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# GOLDFINGERED

*Rio Tinto is the world's biggest profiteer from mineral exploitation. And the majority of these profits are gained at the expense of indigenous land owners who have never given consent to the company's operations"* PARTIZANS

Last Thursday Rio Tinto Zinc (RT), the world's biggest and baddest mining company faced more protests at it's annual general meeting.

The board faced nearly two hours of angry questioning from the floor, as shareholders concerned with their dividends were joined by people, more concerned with the communities and eco-systems across the planet that have been smashed to pieces by the corporation's mining operations. In an at-a-glance quick-fire fact rundown, here's some of their activities that they didn't boast about in their annual report...

- A senior RT exec was one of the chief drafters of an Australian labour law which breaches International Labour Organisation conventions on the rights to organise, collectively bargain, and freely associate.

In West Papua, they've been assisting the military brutally to crush indigenous opposition, where they jointly own one of the world's biggest gold and copper mines.

- Trespassing on Western Shoshone Treaty land in Nevada, US. This gold mine increased production 180% during 1998, and has established itself as the world's lowest cost commercial producer of this (almost) useless metal.

- The recent - and devastating - report on their now obsolete Capper Pas tin smelt on Humberside, England, showed that the plant is a major health and environmental disaster, spewing out an impressive range of poisonous heavy metals for the local kids to play around.

- The lack of consultations with the Wayuu people of Colombia during the recent huge expansion of coal operations in Guajira.

To be fair, the company have acted with with near-perfect consistency, as every time it descends upon another area of wilderness, an ecological nightmare unfolds in its wake. And RT have their green-wash public relations down to a fine art. Like the rest of big business, they see the advantages of talking to environmental groups, as why do battle when you can co-opt the activists? You needn't make any real concessions to the greens, as even a token deal can do so much to foster a green'n'caring image. James Harris, vice-president of PR consultants Hill and

Knowlton, put it this way "For corporations, environmental groups offer the opportunity to obtain positive publicity... they also provide credibility, which can be particularly valuable." Stauber and Rampton, who edit PR Watch put it more bluntly - hiring activists is a "crude but effective way to derail potentially meddlesome activists."

In the UK RT are also one of the main providers of information to schools from primary to post-graduate. They even fund two colleges - Atlantic and United World in Wales, while last year they chucked \$30 million at charities to make the world a better place (sic).

All of which helps to compensate of course, for the negative publicity that tends to come from systematically polluting the earth and fucking over the locals. Time to hire yerself a credible greenie. Someone like Tom Burke, one time director of Friends of the Earth, who now works for Rio Tinto, helping them pull the wool over the public's eyes. Burke is a well connected man, working for the last 3 environment ministers and setting up the Green Alliance, the people behind Rio Tinto's new forums. These forums are classic examples of greenwash gimmicks - talking shops where groups like Amnesty International, Save The Children Fund and Oxfam help Rio Tinto clean up their image. There seems to be one small oversight at the Forums - no indigenous people whose lands are being destroyed by the company are ever invited.

So do we really need all this gold, copper, and titanium oxide (the stuff that makes toothpaste white)?

In 1998 Rio Tinto had to face one of its biggest-ever financial crises thanks to the fall in virtually all metal prices. But as economists point out prices have been falling for nearly thirty years. Good for consumers as everyone gets cheaper cars, microwaves, fridges etc. But not so good for the miners who face deteriorating conditions.

So will this article get you all scurrying down

to the local tin recycling bank? Maybe, but it should be pointed out that the biggest consumers of Rio Tinto's metals is the European armaments industry. Not only are those Hawk jets and missiles a bit tricky to fit in the old recycling bin, the arms connection may help explain why our European leaders might not want to put RT's back up to much.

\* **Rio Tinto Behind The Facade** - report by the International Chemical, Energy and Mineworkers Union £1 postage from PARTIZANS

\* **PARTIZANS**, (who campaign specifically against Rio Tinto) 41A Thornhill Square, London, N1 1BE Tel 0171 700 6189 email [partizans@mole.gn.apc.org](mailto:partizans@mole.gn.apc.org)

Not wanting to miss out on the image-enhancing potential of a few co-opted indigenous people, Rio Tinto Australia has sponsored a new exhibition 'New Directions - Aboriginal Australia and Business'. According to its website, the exhibition presents "clear signs of a new direction in relationships between the Rio Tinto Group and Aboriginal people based on respect, listening and negotiation for mutual benefit."

It gets better: apparently "Rio Tinto has 'relationships' with Indigenous peoples in many parts of communities along a sometimes uncertain path. There have been misunderstandings and setbacks as each party has learned one another's ways."

"Not a creature on this planet needs a single further ounce of commercially mined gold" **PARTIZANS**

**GoldBusters**, is a coalition of groups fighting, appropriately, the gold industry, hoping to make the wearing of the sparkling stuff as unattractive as wearing fur. 80% of new gold being mined worldwide is for jewellery - people wearing it are probably unaware of the true costs.

The mining of gold is one of the most environmentally destructive industrial activities, wreaking havoc on indigenous communities on every continent. In dozens of countries mercury-laced tailings, eroded land and acid mine drainage stand as visible and toxic legacies of gold rushes from days gone by.

Unfortunately in the 1990s, the gold mining industry has experienced a boom due to new technologies, principally using cyanide to leech the gold from its parent rock.

The two-pronged campaign is aimed at jewellery consumers, and nations' gold reserves. Depressing its price would lead to the decommissioning of many mines, and the dumping of exploration stocks by investors. For example, 20 gold mines in Australia have been postponed or closed recently because it wasn't cost effective. [www.moles.org/projectunderground/](http://www.moles.org/projectunderground/)

**small bit:** Sorry if you've been e-mailing us, our mail has been down for 2 weeks-we're not ignoring you, we love you really and are on the case sorting it

## SchNews Survival Handbook

The new SchNEWS book is out now  
 Featuring issues 151-200 plus cartoons, photos, and other articles to help you protest and survive as well as a comprehensive database of over 500 grass-roots organisations.

Yours for £7 (incl. p+p from the usual address. (Cheers to Headmix and everyone for Wednesdays bash- more cabaret party politics fun on the horizon)

# NO BAD WOMEN ONLY BAD LAWS

*"These measures will only serve to further criminalise women whose choice of profession is the result of a lack of viable economic alternatives."*

Cari Mitchell, English Collection of Prostitutes

The incorrigible Jack Straw is the man behind the master plan to rid Britain of so called 'tartcards' in 'phone boxes and push prostitution back on to the streets. It's incredible that the Government refuse to acknowledge prostitution as an established industry, regardless of the various scandals involving politicians, exposed over the years. So, are we to surmise that those with power to protect through legislation are content to exploit women surreptitiously but refuse to offer the same women any degree of protection? And now, in the name of 'decency' they intend to destroy one means which the women have found of making their work a little safer.

A spokeswoman from the ECP, told SchNEWS *"The impact will be very serious. Working in premises and advertising in this way enables women to work independently. Some women will be forced out onto the street where it is 10 times more dangerous to work and where women will face increased arrests and hostility from residents. Black and immigrant women will be particularly targeted and vulnerable."* Girls who tout for work using cards operate from flats, places of relative safety where they have control over who they allow on the premises. The Well Woman clinic visits the flats once a fortnight. There are facilities for the girls and the clients to wash, the whole environment is cleaner and better controlled than street prostitution. This is not intended to imply that women working on the street are less aware of the necessity of cleanliness, in fact they have given a lot of leadership to all sex industry workers on the issue of using condoms. In Britain it has been left to the prostitutes themselves to organise their industry and make it as safe and clean as possible. It would seem obvious that if the girls are forced back onto the streets there will be a marked increase in violence and pimp-related crime. Carole, an 'ex-working girl', explained *"I used to work on the streets in the freezing cold and you never know who is going to rob you or rape you. I was so severely raped it traumatised me for nearly six years. There is less chance of someone coming into a flat and doing that."*

The girls suggest that the cards are allowed to remain with no images. Discreet cards which offer a specialised service without using explicit pictures or language would be preferable to a total ban on 'carding'.

The government has decided against giving BT the power to invoke criminal sanctions for offenders. Instead, local authorities will decide what advertisements should be allowed in 'phoneboxes. BT announced yesterday that it had cut off all incoming calls to 600 numbers being used by prostitutes which serves to emphasise the lack of rights suffered by these women. SchNews detects a hint of 'double-standards', after all, since when has BT been so conscientious in clamping down on immoral uses of their phone lines-they don't seem so swift to close down the 0898 sex lines which bring them revenue whilst incidentally encouraging the exploitation of women. To quote a spokeswoman for ECP, *"B.T's main objection to women advertising seems to be that BT does not profit from it. ....Workers on a prostitution project have also been told by BT that they were prepared to negotiate an advertising fee for their cards."*

If Jack Straw is serious about dealing with prostitution he needs to address women's poverty. Prostitutes and the people who put up cards for them are struggling to support themselves and their families in the face of poverty, unemployment and cuts in benefits and resources. De-criminalisation of prostitution is essential if these women are to achieve basic human rights and an acceptable level of safety in their work.

• A book about violence against prostitute's can be obtained from Crossroads Womens Centre, PO Box 287, Ldn NW65QJL 0171 482 2496

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Keep SchNEWS FREE! Just send 1st Class stamps (e.g. 20 for next 20 issues) or donations (payable to Justice?) Ask for "Originals" if you can make copies. Post free to all prisoners. SchNEWS, c/o on-the-fiddle, P.O. Box 2600, Brighton, East Sussex, BN2 2DX.

Tel/Autofax: +44 (0)1273 685913 GET IT EVERY WEEK BY E-MAIL: schnews@brighton.co.uk

# SchNEWS in brief

**Cambridge Reclaim the Streets.** Sat 12th June @ railway station 1pm Bring your party toys, banners, strawberries and cream. A coach will be going up on the day from Brighton. Tickets cost £5; available soon from the Peace Centre, Gardner Street \*\* How about a summer of **mass trespass** for the right to roam? Meet 10.30 am Sun. 30th May at Brighton Station for a 6 mile walk, bring a packed lunch - sorry no dogs. Contact Brighton The Land Is Ours 01273 620815 \*\* **Be Tranceformed** - massive five roomed party featuring everything from funk to trance to drum'n'bass at The Drome, Stainer St, London Bridge on Saturday 12th June. It's £10 and all profits go to Guilfin magazine. 0956 250 108 \*\* **Friends and Families of Travellers:** Health and Safety workshops available. 01426 218424 \*\* **Animal Freedom Gathering,** at The Miners Welfare Recreational Ground, Moira, nr Ashby-de-la-Zouch, 28th-31st May various workshops, transport available 0171 278 3068 \*\* Next demonstration against **Hillgrove** Cat vivisection farm nr Oxford on June 12th, coaches from London as usual 0121 632 6460 \*\* **Is Anarchism a Religion?** For a rivetting discussion turn up at Conway hall, 25 red Lion Square, London WC1 on 4th June 8pm. It's organised by the London Anarchist Forum who put on talks same time same place every Friday. List of events ring 0181 847 0203 \*\* SchNEWS is looking for someone to print yer favourite news-sheet every Friday 9 am (yes, the morning). Any reliable people out there interested should ring the office \*\* Everybody's favourite cheeky geezer **Mark Thomas** (perhaps excepting New Labour bods) has done a documentary about the nasty new Immigration and Asylum Bill (see last weeks SchNEWS). It will be on C4 27th May. Don't know a time yet

## SICK AS A DOG

A week of intensive campaigning against the sport(?) of greyhound racing is happening from May 22nd to 29th. In case you were under the impression that this is a fairly innocent, cruelty free form of amusement, let us put the record straight here. ....

\* Every year in Britain 30,000 greyhounds that are surplus to the industry are drowned, poisoned, beaten to death, starved, dumped on the streets or impounded and destroyed.

\* Greyhound pups are killed if they fail to reach racing standards 1/3 are put to death before they reach a year old.

\* Many greyhounds are exported to Spain for exhibition racing. Kennel conditions are appalling with animals kept locked up 23 hours a day. \* Many exported dogs are used for hunting and coursing. Greyhounds do not have the stamina for this work & many are being hanged (some have been found burned and skinned) as a cheap means of disposal

\*\* Greyhounds naturally live about 14 years but racing dogs generally only live two.

Greyhound action are working to change this appalling situation. As it is not possible to re-home the vast number of greyhounds disposed of every year by the racing industry, the total abolition of greyhound racing seems to be the only real solution. For once SchNews can say "gawd bless America" without a trace of irony as greyhound racing has been illegal in the States since 1993.

Greyhound Action, PO Box 127, Kidderminster, Worcs. DY10 3UZ01562 745778.

### TRAINING DAY

SchNews needs some more hands on decks, so stop sunbathing down the beach, and get over to the office for our Training Day next Wednesday (26th) 12 noon. Limited places so give the office a ring now.

# Happy Campers

After loads of hassle from the Foreign & Commonwealth Office, the Inter-Continental Caravan (ICC) have finally got their visas. There are 600 activists in the caravans, from as many countries as you can think of (well, almost), including shed-loads from the Indian subcontinent. They're coming over to bring the concerns of the South (such as those about being fucked over by western companies) directly to the heart of the North. Their visit will coincide with the G8 summit on (wait for it) June 18th' whose date has surely now been etched into all our readers' hearts.

On Friday 28 May, 150 'caravanners' will come to London. There'll be a public meeting, with first hand accounts from Indian farmers of the REAL effects of free trade. And its free!! Anarchist Teapot will be doing the catering! What more could you ask for? (well, an end to global capitalism would be nice)\*\* 12.00 til 4.30ish at the Friends House, Euston Road (opp Euston station) London NW1. For info, call 0181 357 8504. Friday 7.30pm, there's a public seminar on the World Trade Organisation and the International Monetary Fund. Oxford House community centre, Derbyshire Street, London E2 (Bethnal Green tube). And there's more!! Sat 29 May - genetic crop squat with the caravan crew- meet @ Lincoln Station 10am, or call 07971 755 823 Squall / Strike PARTY Sat. 11-29 Fashion Street. Contact ICC London Committee: 07801 708 4966 / 0171 375 3596. www.stalk.net/caravan.

On June 18th leaders of the 8 most powerful nations will meet for the G8 summit in Germany. On their agenda will be more economic growth, more free trade and more power for corporations. Some people don't think this is a very good idea - so across the globe on June 18th, people will be organising demonstrations. In the UK there will be a massive carnival in the city of London "replacing the roar of profit and plunder with the sounds and rhythms of party, carnival and pleasure." (SchNews likes the sound of that) Meet 12 noon Liverpool Street Station, London.\* If you want posters, flyers, stickers for J18 contact Reclaim the Streets 0171 281 4621 rts@gn.apc.org

\* Get yer tickets now for coaches up to London from Brighton on sale at the Peace Centre, Gardner St. £4.\* The Legal Defence & Monitoring Group will be watching the cops and offering legal support on J18, but need volunteers. Full training provided, no legal knowledge necessary. Contact LDMG c/o PO Box 2474, London N8, P/F 0181 374 5027.\* If you want A Crap Night Out get to the Free Butt, Sat. 22nd feat. Flannel, Tragic Roundabout, the Borg (famous anarchist tennis players) for yet another bloody J18th benefit.

\* Squaring up to the Square Mile - a rough guide to the City of London. For a free copy send a SAE (31p) to June 18 Info, Box E, 111 Magdalen Rd., Oxford, OX4 1RQ

## ...and finally...

### WHICH? MERCENARY SPECIAL

Your Third World regime wants to profit from the nation's rich mineral reserves, but first you have to stave off the indigenous populace and others with competing power claims. Who ya gonna call - Tribesmen-and-Peasant-and-Rebel-Army-Busters? I don't think you'll find them in the Yellow Pages! Try reading 'The Privatisation of Violence - New Mercenaries and the State' a new special report by Campaign Against the Arms Trade. See here which of the corporate military firms on the market have delivered the best performance in areas as diverse as Sierra Leone and Bougainville - and which have been rubbish! In a new, easy-to-read format, with loadsa pop pix n' fax. CAAT: 11 Goodwin St, Finsbury Park, London N4 3HQ. Tel. 0171 281 0297

**Disclaimer\*** SchNews warns all readers not to prostitute themselves to multinationals as they'll fuck you over and leave you holding the baby. Honest.