - "Uranium Exploration in the Rudall River National Park: An Aboriginal Perspective" - has been presented to the RTZ Annual General Meeting by the Western Desert Puntukurnuparna Aboriginal Corporation, the Western Desert Land Council. It is the Organisation's "official" position and it represents their virtually unanimous view about this potentially extremely damaging project.

Since this statement was issued (early in 1987), the community has become even more alarmed by CRA's plans. On May 25th, Robert Lawrence, representing the WD Land Council, wrote to Partizans "...we have received information that the company plans to move further into the Park without having obtained permission from the Department of Conservation and Land Management...Needless to say, no overtures have been made to us concerning the conservation of Aboriginal heritage and the rights and welfare of those communities currently living there."

Already, in mid-April, a Western Australia State Labor politician, Tom Helm - who flew over CRA's Kintyre prospect - expressed himself "amazed" at the extent of the company's infrastructure, exploration work, and damage caused.

"It is really a big development" commented Tom Helm, "something that CRA, I would suggest, would be very proud of and publicise quite frequently. But that does not appear to be the case." (Times on Sunday, WA, 19/4/87)

Little wonder. For not only may CRA have located one of the western world's biggest untapped lodes of uranium, but all its moves face opposition from conservationists and the local Aboriginal community.

Already, in September 1985, the Australian Conservation Foundation - a highly respected body of ecologists and scientists - was recording "extensive destruction" associated with CRA's work at Kintyre (ACF News Release 17/9/86). Commented ACF Campaigns Officer, Rick Humphries: "The State Government and CRA think they can get away with [uranium mining and exploration] because the Park is so remote. We've been up there and will be doing our utmost to inform the Public of the fate that awaits WA's largest national park." (ibid)

Although the Federal Australian government has denied that there is a "sweet heart" deal to allow CRA to proceed with Kintyre - in the face of undertakings that no new uranium mines would open - there is fear that the company may "do a Roxby" - that is to say, claim that uranium mined at Rudall River would be "incidental" to other minerals. Some of the exploration leases have, apparently, already been converted to mining leases, and staff at the site are to be increased from 90 to 240 personnel. (Personal communication, Carl Drury of Kimberley Land Council to Partizans, 18/3/87).

QUESTIONS

1) Why have no negotiations taken place between CRA and the Western Desert Land Council over exploration or mining at the Kintyre prospect? Is the company intending to "do an Argyle" i.e., separate off a few members of the community, to sign a spurious agreement?

2) What steps is CRA taking to rehabilitate sites - including sacred places - at Kintyre, which have been damaged - and to ensure that damage will not occur in future? Is an anthropologist being appointed who has the confidence of the Land Council and the people of Punmu and Pangurru?

3) Does CRA intend to exploit the Roxby precedent, by mining uranium at Rudall River, in the guise of (or alongside) the exploitation of other minerals? Is it true that there is already excessive collusion between CRA and the Western Australian State government; for example, that David Parker (WA State Minister for Minerals and Energy) often holidays at CRA's expense e.g., on the Great Barrier Reef?

4) Would RTZ agree that, because WA's Aborigines still have no land rights and access to mining royalties; that because Rudall River possesses a unique Aboriginal and natural heritage, the consequences of proceeding with the Rudall River prospect would be devastating and irretrievable? Will RTZ use its influence over its Australian associate company, CRA, to effect an immediate halt to all operations at Kintyre?

5) A senior official of the Australian Mining Industry Council (AMIC) has called the Kintyre prospect "a three-act nightmare - uranium, in a national park, and on Aboriginal land." (Times on Sunday, 19/4/87). Will CRA now wake up - and get out?
Successive RTZ chairpersons have sought to deny that RTZ has any direct involvement in the production of nuclear weapons. The Rossing/Trident connection is one which has often been mentioned by critics of RTZ, as exploding this claim (RTZ Uncovered, Partizans, London 1986, p9).

However, the Trident missile programme is still on the drawing-board, and may never be implemented. Meanwhile, RTZ holds 10% of a company which plays a crucial role, both in the "plutonium economy" of the West, and in the promotion of nuclear arms.

That company is NUKEM, based in Hanau, West Germany. Apart from its French counterpart, Cogema, Nukem has more fingers in more nuclear pies than any other company in the world. It transports uranium, processes it, manufactures it into fuel elements, reprocesses it and disposes (or rather, doesn't dispose) of nuclear waste.

NUKEM supplies goods, services, and nuclear material to numerous countries, including Brazil, Argentina and South Africa: three countries long believed to be developing nuclear weapons. It also controls, or has an important share, in several companies involved in plutonium production (ALKEM: 40% Nukem, 60% KWU); the manufacture of plutonium fuel elements (RBU: Nukem 40%, KWU 60%); and the transport of plutonium (TRANSNUKLEAR: 66.6% Nukem, 33.3% Transnuklear).

NUKEM was once accused of openly selling plutonium - virtually to any buyer (Observer, 12/12/77). While it might have cleaned up its act, it has since become even more vital as a supplier of this deadly material.

Most of the fuel elements reprocessed by Nukem go to the Savannah River plant in the USA, where the plutonium extracted contributes directly to the US Atomic Weapons programme (Verhebroschrift des Transnuklear p.25 & Testimony by T.B. Cochran before the Inner Committee of the US House of Representatives, documented in Atommilmzeitung (FRG), Nr. 19).

But, in the last few months, it is Nukem (and Alkem's) role in Western Europe which has caused most alarm.
NUKEM/2

"There is, in the Federal German Republic, a political logic, which points in the direction of an option for a West German or European nuclear armed force, to include the FRC" - Alfred Niechterelsheimer, CSU quoted TA2, 10/10/86

"Meanwhile, the French government informed the European Supply Agency that it needed the (Nukem-provided) plutonium from the 250-MW Super-Phenix reactor for military purposes" - W. Catenhusen, MdB, in K. Thoede "Plutonium Wirtschaft" nroro aktuell.

There has long been a determination on the part of nuclear proponents and militarists in West Germany, to "close the nuclear fuel cycle" and enable the country to control all steps towards the production of nuclear weapons.

Construction of a reprocessing facility at Wackersdorf is continuing - despite opposition from many local groups. And while the long-postponed (and much-resisted) Kalkar Fast-breeder reactor was recently refused an operating license by the State government of Lower Saxony (WISE News Communiqué, Amsterdam, 1/5/87) Alkem, the Nukem associate company which manufactures plutonium/uranium fuel rods, has entered a complex "swap" arrangement with the French Cogema company.

Currently, the swap involves plutonium coming from the La Hague reprocessing plant in France and being handled by Alkem for use in German nuclear reactors. In future, it could go the other way. Alkem is considered essential to the functioning of La Hague. "If we break down here" Alkem's general manager was quoted in March "La Hague will have to close down" (Financial Times, 16/3/87).

The Alkem plant has met enormous opposition - and caused the German Green party to leave the Hessen state government, in protest at the Federal Republic becoming a "plutonium economy" Alkem normally handles about 780 kg. plutonium a year. The new CDU government now wants to increase its capacity to no less than 6.7 tonnes. (WISE News Communiqué, 1/5/87 op cit)

Added to this is concern at contamination from both the Nukem and Alkem plants which have recently caused several serious incidents. An Alkem worker was contaminated with plutonium from a torn glove in late February (FT 16/3/87). Potentially much more serious was an incident at the Nukem plant, only a couple of weeks later, when another worker was contaminated with plutonium, and one of her 66 people had to be checked. Nukem failed to inform the state government of the occurrence - all the more serious because officially Nukem doesn't handle plutonium at all! (WISE News Communiqué, Amsterdam, 10/4/87). A case against Nukem's managers is expected to penalise them with a small fine, or token prison sentence.

QUESTIONS

1) Is RTZ aware of the full extent of the military involvement of Nukem, in which it holds 10%? Specifically, would the chair like to comment on information that plutonium produced by Nukem goes directly into US nuclear weapons, while plutonium supplied to France will be employed in French nuclear arms?

2) Is the chair of RTZ aware that Nukem (in which it holds 10%) is currently being charged with criminal irresponsibility in the case of workers contaminated at its Hanau plant, by plutonium shipped from Karlsruhe Nuclear Research Centre? The Financial Times European Energy Report commented on this incident: "Rather unsettling, at least for the general public, is the manner in which very small but dangerous amounts of plutonium can be shipped around, apparently without anyone knowing" (FT Energy Report 235/1). What steps is RTZ taking to combat such ignorance?

3) What profit does RTZ derive from its 10% holding in Nukem? Even if it were ten times greater, could it possibly justify our company's implication in a dangerous, dirty - and many would say, disastrous - business, where the military and so-called "peaceful" purposes are so intertwined as to be indistinguishable? If the company argues that it only owns 10% of Nukem - let it reflect that just 10% of the current world's stock of nuclear weaponry could wipe us all out - including the value of our stock?
"An economic godsend - and an environmental disaster!" was how a noted scientist recently described the Bougainville copper mine. (1) And now - claiming its new plans would obviate pollution of the Jaba River system - the Bougainville Copper Company (BCL - 53.6% held by CRA) intends to run a pipeline from the mine to the west coast of the island. In its latest annual report, BCL promise that this proposal will "...allow the company to commence rehabilitation of the river system during the life of the mining operations." (2) If so, this is to be cautiously welcomed, especially as - according to M.R. Chambers in the paper quoted below - the project was originally commissioned "with no regard for its impact on aquatic life" - all of which has now been wiped out in the Jaba Valley.

Notes: 1) Phillip Hughes, head of Environmental Science, University of Papua New Guinea, phone interview with FoE PNG, March 1987 2) BCL Ltd, Annual Report, 1986 p. 13

The Project

The Bougainville Copper project was the first major mineral extraction project to be undertaken in Papua New Guinea. Mining began in 1971 and involves open-cut mining of low-grade copper porphyry ores associated with small amounts of gold and silver.

The sediments (tailings) remaining after mineral extraction are released untreated into the Jaba river valley some 35 km from its mouth in Empress Augusta Bay. Waste rock is dumped close to the mine. Since 1970, Bougainville Copper has contributed $US66 million to the State, more than 20% of the total internally-generated revenue. With a workforce of nearly 4,000, it is one of the country's major employers.

The project is located on Bougainville Island, North Solomons Province. The mine site is situated at Panguna (700m) in the mountainous interior of the island. This is a high rainfall (c 4800mm yr^-1) zone with high seismicity and volcanic risk. Earthquakes of 7.1 on the Richter scale have a return period of 10 years.

Environmental Studies

No environmental studies or impact evaluations were carried out prior to the commissioning of the project. At the time the project was planned, there were no environmental laws in the country by which deleterious impacts could be regulated. Three agreements relating to the operation of the mining included limited reference to environmental considerations. The Mining (Bougainville Copper Agreement) Ordinance of 1967 stated that the company was obliged to revegetate overburden and tailing deposits. In a subsequent amendment in 1974, the government was empowered to request the company to supply it with any environmental data it possessed but the amendment did not stipulate what types of data should be collected. The third agreement was the Disposal of Overburden and Tailings Agreement in 1971. This obliged the company to collect hydrological and meteorological data, minimize serious effects due to copper pollution and expedite land restoration. This Agreement lapsed in 1980.

Figure 2. Tailings from the Bougainville Copper mine deposited in the Jaba river valley. Bougainville Island, Papua New Guinea. August 1984.
Present Situation

From 1973-1983, some 768 Mt of ore and waste were processed. Approximately half of this (395 Mt) was deposited in waste dumps in the Kaweros Valley, which connects with the Jaba valley. This waste rock (andesite, diorite and biotite-gneiss) was rich in copper (0.2%) and iron pyrites (1.2%). Of the 373 Mt of ore processed, 6.7 Mt was exported as concentrate and the remainder (396.3 Mt) deposited into the Jaba valley (Figure 2). Approximately half of the tailings (the coarser fraction) remained in the valley while the rest were carried into the Empress Augusta Bay. These tailings were rich in copper (800-1000 ppm) and sulphur (0.25-0.3%). Only limited dilution of tailings occurred after release.

Tailings deposition into the Jaba valley caused the river bed to rise by 30m near the outflow. In this region, the river bed is currently rising by some 3.5m yr⁻¹ while at the river mouth, accretion is 0.15 yr⁻¹. The entire length of the valley is covered by sediment up to 60m deep and 1km wide in basins. Heavy metal, sediment and acid contamination (from sulphide oxidation) also resulted from the weathering of the waste rock dumps.

All aquatic life in the Jaba valley has been killed. Sedimentation alone, quite apart from chemical contamination, was enough to accomplish this (Powell, 1982). The continued release of sediment and chemical contaminants from the waste dump together with remobilization of heavy metals from deposited tailings will prevent recolonization long after mining is completed (Meier, 1982).

Other Impacts

Tailings deposition caused the formation of a large (7000ha) delta at the mouth of the Jaba river. In total, some 5000ha of the Bay (25%) is covered by tailings to a copper concentration greater than 500ppm. Lower levels presumably cover all or most of the Bay. This smothering caused depletion of benthic fauna, but apparently has not affected fish diversity or abundance or tissue copper levels compared to the unaffected east coast of Bougainville Island (Powell, 1982).

Experiments to revegetate waste dumps no longer in use, mine pit faces and tailings sediments have been successful. These substrates are deficient in most plant nutrients especially nitrogen, phosphorus and boron, but are acid due to sulphide oxidation, toxic due to high copper levels and rapidly leached by the high rainfall and porosity (Archer, 1982; Jeffrey, 1982). Nevertheless a number of grasses, legumes and tree seedlings have been established through careful fertilization programmes. Once mining has ceased, a large proportion of the various bare surfaces can probably be revegetated. Natural mangrove colonization has occurred on the tailings delta.

At the present time, alternative tailings disposal methods are being investigated. One option is to extend the tailings pipeline out to sea. This would reduce contamination in the Jaba valley but would increase deposition in the Empress Augusta Bay with possible consequences to the fish fauna.

There is no doubt that the project has had major environmental impacts, particularly on the 35km length of the Jaba valley. These effects will continue after mining has ceased. The project was commissioned with no regard for its impact on aquatic life; it is unlikely that such a project would gain approval in Papua New Guinea today. The only fortunate aspect is that a comparatively small area is affected. All villagers living in the lease area receive financial compensation for environmental degradation, currently to an annual amount of US$ 1.4 million.

REFERENCES


QUESTIONS

1) Will RTZ kindly inform shareholders whether the Bougainville tailings pipeline is being constructed on schedule? Is it not true that, while generally welcomed as an alternative to continued dumping of toxic waste into the Jaba river, nevertheless leaching from present dumps is bound to continue? To what degree will the tailings be neutralised, before deposition in Empress Augusta Bay - where a depletion of the benthic fauna has already been recorded?

2) Dr. A.K. "Joe" Barbour, RTZ's environmental scientist is quoted (in RTZ REVIEW, No.1) as claiming that "...far too much emphasis is placed on out-plant 'environmental issues' and far too little on occupation hygiene or 'in-plant issues.'" Is this view shared by Bougainville Copper Ltd - and if so, will it limit its zeal in cleaning up its mess at Jaba: specifically the tailings deposits which reach an incredible 60 metres depth and 1 km width along the whole length of the valley?
SOME COMMENTS ON QUESTIONS ABOUT ROSSING URANIUM

Many of the issues are dealt with in our booklet "Namibia: A Contract to Kill". But new developments include the emergence of the Mineworkers Union of Namibia, the shifting stances of the Canadian and US governments together with the current court case against URENCO for processing Namibian uranium in the Netherlands.

Also, the company has dealt with an impending "internal settlement" imposed by South Africa while claiming to support independence. Rossing Uranium is thus under pressure from several sides.

1. A recent RTZ document Rossing and Namibia states "Rossing contributes more than $150 million a year directly into the Namibian economy through taxes, salaries and purchases of local goods and services" while a graph shows Rossing contributing 22% of the taxes paid to the interim government.

2. Rossing and Namibia states that RTZ and Rossing Uranium consider themselves unaffected by any UN or International Court of Justice decisions until these are incorporated in domestic law. Successive British Governments "do not recognise (the UN Council for Namibia) as the legal administering authority for Namibia, nor accept Decree No.1". But Rossing and RTZ "firmly believe internationally recognised independence would be in the best interests of Namibia." The document does not mention SWAPO. The implication is that the company would prefer an internationally recognised settlement without SWAPO, and without the UNCN or the ICJ holding influence.

3. UN Decree 1 states: "Any person, entity or corporation which contravenes the present decree in respect of Namibia may be held liable in damages by the future Government of an independent Namibia." See also Sizewell Enquiry Day 231, evidence from Rob Rosenthal.

4. In 1979/80 the Rossing Mineworkers Union, affiliated to the National Union of Namibian Workers, was crushed after striking against the new pay scale and radiation hazards. In November '86, the Mineworkers Union of Namibia was launched. The MUN organises at Rossing, and is affiliated to the NUNW. Broadsheets and articles on the MUN and NUNW are available from the Namibia Support Committee. Rossing and Namibia claims the company is committed to "Recognition of unions and a labour self-organisation", while the Dec. 1986 Fact Sheet states that the union "has not yet concluded a recognition agreement with the company".

5. The Security Scheme was detailed in a 1978 management document obtained by SWAPO. It provides for 69 security personnel, heavily armed, and in direct communication with the South African Police and Army, by radio link.

6. Rossing and Namibia implies that migrant contract labour is a thing of the past, by stating that all 2,600 of its employees are on permanent contracts, and by describing housing for married employees. But Ben Ulenge, Gen. Sec. of the Mineworkers Union of Namibia, told the Namibia Support Committee in Feb. '87:

"You find that the people who live in Arandis live with their families. But then about half of Rossing's workers live in the hostels and, of course, here the question of families not being allowed applies. So one can say about half of Rossing's workers live without their families. They are not exercising this right; they live in hostels alone."

7. Rossing have still not allowed an independent investigation into safety standards at the mine, and data appearing in a Uranium Institute paper comparing hazards of mining coal and uranium contain the following interesting fact: Radon radiation levels are higher for miners at Rossing than at any other open-pit uranium mine in the study, except for Cluff Lake.

9/10/11. See "Namibia: A Contract to Kill" for details of the safeguards argument and the evidence that Namibian uranium has been provided for use in the weapons programme.

14. The ban deliberately excludes uranium hexafluoride, allowing Namibian ore to be converted to hex by BNFL and sent to the US for enrichment. The ban is being interpreted to apply only to domestic US utilities, allowing e.g. Japanese electricity companies to import Namibian or South African ore to the US for conversion, enrichment, fuel fabrication and re-export. However, the entire ban is being postponed while the interpretation is being debated. Despite these delays, it is quite possible that the eventual outcome will be to close some of the loopholes in the Act. Together with Canadian policy, this will create a potential bottleneck for the processing of Namibian uranium, making it more difficult for Rossing to secure new contracts.
QUESTIONS FOR RTZ AGM ON ROSSING URANIUM

1. a) What percentage of Rossing Uranium Ltd.'s profits are paid to the "Interim Government" in Namibia?
   b) What did these payments amount to over the last financial year?
   c) What is Rossing Uranium Ltd.'s attitude to and relationship with the "Interim Government"?

2. What is Rossing Uranium Ltd.'s attitude to SWAPO, recognised by the United Nations as "the sole authentic representative of the Namibian people"?

3. How has RTZ anticipated meeting SWAPO's claims for eventual compensation for the theft of Namibia's natural resources?

4. How has Rossing Uranium Ltd.'s attitude to trade union organisation at the mine changed since 1979, and what is the current negotiating status of the Mineworkers Union of Namibia as far as Rossing management are concerned?

5. Does Rossing Uranium still operate a Security Scheme to deal with "Civil or Labour, or Terrorist attacks against the mine"?

6. Is Rossing Uranium still employing contract labour?

7. When Rossing was awarded the NOSA Trophy as "the safest mine" in South Africa and Namibia, Gordon Freeman, Rossing's General Manager, stated that in 8 years Rossing had progressed from being the worst mine in Africa to the best. Do RTZ and Rossing Uranium therefore concede that the attacks made on working conditions in the past were in fact completely justified?

8. What is the long term future of Rossing Uranium in the light of its erratic profitability?

9. What benefit do RTZ shareholders enjoy, in terms of the viability of Rossing Uranium Ltd., from the lack of any bilateral agreement or other safeguards which would prevent the end-use of Namibian uranium for military purposes?

10. Does the 7,500 tonnes of yellowcake supplied to the CEBG up to 1985 constitute the total sales of uranium oxide from Rossing to the CEBG, SSEB, BCUPO, BNFL, UKAEA, Ministry of Defence, or any other agencies of the British Government?

11. Has Rossing Uranium Ltd. sold any of its output to any private company based in Britain?

12. How do RTZ anticipate that Rossing Uranium Ltd. will be affected by the current court case against URENCO in the Netherlands?

13. Following protest action against Namibian uranium imports to Canada last summer, the Canadian government announced a policy of ending contracts for conversion of Namibian uranium at Eldorado Nuclear. How will this decision affect the viability of Rossing Uranium?

14. How is Rossing Uranium Ltd. affected by November 1986 Anti-Apartheid Act, which bars the import of all Namibian and South African uranium ore and uranium oxide to the US?

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BLACKMAIL WITH GREENSTONE?

In mid-1986, local people from Llanest, near the Cornish town of Launceston, suddenly became aware of plans by RTZ (through its wholly-owned subsidiary Carnon Consolidated) to re-open the old Tregunnon quarry. The purpose? - to get at some 3,600 tonnes of 'greenstone'! This product, claimed by the company to be in great demand for decorative purposes, is said to be available in Britain at this one site alone. Quarrying it would result in the removal of 100,000 tonnes of total rock each year. The locals were greatly alarmed; such an operation would involve a 20-tonne lorry thundering through their community every 20 minutes! But wouldn't the project produce much-needed employment in a depressed area? In fact, the company was offering only 12 jobs over a 20-year term (since reduced to six). More important, the RTZ plans have been directly linked by the company to the survival of its Delabole quarry: "if we can't diversify" says RTZ "we might have to close Delabole" - where 78 jobs are at stake.

Combined with this veiled blackmail, however, is another important factor. The A-30 road has been in the process of being widened for years. Waste rock from Tregunnon, after crushing at Delabole, can be sold for the road-works, thus undermining possible contracts with four other local quarries, and jobs held there.

Indeed, the Manager of Carnon Consolidated has admitted this fact: "We'll be able to sell the waste to undercut the local quarries!"

The local people protested RTZ's plans late last year - and 60 protestors turned up at a full council meeting, where the plans were okayed. Concessions were won, however: the output trimmed from 100,000 tonnes of rock to 50,000 tonnes; the rock to go direct to Delabole without passing through the village crusher on site; no sales to subcontractors on site.

As of May 1987, RTZ has signed the Section 32 agreement along these lines, but the Council is dithering. The community - now grouped under the Tregunnon and District Residents Association - will monitor closely what happens from now on. Meanwhile, some outstanding questions:

1) RTZ claims that Tregunnon is the only source of "greenstone" in Britain. But this material is currently being imported from Norway. Will RTZ under-price the imports? Have RTZ mineralogists located other ores at Tregunnon?

2) What profits do RTZ expect to make from selling waste rock for the A-30 widening (or similar) schemes? To what degree will such sales undercut local quarries?
Once Upon a Tale of Two Fishes Lived Beauty. Then Came the Beast.

Killing Dreamtime is a pas de deux by the Australian government and CRA. With something like 300 sacred sites notched up on its bulldozers, and no cloud of binding law on the horizon to prevent ravage, CRA's presence in the Kimberleys looks certain to destroy what 200 years of colonial rule could not.

Et tu tu - David Parker, Minister for Minerals and Energy (and Arts, too) has arranged a $40,000 sponsorship for the Western Australian Ballet Company from Argyle Diamonds. All in the name of culture and art (not to mention sunning himself on the coral reef at CRA's expense).

Not so long ago, CRA's diamond mine (now the world's largest) was culture and art of its own being: a woman's sacred Dreaming site called Barramundi, whose symbol was two fishes. Now forced to yield her rare, intensely pink diamond stones - 56 stones were recently sold for over $1,000,000 - which will no doubt appear at the Ballet adorning the cream of white Australian society! The theft of Barramundi is well documented. Some may balk at the word theft, but RTZ and CRA's persistent refusals to release documents (supposedly) signed by only 6 of the 35 Aboriginal custodians - even to those who signed - indicates that something is seriously amiss.

But tokenism is a marvellous tool that confuses and conceals all manner of ill deeds and racism by companies, governments, and their entourages - never mind the broken laws.

"What happened at Argyle must not be allowed to happen again."

- John Watson, Chairman, Kimberley Land Council.

The relatively token payments conferred upon Aboriginal communities by CRA through their ironically named "good neighbour programme" imply caring and generous benefits: "...establishing a funding programme that has Aboriginal participation and decision making, and is providing substantial long term benefits for the Aboriginal communities involved." - G.F. Littlewood, General Manager, Corporate Relations Services, CRA. July 1986.

The truth is more sinister. The money is still firmly in control of the company, and can only be spent on capital goods that have CRA approval. The steering committee controlling the funds is made up of three company men and four government representatives, one of whom is the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs. The minister, Ernie Bridge, himself an Aboriginal, says he has no intention of changing the way the money is distributed, and that while the company continued to fund local communities he would not urge them to spend more. (The Age, Melbourne 3/6/87). The communities live on unemployment benefit! If CRA were truly interested in "long term benefits for the communities" large areas of land could have been secured - but CRA will not allow this. The purchase of Bow River cattle station and Turkey Creek Road House has been rejected causing widespread disappointment. As Sam Butters of the Purnululu Association said: "We should be able to spend the money in any way we want."

In view of this, and the fact that 99-year leases from the government are going to affect Aboriginal reserves soon, the mining companies can do as they wish on Aboriginal lands. The Aboriginal people's dream for the next 99 years is not a rosy one. Should racist repression destroy them, will white Australia claim all Aboriginal Arts and Culture for its own history, along with the land and sacred sites? Australian whites refuse to honestly address land rights now, preferring instead to celebrate their own white bicentenary.
Is there no shame that they remove the issue 99 years into the future? For their children's children to cope with, the answer to this is obviously no. They will all be too busy as well, celebrating the year 2088 - their 300th anniversary.

"Land Rights have been thrown out but still we demand that self management and self determination be initiated"
John Watson, chairman Kimberley Land Council 1986

Argyle Diamond Mines earns about $150 million per year from a capital outlay of $500 million. Yet it grants Aboriginal people a mere $500,000 a year - less than a third of one percent of Argyle's earnings!

Questions

1. When are the funds from the Good Neighbour Programme going to be given to the people to manage themselves?

2. When will the people who went to Perth and signed an agreement be given a copy of it? Why were the people who did come to the office in Perth told that they hadn't signed an agreement and were entitled to nothing?

3. What guarantees have Aboriginal communities got that similar tactics to those used at Argyle will not be used to undermine Aboriginal control over land and sacred sites at Ellendale, which is now held by the company under special agreement until 1991, and which the company recently call "highly prospective"?

4. How much is CRA or RTZ contributing to the Bicentenary celebrations?
"VICTIMS OF VULTURES"

"The Rio Tinto basin has been exploited since the Romans; the best of its mineral wealth is long gone and this last phase is simply a question of vultures picking the bones until RTM finally abandons Spain." So said Manuel Valero from Accion Ecologistas Social, echoing comments made by representatives of the unions of the mineworkers at Rio Tinto Minera on the company's decision to re-open the copper production line as the result of 3 months strike activity.

The Mines

The Rio Tinto, (Coloured River) in the South of Spain is so called because of the high level of copper and other mineral deposits in the water. As mentioned above, the area has been mined since Roman times, and there are currently 16 mines owned by Rio Tinto Minera (Rio Tinto Zinc - 49%; Explosivos Rio Tinto - 49%; Banco Urquijo - 2%). The Carro Colorado mine, where the recent strike took place, at one time employed 8 to 10,000 workers, but as a result of the 1973 'crisis' which resulted in the fall in copper prices, the workforce declined to 3,800 by 1975 and to just over 1,500 by mid-1986. At that time annual production from the mine was 700,000 tons of pyrites, about 2 million tons of copper ore and about 2.5 million tons of 'gossan' (a mixture of gold and silver in low-quality copper ore).

The Strike

Early in 1986 Rio Tinto Minera stated that due to low output and a 4000 million peseta loss in the first quarter, it would be reducing the workforce, though at that time talk was of an early retirement programme rather than mass redundancies. When the company finally presented its plan, on 21/7/86, the truth was revealed: 1,340 workers were to be sacked from the total of 1,531, the copper production line would be closed and only gold and silver extraction would continue. A few days later the copper production line was closed. This was without authorisation and in the words of Jose Miguel Salinas, the vice-president of the local government of Andalucia and Councillor for the Economy, this and subsequent actions were totally "lacking in respect for the dignity of the local government of Andalucia". Had mining law been brought to bear, the company's licence to mine could have been suspended for six months.

The miners embarked on a programme of intermittent strikes and working to rule the following week. After four weeks, there having been no progress in negotiations with RTM, the entire workforce marched overnight to Madrid to persuade the Minister of Employment to support them, which the government duly did. A general strike was called involving about 4000 miners and effectively paralysing all work in the 16 mines in the area. At the same time, about 200 miners' wives set up a permanent picket stopping both the transport of minerals to Huelva and supplies of fuel to the mines. Ironically, RTM actually claimed that the women's actions could "force the closure of the mines"! The company had been saying that the mine could only be re-opened with the help of government subsidies, so it was not surprising that the announcement in October that the copperlines were to be re-opened, apparently unconditionally and with no promise of government subsidies, was met with overt scepticism by the workers and the unions. This scepticism was well founded, for in January 1987 RTM declared that it could not repay either the interest or principal of its debts and announced new plans to lay-off up to 940 workers over the next two years.
A compromise agreed with the regional government in Andalucia altered this to the temporary laying-off of these workers for six months. This news immediately resulted in an indefinite and general strike.

Finally, however, there can be little hope for the workers at the Huelva mines:
Once operations begin at the Neves Corvo copper mine in Portugal in 1989 the end is in sight, for not only is the Portuguese seam far richer, but wages there are at about a third of the Spanish levels. In the light of this, it is hard to take seriously Derek Birkin's comment that the decision to suspend copper production in Spain was 'painful', and equally hard to believe that the company will make any great effort to safeguard jobs in Spain. All that now remains to interest RTZ are the gold and silver deposits which employ a relatively small workforce.

The Pollution: Yet More Victims.

A secret study commissioned by the Spanish Government in 1984 into water pollution at Huelva painted a grim picture of the environmental impact of the industrial activity in the area. In the coastal waters, concentrations of 20 times normal for zinc, 50 times normal for copper and 200 times normal for lead were found, while in the estuary itself even greater concentrations were found (for example 200 times greater than normal for copper; 500 times greater for mercury). The right bank of the Rio Tinto was found to have suffered irreversible damage.

Since then neither the government nor the industries themselves have taken any steps to alleviate the situation, which has now become critical. Huelva and its bay now constitute the most polluted part of the entire Spanish coastline, and while Rio Tinto Minera is not the only culprit, the mining operations have played a considerable part in bringing this about. As the mine reaches exhaustion, even greater quantities of polluting waste will be generated in the effort to make the operation profitable, which will further exacerbate the ecological damage.

The contamination of the waters with heavy metals is such that the government has forbidden traditional fishing methods and 4000 to 6000 families have lost their livelihoods.

QUESTIONS:

1). Given that production is soon to start at the Neves Corvo copper mine in Portugal, what assurance can the company give to the mineworkers at Huelva that the suspension of copper production there is in any way a "temporary" one, given that operations in Portugal will be more profitable both in terms of the higher quality of the ore and the lower price of labour?

2). Since operations at Rio Tinto Minera mines are coming to an end, leaving a legacy of chronic pollution in the Huelva area, what assurances can the company give to the local population that they will take measures to both limit as much as possible the discharges of toxic wastes from the mines and to assist in the clean-up operation which is so critically necessary?