

COMMUNIST CAVE : LOCATION N.949 E.988 Paluma WGS 84

Situated on Thunderbolt Creek 5 kms walk from powerline. Cave at rear of large boulder 20 metres above creek bed. There is a smaller cave (more of an overhang) visible from the creek with aboriginal stick men (in red ochre) painted on the roof. Cave is on the left hand side of creek going downstream and is at the end of the boulders and rocky escarpments.

History

The communist party in Australia was declared illegal in 1940, due to Stalin signing a non aggression pact with Nazi Germany. As a consequence a clandestine printing operation was established on the ranges to the north west of Townsville. In 1940 a printing press was carried in by donkey to a cave on Thunderbolt Creek to the west of Mt. Zero station and used to print Communist propaganda for distribution to the workers in Townsville and miners of surrounding tin fields. (At the time there were 200 communist party members at Hidden Valley). The newspaper printed at the cave was called "The Spark". It was a 2 hour ride on horseback to the cave but visitors spent a full day backtracking to avoid detection.

As a result of the invasion of the Soviet Union by Germany and Stalin turned to the West for help, the communist party in Australia had the ban lifted in 1943, and as a consequence all activity at the cave ceased.

In 1951 printing was to be recommenced, due to a referendum introduced by the Menzies Government to ban the Communist Party. The referendum was defeated and nothing further took place at the cave. All that remains now are rusting tins, cooking utensils and bottles and a faded hammer and sickle painting on the roof. A faint echo of turbulent years past.

P. J. Shears. 2006 2005