

Australia Dossier by Allen Douglas

Rio Tinto: the Crown jewel

The Queen is using her personal mining company, Rio Tinto, to attack nation-states and steal raw materials.

Well, the cat's finally out of the bag: Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth is indeed the chief non-institutional shareholder in the world's largest mining company, Rio Tinto. In an article in Australia's *Bulletin* magazine of Oct. 19, entitled "Diamonds Are for ER," author Anthony Hoy reviewed Rio Tinto's extraordinary diamond holdings in Australia, in the course of which he emphasized that the single individual who benefits most from these holdings is "ER"—Elizabeth Regina, the Queen herself—"the largest non-institutional shareholder" in the company. The *Bulletin* is well-positioned to know: Its multibillionaire owner, Kerry Packer, is a frequent guest of the Queen at the Ascot races in Britain.

This is a startling admission. For almost a century, ever since Rio Tinto was founded in the late 19th century with the profits of the British Empire's Hong Kong-centered opium cartel, Crown ownership had been a most carefully held secret. Some years ago, when rumors circulated of the Queen's involvement in the mining giant, then-Rio Tinto chairman Sir Mark Turner turned aside queries with a cryptic, "You're running into problems of what the government is going to say about the Queen's involvement."

The issue is touchy, because Rio Tinto has been for decades a chief financier of the Royal Institute of International Affairs and Britain's MI6 intelligence service. It thus sits at the center of Britain's far-flung intelligence and financial empire, and of the Club of the Isles' (the European oligarchy) estimated \$9 trillion financial empire, whose chairman is the Queen. For

the past several years, as the world's monetary system has careened toward financial collapse, this Crown-centered cartel has been grabbing all the raw materials it can, typically by supporting ethnic and "indigenous" insurgencies, in order to utterly dominate the post-crash world.

A good example of how this works, is Ashton Mining, in which Rio Tinto is the senior partner. Ashton controls the legendary Argyle diamond mine in the Kimberley region in Australia's northwest, a mine which *Bulletin* author Hoy describes as "a gift, of sorts, of unimaginable dimensions, from us [Australia] to our Queen." Argyle has accounted for one-third of the world's diamond production yearly since 1985, generating an estimated \$500 million per year. Though Argyle is expected to dry up around 2005, the Queen won't be hurting. "The Queen's Rio Tinto minions," says Hoy, are the senior partners in "the next Argyle," Striker Resource's NL Geebung prospect, which is also in the Kimberleys.

Virtually no medium-sized or small mining firm can operate in the Kimberleys any more, because the entire area is locked up by "Aboriginal land rights" claims. The "land rights" movement was founded by the Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF), which Her Majesty's consort Prince Philip set up in 1963 as an arm of his World Wildlife Fund (today the World Wide Fund for Nature). Rio Tinto has poured hundreds of millions of dollars into the ACF, and into land rights campaigns directly, since that time. Reflecting this royal sponsorship of "land rights," on Oct. 12 the Queen granted

an unprecedented audience to Aboriginal leaders at Buckingham Palace, to discuss the issue. Among the delegation was Peter Yu, the head of the Kimberley Land Council, which has locked up the area through its claims.

Her Majesty is targetting not only Australia, but also the entire Southeast Asian littoral, home to one of the richest concentrations of mineral wealth in the world, from the Bougainville province of Papua New Guinea in the east (where Rio Tinto owns the world's largest open-cut copper mine), through Rio Tinto-dominated P.N.G. itself, with its extraordinary mines, through the Indonesian province of Irian Jaya (where Rio Tinto has a huge mine), which province shares the island of New Guinea with P.N.G., on across the mineral-rich Indonesian archipelago (where Rio also has mines) to Sumatra in the west.

This area was financially devastated and thrown into political turmoil by the speculative assault of mid-1997 (the "Asian financial crisis") led by George Soros. Soros, an investment manager to the Queen, is the junior partner in Rio Tinto's "next Argyle," Striker Resource's NL Geebung prospect. If, as the British plan, Indonesia and P.N.G. disintegrate, their vast wealth will be Rio Tinto's for the taking.

It is unclear why Packer's *Bulletin* chose to admit, even emphasize, the Queen's control of Rio Tinto, but the admission follows a years-long campaign on this issue by Lyndon LaRouche's Australian associates in the Citizens Electoral Council. The CEC not only first charged that the Queen personally controls Rio Tinto, but documented, in its 1998 pamphlet "Stop the British Crown's Plot to Crush Australia's Unions," the awesome political control the company maintains over Australia—whose head of state, after all, is the Queen.