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KEEP IT IN THE GROUND

international stop uranium mining newsletter

SUBSCRIPTIONS

A subscription to *Keep It In The Ground* newsletter costs 15 Dutch guilders per year. This is the equivalent of US \$7.50.

This money only covers the cost of stamps. Therefore we ask groups who can pay more to do so. The rate for institutions is 40 Dutch guilders.

Make your cheques out to WISE marked KIITG. Our giro number is 408 82 85.

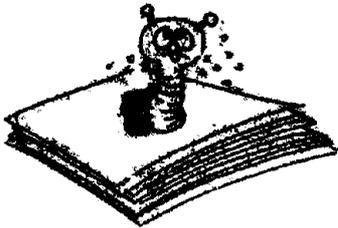


TABLE OF CONTENT

| | | |
|--------------------|---------------|----|
| COUNTRY BY COUNTRY | SPECIAL THEME | |
| | (CANADA) | 3 |
| | AUSTRALIA | 6 |
| | NORTH AMERICA | 10 |
| | SWEDEN | 10 |
| | FRANCE | 11 |
| INDUSTRY NEWS | | 11 |

A story about the Russel Tribunal will be in our next issue.

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ABOUT THIS NEWSLETTER

This is a newsletter linking together people all over the world fighting to stop uranium mining.

We pass on information from groups who want to share that information with other groups. The newsletter was set up at the request and initiative of a meeting of people from isolated pockets of this earth who needed to keep in touch with each other. This newsletter is a way to learn about each others struggles and tactics. It is a tool for supporting each other.

Everybody is invited to participate in the newsletter. Please send news stories, information requests, information on new and useful publications etc. to WISE Amsterdam.

Every month new people are subscribing to this newsletter. Now WISE has to print 750 copies. All back issues are available on request. Bulk orders are not only possible, they are welcome.

WISE has several other services. We publish a bi-monthly bulletin for the international anti nuclear and alternative energy movements. Every two weeks we publish a fast news service for the movement press. For more information contact your nearest WISE office.

This issue of KIITG was put together by Iin Pugh and Volker Hauck with the help of the WISE team. Information is provided by the movement people including WISE groups.

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SPECIAL THEME: A STUDY IN HAZARDS
IN A URANIUM MINE

(Excerpted from One Sky, Nov 1980, who in turn excerpted it from the Key Lake Inquiry. The statements are made by K. A. Valentine, Director, Occupational Health and Safety, National Office, Canada, of the United Steel Workers of America).

The adverse effects of uranium mining and milling can no longer be denied or hidden. In addition to conventional disabilities caused by mining, significant increases in the incidence of lung disabilities have been established as arising out of the working environment of the Elliot Lake uranium operations. Dr Ham, in his Royal Commission report, identified 81 lung cancer deaths by 1974, probably attributable to the uranium operations. Due to the latency period, many more can be expected and are occurring every month. At the time of drafting this brief, the writers were told of new cases of sputum cytology.

Actual figures remain statistically unrecorded due to the history of the Elliot Lake mining camp. In the late 50's and early 1960's the work force climbed to approximately ten thousand workers and with turnover that would be significantly higher. When the boom burst, the work force dropped rapidly to perhaps two thousand and the employees scattered throughout Canada, the United States and even Europe.

We have uncovered lung cancer cases, attributable to Elliot Lake radiation exposures, in various other communities throughout the province and from as far away as Portland, Oregon. In most cases, only coincidence

has brought them to our attention, since the afflicted persons were unaware of the causative factors because of their lack of knowledge about the latency period that can be expected from radiation exposure. It is our contention that perhaps more lung cancers, due to radiation exposure, are undetected due to the scattering of the work force in the early years. In addition, we expect that significant numbers of other forms of cancer are, and have been, caused due to radiation and we are currently in the process of attempting to establish working persons compensation claims on a number of these. For years, the only cancer cases accepted by the Workmen's Compensation Board were lung cancers caused by radon daughter exposure. Since radon daughters were said to be the only radiation hazard, and since they could affect only the lungs, no attention was paid by the companies or the regulatory agencies to other forms of cancer.



Indeed, other cases were rejected since the only acknowledged radiation hazard was radon daughters. We know now that whole body radiation has, and is, occurring due to gamma radiation. We believe it is a well established fact that whole body radiation is a causative factor in various types of cancer.

However, since it is not acknowledged as being a problem in uranium mining and milling operations prior to the report which was issued to us in June 1979, these deaths or disabilities have not been acknowledged or recorded as radiation induced.

In addition, the effect of thoron daughters has never been analysed therefore also never recorded. This failure stems from the opinion of the regulatory agencies and the companies (until 1979) that thoron daughter exposure was minimal. The Atomic Energy Control Board has now also acknowledged that thoron daughters pose a greater hazard than originally thought.



In addition, correspondence from a certain Dr Muller to one of our staff verifies our concern that uranium dust is a causative factor in kidney damage and cancers of various organs and bones of the body. Due to the denial and/or secrecy of these

additional potential hazards, for years no real attention or record keeping has been directed to this concern by the companies or the regulatory agencies. If we are correct, as we regrettably believe we are, the death toll of radiation induced cancers is significantly higher than anyone has cared so far to admit. Perhaps the recently announced government health survey of the Elliot Lake community will uncover the real picture.

SILICOSIS

Dr Ham's Royal Commission Report showed ninety three silicotics charged to the Elliot Lake uranium camp by the end of 1974. Since that date, a considerable number of additional cases have appeared and we believe there are in excess of five hundred Code 3+ , Code 4+ and 5 silicotics, or pre-silicotics, as the result (in whole or in part) of exposure in the Elliot Lake Mining Camp. The precise figures are unknown since our records only indicate those employees who came to us for assistance. Needless to say, silica dust has proved to be a particularly disabling hazard and it continues to be very serious today. This is true in the mine, crushing and milling process.

The harmful effects of dust and radiation exposure have been so severe to the employees in the uranium operations in Elliot Lake that the Ontario Workmen's Compensation Board was persuaded , in 1975, to establish a special programme for dust a radiation affected workers of Elliot Lake operations alone... In addition, the

Union was forced to negotiate special provisions to disregard seniority in providing mandatory job opportunities in non-exposure working locations for workers showing lung disabilities. The Workmen's Compensation programme provides for retraining,

relocation, wage loss assistance and various other benefits to the hundreds of people afflicted, and was designed to cover removal from dust and radiation exposures. Up to March 14 1975, four hundred and forty six present or former Elliot Lake mine and surface workers were identified as having lung disabilities in whole, or in part, a direct result of dust exposure in the uranium industry. There were one hundred and forty seven silicotics and two hundred pre-silicotics (dust effects). These lung disabilities are in addition to the carcinomas and other illnesses and to additions subsequent to the above date. An Ontario Ministry of Health report determined that by December 31st, 1972, observed deaths from lung cancer of Ontario uranium workers exceeded the figure expected in the general population by a factor of three to five.

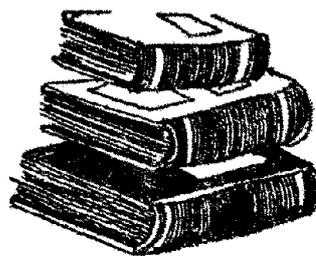
It should be understood that there are significant other potential hazards depending on the content of the ore and the processing techniques. In Elliot Lake, these include considerable numbers of white finger disease, exposure to various chemicals and gases, as well as the so-called conventional hazards found in mining/milling in general. We have no reason to believe that the hazards in any other uranium mine will be different.

(research credited to Homer Séguin).

*One Sky
A Supplement on Occupational Health
November 1980
134 Ave. F. South
Saskatoon, SASK, Canada*

The mining and milling of uranium is an insult to the health of all living things.

RESOURCES



Health Dangers of Uranium Mining and Jurisdictional Questions is the title of what has been described as a "tremendous resource book". Published on August 1, it summarises the Key Lake Inquiry into Uranium Mining and Milling, never completed due to the imposition of a 7 year moratorium. Part 1 is entitled Sources and Levels, and details the basic principles of radiation, background radiation, uranium mineralisation and decay, and the various forms of radiation resulting from decay. Part 2 is Risk Assessment, with studies in high and low dose radiation and cancers. One section further deals with the unfitness of the Atomic Energy Control Board to regulate dose limits and radiation risks.

The end uses of uranium are also discussed: nuclear power and health risks, nuclear weapons and health risks, nuclear power is a means to weapons proliferation, and nuclear power in the third world. A bibliography is attached.

We don't know how much it costs, but as it is 5cm thick we estimate \$20.

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BC Medical Association, Academy of
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1807 W, 10th Ave
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ELDORADO REFINERY WILL NOT GO THROUGH, BUT GHOST REAPPEARS.

At the end of October the 4 year battle of local and regional citizens groups against plans for a uranium refinery at Warman resulted in a success, and the plans were buried. But the ghost has come back only 34 km west of Warman, at Langham. This battle ground is Saskatchewan.

Overnight the Langham and Valley Concerned Citizens Organisation (LVCCO) sprang up, and a blitz petition found 80% of the population opposed to the refinery after 75% of the rural area had been canvassed.

Spokesmen said to represent 20 businessmen announced to Eldorado Nuclear on October 20 their intention to offer their land to the cause of the refinery. Behind the businessmen, who are real estate agents mainly, lie some shady deals, including dishonesty toward the previous owner of the property in their intentions.

*Saskatoon Environmental Society
PO Box 1372 Saskatoon, Sask
S7K 3N9
Canada*

KEEP IT IN THE GROUND IN AUSTRALIA

NOONKANBAH: STATE GOVERNMENT GETS HEAVY CRITICISM

In a report tabled in Federal parliament on Dec 2, the Western Australian government was severely criticised for its actions against the aboriginal community at Noonkanbah this year. The State government gave its police and state emergency service free of charge (at great cost to ratepayers) to AMAX OIL company, to force its way on to the aboriginal pastoral lease. The battle for Noonkanbah has lasted 2 years, and won among others church and union support.

The Commonwealth Aboriginal Land Fund Commissions Report said that the State Government challenged the Commonwealth's professed interest in getting property into aboriginal possession.

The State Government claims the Aborigines are trying to "seize ownership" of the land.

The Noonkanbah Community has established a cattle and horse station on its pastoral lease, which is also land traditionally belonging to the community. Many years ago a British company took the land away from the people, and forced the community to work there or move to the cities. After a long struggle the Yungngora people were given back the property under pastoral lease three years ago. They have set up a trilingual school, a pre school centre, and training in administrative and secretarial tasks required to run the station.

For two years the people have had to fight again for the land, and their sacred sites. They also fought for

peace, equality and freedom, and without the constant attacks on women that life in the white world meant.

The state government says the sacred sites are lies, created by propaganda machines. It says the community has not suffered as a result of Amax's drilling operation.

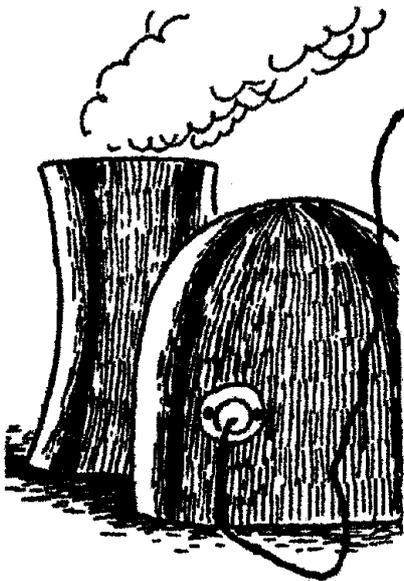
Amax Oil has now completed the drilling and found nothing. On Dec 3 Amax Iron Ore was granted a mineral claim at Noonkanbah, as was Rio Tinto Zinc's Australian group CRA Explorations.

The Australian Aboriginal community is seeking international support for their land rights and rights struggles. Until an Aboriginal Information Centre is set up in Europe under the guidance of the joint Land Councils, CIMRA in London is the official representative. CIMRA, WISE and the Kimberley Land Council can pass on information.

KLC, PO Box 332 Derby, WA 6728
Australia

CIMRA 180 Liverpool Road, London N1
England.

Source: TAZ



AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT MAKES URANIUM EXPORT EASIER

On November 27, the Australian Liberal government announced a very significant relaxation of its uranium export policy when it stated that it will allow other countries to reprocess Australian uranium.

Up until now the government would only sign contracts with countries who promised not to make bombs. However, it is now negotiating contracts with France and South Korea, and these countries do not find the safeguards convenient.

Reprocessing is the process of changing spent or used up nuclear fuel into usable fuel again. A part of the process also makes plutonium, which can then be used for nuclear weapons.

The reasons the Australian government gives for relaxing safeguards are that these regulations now have to be made so that they can take into account "world energy needs" and the development of the nuclear industry. A former commissioner on the Ranger uranium inquiry, Professor Charles Kerr, has stated that the Australian government cannot possibly be safeguarded against

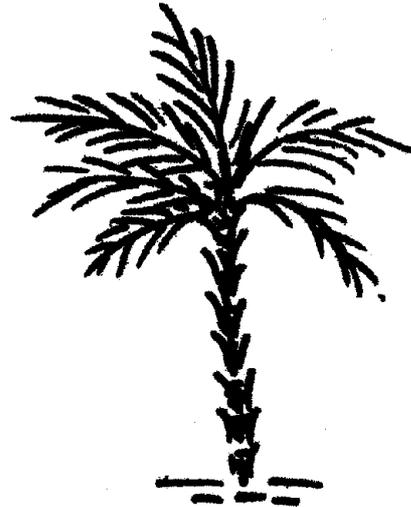
military use. Kerr remains in favour of exporting uranium.

There has been considerable criticism of the government's decision in Australia. The anti nuclear movement said that the safeguards mean nothing at all. The Australian Council of Trade Unions, which already adopted a resolution last year against uranium mining and export, has called on member unions to block the mining of this mineral .

*MAUM Trade Union Group
250 George St
Fitzroy 3065 Vic Australia*

*REQUEST FROM THE INFORMATION
COMMITTEE ON THORIUM MINING, NORWAY*

The Information Committee on Thorium Mining in the Fen area near Ulefoss, Telemark, Norway, was established a month ago as a result of the on-going investigations/research in the area by four big Norwegian companies in cooperation with the American oil company Union Oil. Their aim is to get hold of Rare Earth Elements (REE) and the radioactive element thorium.



We, the Information Committee, are seriously concerned about the impact of this type of expected mining on the environment and the whole society, and the dangers of radioactivity. We hope, through WISE, to get in contact with other committees, groups and individuals for information from similar mining activities elsewhere in Europe and the USA.

*The Information Committee on Thorium
Mining
c/- Gjermundsen
N-3730 Ulefoss
Norway*

**20 ABORIGINES ARRESTED AS ALCOA TAKES
OVER ABORIGINAL LAND**

On December 8, 20 Aborigines were arrested for trespassing on their own land in Portland, Victoria, land which Alcoa aluminium company intends using to build an aluminium smelter.

The Alcoa smelter is one of six planned for construction in different parts of Australia. Aluminium is the expected new boom industry and major export of Australia's near future. Most sales will go to Japan and the United States. Other companies building smelters in Australia are Swiss Aluminium, Kaiser (West Germany), Reynolds, Alcan and Pechiney (France).

The Aborigines have been camped on the site since mid- November, in an attempt to stop one of the world's largest smelters being built. They were joined by Aborigines from far away North Queensland, who came to express solidarity and make clear the links between the exploitation of bauxite (the raw material for aluminium) in North Queensland and the loss of Aboriginal land in the South.

On November 26 the court refused the claim of the Gunditj-Mara people that the land was theirs and not to be given to Alcoa. "From as far back as our stories go", the Gunditj-Mara state, "we have been part of this land, as are the soil, sea, animals, birds and all other creations. This land is sacred to us, as it is part of the Creator. We, the Gunditj-Mara and all Aboriginal people of Australia, have never stopped the fight for our land, that land has been our life since the dreaming...We have asked the State government to give us legislation for the protection of the sacred sites in Victoria, but they refuse".

The people are demanding land rights legislation, to be drawn up by the Victorian Aboriginal Lands Council.

Throughout the month the Aborigines camped on a roadway in the property. Until Alcoa had full title of the land from the Lands Department, police were not able to arrest the people.

On December 3 the first of the giant bulldozers arrived, and Alcoa began building bonfires and burning down the heath on the site, around the protestors. Many sacred sites and precious cultural relics were destroyed and rare species of plant killed during the next five days.

The Aborigines tried to stop the destruction by throwing themselves in front of the equipment. Several arrests were made.

The final arrests were made on the 8th.

Land rights is not the only issue behind the fight against Alcoa. Development of this industry means rapid development of electrical power, as smelters consume vast quantities of electrical energy. To produce one kilogram of aluminium takes 15 kilowatts of electricity. Every state in Australia is competing for aluminium smelters by offering cheap energy.

Alcoa has direct links with the uranium industry. Western Mining Corporation, a uranium company, has 20% share in Alcoa. WMC is pressing for a uranium enrichment factory and for a nuclear power plant in Australia.

Aborigines are calling for international support for this struggle. The Australian government should be criticised as its intention to have aluminium as the major export industry of the future costs the land rights of Australia's original inhabitants.

*contact Mara Aboriginal Organisation
4 Woods St, Portland 3305, Vic*

**KEEP IT IN THE GROUND IN NORTH
AMERICA**

**PETITION DEMANDS RADIATION
PROTECTION**

The New Mexico Physicians for Social Responsibility and Friends (NMPSR) has produced a brochure and support petition calling for a reduction in radon and radon daughter (radon nuclide) exposure to uranium miners. It supports a request already made by the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Union for a reduction. Supporting this petition as evidence is a 50 page study by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, which claims that current standards of allowable radiation exposure will expose miners to levels of radiation which can cause cancer.

The pamphlet and petition are available from NMPSR

PO Box 4096 Albuquerque
NM 87108 USA

NMPSR also have a video available for sale - perhaps also to rent. *The Uranium Factor* is a one hour long American Broadcasting Commission News Documentary video tape. It is an exposé of environmental, health and other problems connected with uranium mining and milling. The tape includes several interviews with local people: Navajo people living near the mines, people exposed through radioactive homes, widows of miners, and ex uranium miners. State officials who are trying to minimise the problem are also recorded. contact the above address for more details.



KEEP IT IN THE GROUND IN SWEDEN

PROTEST GROWING IN NORTHERN SWEDEN

Plans to rapidly develop a uranium project in Pleutajokk, in the Arjeplog area in northern Sweden, are being opposed by an equally rapid growing anti uranium movement in the area.

A broad based group, "Arjeplogare mot Pleutajokk" (Arjeplog people against Pleutajokk) has been formed in this sparsely populated area. Among them are the Samis (Laps) who are particularly protesting as their reindeer will be severely threatened. Reindeer are the basis of the Sami livelihood. The people are also protesting poisoning by radioactive waste which will spoil Sweden's deepest lake, Hornava. This lake is the present source of drinking water and fresh water fish for the community.

The uranium deposit will be exploited by the Swedish mining company Loussavaara Kirunavaara AB (LKAB). Although it has only an estimated 4000 tonnes of uranium, the quality of the ore is very high, making it a profitable venture.

Before mining can start the local municipality and the government must grant permission.

*Arjeplogare mot Pleutejokk
Stefan Tornberg
Åkerbärsstigen 3
S-951 45 Lulea, Sweden*

KEEP IT IN THE GROUND IN FRANCE

GRANDMONT PEOPLE MAKE THEIR DEMANDS

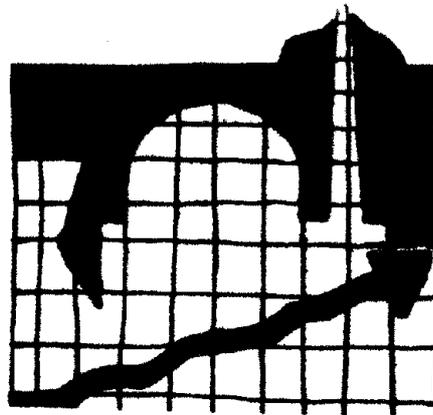
After a three day march to Paris, November 1-4, the people of Grandmont (Haute Vienne) presented the French electricity company CEA, the Ministry of Industry, and the "Elysée" (the residence of the President of the Republic) a motion demanding a real dialogue between the local authorities, Cogema mining group, environmentalists and themselves. Up until now this dialogue has been blankly refused.

The particular significance of the action is that the local population are demanding the right to defend the area they have chosen to live in. These people have been protesting now for 8 months, particularly against the drying up of their water resources due to Cogema's uranium exploitation.

For further information contact
André Christophe
Grandmont
87240 Commune de St Sylvestre
France



Foto: Aus „Männersexualität“



source : BIEH

INDUSTRY NEWS

*GO-AHEAD FOR WEST GERMAN URANIUM PLANT
LIKELY SOON*

The German nuclear industry expects government approval early in 1981 for a DM 1 billion investment in West Germany's first uranium enrichment factory. This was announced in the Financial Times of October 20 1980.

The plant will be at Gronau, near the Dutch border, where the nuclear industry has just started a DM18 million assembly line for gas centrifuges, owned jointly by MAN and Uranit.

Dr Hans Mohrhauer is in charge of planning and constructing, expecting the first enriched uranium in 1984. Although contacts only justify 400 tonnes at present, it will have a capacity of 1000 tonnes.

This enrichment factory is Urenco's 3rd European factory. Urenco is also in the final stages of planning the establishment of a uranium enrichment facility in South Australia. Gronau is 45 kilometres from the Dutch Urenco enrichment plant at Almelo.

Urenco is a West German/Dutch/British uranium enrichment consortium.

For more information on Urenco, contact
Stop Urenco Alliance
6 Endsleigh St
London WC1 England