

Australia Dossier by Allen Douglas and Michael J. Sharp

Cartels push 'land rights' scam

Her Majesty's minerals cartel is whooping it up for "Aboriginal land rights," and handing out the firewater and trinkets.

As EIR has documented since 1994, the British Crown-centered global financial oligarchy has been grabbing all the raw materials it can, to protect itself from the looming international financial collapse. Recently, the pace of this looting has intensified, whether in Africa, where the Nazi-like Tutsi legions of Laurent Kabila have grabbed all of Zaire and its fabulous mineral riches; in Russia, whose government has just agreed, under pressure from the International Monetary Fund, to privatize Gazprom, which controls an estimated one-third of the world's natural gas; or in Brazil, where the government has just sold the Companhia Vale do Rio Doce (CVRD), which controls untold wealth in the vast Amazon region, just to name a few egregious cases.

Under the guise of "Aboriginal land rights," the looting is also accelerating in Australia, one of the world's largest producers of gold, silver, tin, lead, bauxite, and other valuable raw materials. The game is as simple as it is old: Vast swaths of the Australian continent are temporarily turned over to Aborigines as "reparations"; and then, through various ruses, including a "firewater and shiny trinkets" swap (jazzed up, to allow for inflation), as in the old British and French colonial days in North America, Her Majesty's mineral cartel winds up with the loot.

The whole scam was started by Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip personally, following their tour of Australia in 1963. Philip set up the Australian Conservation Foundation as a branch of his World Wildlife Fund, and the ACF in turn spawned

both the environmentalist and "Aboriginal land rights" movements. Combined, these have now locked up almost one-third of the continent. The chief funder of the ACF from the beginning, was the mining company CRA, a subsidiary of Rio Tinto Zinc, in which Queen Elizabeth has heavy investments. CRA has since merged into RTZ, and the conglomerate, known as Rio Tinto, is the second largest mining company in the world.

The land scam really took off in 1992, when the British Privy Council-controlled Australian High Court handed down its so-called "Mabo decision," which declared the existing doctrine of *terra nullius*—that the continent was not owned by anyone when the first colonists arrived—to be void, throwing the ownership of the entire continent up for grabs. And Rio Tinto has been grabbing. The company has given a major impetus to the "land rights" concept (which is still legally fuzzy), by signing the first two deals with Aboriginal claimants, with more under way: one for \$60 million with the Gumala Aboriginal Corp. in Western Australia, and the second for \$90 million with a Queensland Aboriginal land council.

And, in the recent 2,000 delegate Aboriginal Reconciliation conference in Melbourne at the end of May, Rio Tinto and other mining companies were so visible, both as financial sponsors and participants, that it was "provoking people to ask why the miners have been prominent in this debate," noted Michael Pinnock, chief executive of the Queensland Mining Council, in an article in the *Courier Mail* on May 30. Pinnock la-

mented that "reconciliation is neither supported nor understood by many Australians," who merely see, particularly in rural Australia, that someone is out to steal their land.

Two figures dominated debate at the convention, with their strident calls for "reconciliation," i.e., turning over more land: Robert Champion de Crespigny, chief executive of the Normandy Mining company, and a founding member of the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation (CAR), which helped organize the convention, and Leigh Clifford, the chief of Rio Tinto's energy division. De Crespigny founded the CAR's Mining Committee, and pulled together the Joint Council on Aboriginal Land and Mining (J-CALM), at a secret meeting of senior mining executives and Aboriginal leaders in March 1994. The CAR, in its own words, calls for "self-determination, self-government, and changes to the Constitution," i.e., to carve separate Aboriginal enclaves out of the nation-state.

So, who is Robert Champion de Crespigny, this radical defender of "Aboriginal land rights"? According to the *Australian Financial Review* of Nov. 15, 1995, he is a stooge for the Oppenheimer family's Anglo American Corp., the world's largest mining company, and a key backer of Kabila and his genocide in Zaire! In "De Crespigny Success Story: A Millionaire with Mysterious Connections," the *Review* reprised his meteoric rise as head the largest gold mining company in Australia, Normandy Mining, and asked where the \$75 million or more came from to get him started. "It turned out," *Review* noted, "that de Crespigny was backed from his earliest days by Minorco SA, the Luxembourg-based closet that was crammed with Oppenheimer wealth during the dark and uncertain times leading up to South African independence."