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COUNCIL



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COMMUNICATION FROM J.L. SCOTT, STATE SECRETARY,  
AMALGAMATED ENGINEERING UNION, SOUTH AUSTRALIA  
STATE COUNCIL CONCERNING THE TRUST TERRITORY OF  
NEW GUINEA

(Circulated in accordance with rule 24 of the rules of procedure  
of the Trusteeship Council)

26 August 1969

The Secretary  
Trusteeship Council  
United Nations,  
New York, U.S.A. 10017

Dear Sir,

The State Council of the Amalgamated Engineering Union in South Australia wishes to inform the Trusteeship Council of the United Nations of a statement issued on the situation in Bougainville where the Federal Government in Australia is engaged in compulsory take-over of land from the natives of Bougainville for the exploitation of copper deposits by the Conzinc Rio Tinto Company.

This take-over and the methods being used do not have the support of decent Australians and it is our desire that you be made aware of the statement issued by the State Council of the Amalgamated Engineering Union. It is as follows:

"The State Council of the A.E.U. views with alarm the Government's action in compulsorily taking over land in Bougainville required by a private mining company to exploit ore deposits.

"We call for a complete reappraisal of the situation and demand that this matter be approached in a sincere human manner.

"The people of Bougainville have tribal laws governing the ownership and rights to land passed on from generation to generation which go back into a history and to a time long before any white man ever appeared on the scene.

"What possible justification can there be for any alien force to come along and introduce a set of alien laws which gives them the right to take away this land from the native inhabitants and hand it over to an already rich foreign owned Company to exploit copper deposits and make themselves richer.

"The people of Australia with a different history and tradition generally accept the compulsory acquisition of land for Government projects of a public nature. They would not agree to the government compulsorily taking over land to give to a private company. If private firms want land they negotiate to purchase it from the owner.

"It is said by Government spokesmen that this development will be of great benefit to the territory as a whole. How will it?

"If the people who own the land are turned off in such an uncereimonial fashion, what assurance can there be that any other section of the local population will derive any benefit from this development.

"It is the opinion of this State Council that there can be only one solution to this problem and that is an agreement negotiated with representatives of the local population and 100% acceptable to them.

"An agreement which would guarantee benefits from the development to themselves and which would be based on the recognition of the inalienable land rights of the people.

"We wish the United Nations and the world to know that there are many Australians who do not support this act of piracy and who condemn this flagrant violation of a defenceless people's rights in the interests of international big business."

Yours faithfully,

(Signed) J.L. SCOTT  
State Secretary

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