

SOLIDARITY

AND

RESISTANCE



COMMUNITY STRUGGLES AGAINST TOXIC MINING

Solidarity and Resistance?

Anti-mining struggles in occupied British Columbia are heating up. The Premier says she is going see to it that there are at least eight new mines open in BC by 2015. With these mines would come road development, new dams, new electrical lines, new clear cuts, bigger ports; in short, an expansion of extractive and industrial capitalism.

“What’s happened in British Columbia with the environmental movement, it’s been stalemated,” Qwatsinas, a hereditary chief of the Nuxalk nation, told filmmaker Franklin López shortly before his death. “The big leaders, they’re compromised.”

Qwatsinas and his people engaged in a long, grassroots struggle to prevent logging in their territory, which was never ceded to the government of Canada or British Columbia. In the end, the Nuxalk and their allies on the front line were betrayed by big environmental groups like Greenpeace and Forest Ethics, who made backroom deals in their name and without their consent.

Metal and coal mining, together with tar sands transport and natural gas exploitation, have sidled up to industrial forestry as issues of great concern for Indigenous and rural people throughout the province. It is only a matter of time before the big environmental groups get on board, promoting their campaigns and media messages, and, in the worst case scenario, repeating history by signing back room deals after successful, hard fought struggles carried out by folks on the front lines.

We see this dynamic is already playing out around the struggles happening in Wet’suwet’en territory, where the big enviros are already focussed on messaging around one thing: the Enbridge Pipeline. The full suite of threats to peoples’ lives and territory are not on the table: natural gas pipelines, carbon trading, mining, forestry. These groups don’t use words like sovereignty, capitalism or liberation. The brave folks who have set up the Unis’toten camp, in the direct right of way of the Pacific Trails gas pipeline are well aware of this dynamic, and deserve all of our support.

This zine is a critical look at how NGOs can impact resistance movements, with special attention to mining resistance. It was prepared in a very short time span, with limited resources, and in solidarity with ongoing struggles throughout this hemisphere and around the world, and with all the awesome folks in Vancouver for this weekend’s mining injustice conference. This isn’t a personal attack on NGO workers or their specific organizations, but instead, a call to everyone involved to think critically about how dollars are used to co-opt powerful peoples movements, again and again.

Paraphrasing Zig Zag, this is a good opportunity to learn from the past and prepare in the present to defend the future.

NGOs and the Privatization of Everything

By Arundhati Roy

One century after it began, corporate philanthropy is as much part of our lives as Coca Cola. There are now millions of non-profit organisations, many of them connected through a byzantine financial maze to the larger foundations. Between them, this “independent” sector has assets worth nearly 450 billion dollars. The largest of them is the Bill Gates Foundation with (\$21 billion), followed by the Lilly Endowment (\$16 billion) and the Ford Foundation (\$15 billion).

As the IMF enforced Structural Adjustment, and arm-twisted governments into cutting back on public spending on health, education, childcare, development, the NGOs moved in. The Privatisation of Everything has also meant the NGO-isation of Everything. As jobs and livelihoods disappeared, NGOs have become an important source of employment, even for those who see them for what they are. And they are certainly not all bad. Of the millions of NGOs, some do remarkable, radical work and it would be a travesty to tar all NGOs with the same brush. However, the corporate or Foundation-endowed NGOs are global finance’s way of buying into resistance movements, literally like shareholders buy shares in companies, and then try to control them from within. They sit like nodes on the central nervous system, the pathways along which global finance flows. They work like transmitters, receivers, shock absorbers, alert to every impulse, careful never to annoy the governments of their host countries. (The Ford Foundation requires the organisa

right: “The Destruction of Olive Groves” by Erik Ruin



tions it funds to sign a pledge to this effect.) Inadvertently (and sometimes advertently), they serve as listening posts, their reports and workshops and other missionary activity feeding data into an increasingly aggressive system of surveillance of increasingly hardening States. The more troubled an area, the greater the numbers of NGOs in it.

Mischievously, when the government or sections of the Corporate Press want to run a smear campaign against a genuine people's movement, like the Narmada Bachao Andolan, or the protest against the Koodankulam nuclear reactor, they accuse these

corporate or Foundation-endowed NGOs are global finance's way of buying into resistance movements, literally like shareholders buy shares in companies, and then try to control them from within.

movements of being NGOs receiving "foreign funding". They know very well that the mandate of most NGOs, in particular the well-funded ones, is to further the project of corporate globalisation, not thwart it.

Armed with their billions, these NGOs have waded into the world, turning potential revolutionaries into salaried activists, funding artists, intellectuals and filmmakers, gently luring them away from radical confrontation, ushering them in the direc-

tion of multi-culturalism, gender, community development—the discourse couched in the language of identity politics and human rights.

The transformation of the idea of justice into the industry of human rights has been a conceptual coup in which NGOs and foundations have played a crucial part. The narrow focus of human rights enables an atrocity-based analysis in which the larger picture can be blocked out and both parties in a conflict—say, for example, the Maoists and the Indian government, or the Israeli Army and Hamas—can both be admonished as Human Rights Violators. The land-grab by mining corporations or the history of the annexation of Palestinian land by the State of Israel then become footnotes with very little bearing on the discourse. This is not to suggest that human rights don't matter. They do, but they are not a good enough prism through which to view or remotely understand the great injustices in the world we live in.

This is an excerpt from Roy's excellent article Capitalism: A Ghost Story, Published March 23, 2012 by Outlook India.



CONNECTING THE DOTS: Mining and Indigenous Sovereignty

Fact sheet by the Mining Injustice Solidarity Network

“Our relationship to the land has always been of the greatest importance to our existence. The land is a physical representation of our spirituality. The natural resources must be protected. Our very essence and worldview is threatened by multinational industries such as mining, oil, gas, lumber, and water”

– Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs.

Indigenous Peoples are disproportionately targeted by large-scale extractive projects, in particular mining. Over half of gold mining and 70 per cent of uranium mining is carried out on Indigenous lands. For many Indigenous people, mining threatens not only their livelihood, but also their traditional way of life. Resource extraction today is linked to colonization because these industries rely on power relationships left over from colonial times to proceed with extractive projects without consultation, much less consent.

Throughout Canada, natural resources are administrated on a provincial basis. Mining laws have been set up to protect the interests of the mining industry and to minimize the conflicts between mining companies, by providing what’s called investor security.

The Constitution Act of 1867 sets out that the provinces are not subordinate to the federal government, which is responsible for upholding treaty agreements with First Nations.

Successes in the courts, like the Tsilhqot’in and Xeni Gwet’in Court Case, in which “Tsilhqot’in (Chilcotin) people have proven Aboriginal title to approximately 200,000 square hectares in and around the remote Nemiah Valley, south and west of Williams Lake, British Columbia” have failed to stop mining companies from entering the territories.

The colonial governments of Canada and the provinces do not have the political will to honour case law and signed agreements. “We are encouraging grassroots peoples to mobilize and defend themselves and their lands from bad agreements involving their lands and resources, which do not meet the standards of constitutional and international law,” said Defenders of the Land spokesperson Art Manuel in a recent press release.

No Compliance! No Coal! No Way! mining conference effectively shut down

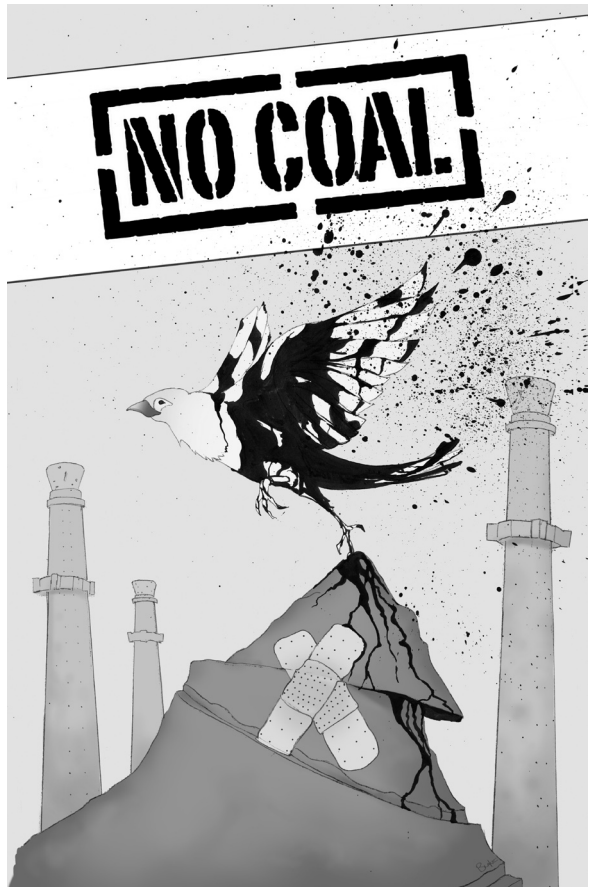
By Anarchist Solidarity

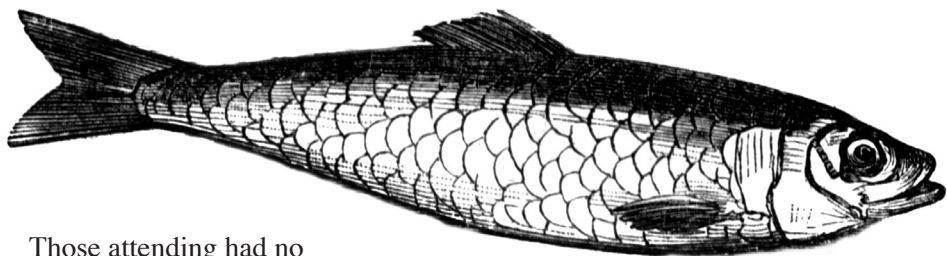
On May 24, 2012 the Vancouver Branch of the Canadian Institute of Mining, Metallurgy, and Petroleum hosted a luncheon meeting at the Four Season's Hotel in Vancouver focusing on Compliance Energy Corp's proposed Raven Coal Mine. The site for this proposed mine is in unceded Pentlatch Territory on Vancouver Island, also known as the Comox Valley.

Conference participants were still savouring their lemon meringue when keynote speaker and Compliance Energy Corp. CEO John Tapics mentioned social opposition to Raven Coal. At that moment, Tapics and the 100 person conference were abruptly interrupted by a half dozen people who unleashed decaying herring upon them. A chaotic stench and nauseating shower of fermented fish engulfed the room. Herring are only one of the species that will be negatively effected by the mining development. (Contrary to mass media reports it was herring, not excrement).

Simultaneously, coal tumbled onto the ground. The wondrous blend created by insurgent passion was too overwhelming for the industrial capital bosses to handle. People yelled unyielding opposition while pamphlets were strewn in the air to assert the point, "It has Begun! No Compliance! No Compromise! No Coal!"

right: Anti-Coal poster.
credit: itsgettinghotinhere.
org





Those attending had no choice but to step in the mix of herring and coal as they quickly exited, the conference being effectively shut down. The coal, the herring, what a sight, what a smell: never to be whipped, chained, or owned into submission. A great force used to crash the daydreams and sick fantasies of industrial development.

No one was captured or injured. The conference and the hotel were shut down.

This action is a small contribution to the ongoing struggle against the Raven Coal Mine. We are through with dialogue. We do not except the false temptation of economic development. We will not poison ourselves, each other or the earth to survive!

No Mine, No Compromise, No Compliance, No Way! Towards a Liberated Reality with Minerals in the Ground and Fish in the Sea!

A version of this communiqué was originally published on the Vancouver Media Co-op.

above: Image of Herring by Worthington Hooker. below: Photo of protest against the Raven Coal mine. credit: tidechange.ca





CONNECTING THE DOTS:

Mining and Austerity

Fact sheet by the Mining Injustice Solidarity Network

“People’s needs not corporate greed!” has become a mantra of people’s movements in the age of austerity. In Canada, the state can be and is being challenged by popular movements as the government cuts social services and funding for education while redirecting public funds towards subsidies mining, oil and gas.

Here are a few examples of public funds subsidizing destructive industries, at home and abroad:

- The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) has plans to provide \$26.7 million Canadian mining CSR projects abroad. At the same time, CIDA has cut funding to NGOs Kairos and Development & Peace, who have advocated for justice for mining-impacted communities.
- Export Development Canada provides over \$20 billion in assistance to Canada’s mining to sector abroad annually.
- Export Development Canada provides \$8.6 billion to the oil and gas sector, supporting these industries abroad and largely in the global south.
- The Federal and Alberta governments subsidize the tar sands at a rate of \$1.4 billion a year.
- To support Plan Nord, Ressources Québec, a new state investment arm, is being entrusted with \$1 billion in the next five years to invest in mining ventures and future oil and gas plays through a fund called Capital Mines Hydrocarbures.

Occupy Barrick Gold!

by Sakura Saunders

On May 1, Toronto saw thousands gather in the streets for May Day: a global anti-capitalist day of protest that has focused around migrant justice issues in much of North America. A massive daytime march was organized by a coalition including No One Is Illegal, the May First Movement, and Occupy Toronto, responding to a global call for mobilizations. That night, as with many Occupies around the world, Occupy Toronto had plans to reoccupy.

The march ended in a park for a May Day cultural event. The reoccupation, dubbed “Occupy the Beast” was to begin at 9pm, with a night march leaving from the MayDay cultural event. The night march would lead to an undisclosed but strategic location in Toronto’s Financial District and be held for 24 hours, as part of a new strategy in Occupy to target specific events with temporary sit-ins.

At the cultural event, things weren’t looking too promising. There were over a hundred police officers criss-crossing the crowd, killing the vibe and making people feel uncomfortable. Their strategy was working: the crowds thinned as the bands played – down to under 500 people by the time that the reoccupation march was set to take off.

The march felt tense, but the mood was energetic as the crowd of 400 moved towards the Financial District, accompanied by a massive presence of police. The fact that we were marching at night reminded us of the photos we had seen of Montreal’s recent night protests, and we yelled our solidarity with the student strikers in a celebration of our mini-rebellion. “Everybody Join the Fight! We Support the Student Strike!” we shouted to bystanders as we passed through Toronto’s bar district.

As we rounded the corner off Simcoe and onto Front street, I watched our target location, expecting to see a line of police. We had kept the final location secret from everyone outside of our small re-occupation working group at Occupy, but these days, you can’t count on anything being secure. We came up with several other locations, just in case this one seemed untenable. But, to our surprise, the park was empty!

In typical Occupy style, we called a General Assembly (GA) to start in ten minutes. At the GA – after introductions, the explanation of our process, and a congratulations on a great night march – we explained why we chose our target location. The following morning, the world’s largest gold mining company Barrick Gold was to hold their Annual General Meeting across the street from the park. Not only does this company pay the highest paid CEO in all of Canada, but they are also responsible for numerous human rights abuses, the theft of native land, the destruction of environments and the militarization of communities around the world. They are emblematic of corporate greed and the hegemony of the 1%, and we wanted to transform this space to reflect our consciousness of their abuses. But the police weren’t having it. They didn’t want us to do anything educational,

anything transformative... they wouldn't even tolerate us simply being there! So the question was: Should we stay or should we go?

That moment was probably my favourite moment in all of occupy. What felt like the entirety of the general assembly roared – in unison – “STAY!” Numbering over 150 at that point, the city didn't want to arrest us all. Within 10 minutes, Parks and Rec had called in that they reverse their decision and we could stay!

The rest of the night was characterized by police harassment and joyful solidarity. In addition to the no-tent policy, the police were enforcing a strict no-sleeping policy. As soon as they would see you shut your eyes while laying down, they would shine a flashlight in your face to wake you up. In response, the Occupiers kept each other up with political folk music and good conversation.

The next morning, slightly cracked out but in good spirits, we drank donated coffee and feasted on a huge bag of scavenged bagels. About 60 of us had made it all the way through the night, and people were already starting to appear to join us for the day's activities: a Barrick Gold protest and day of Free School workshops.

I had arranged to bring leaders of communities to Toronto so that they could speak their mind to the Board of Directors directly, entering the meeting with proxy shares. This year, due to visa difficulties, only Amani Mhinda from Tanzania could make it to Toronto, and the delegations from Chile and Papua New Guinea had to send written statements.

Despite holding a legal proxy to enter the meeting and despite being accompanied by a CBC reporter, Mhinda was denied entrance to Barrick's AGM. His personal experience of human rights' abuses, poisoning and the militarisation of Barrick's Tanzanian mines was not to be heard by shareholders. Ironically, Peter Munk, Barrick Gold's chairman and founder, was later quoted in the paper saying that he “...would love to go outside where they are demonstrating... I'd love to go to Occupy Wall Street or Occupy Bay Street and I'd like to show them.”

At the occupation across the street, a crowd had gathered to listen to speeches by representatives from Argentina, Balochistan, and of course Tanzania, to speak about their communities' struggles against Barrick Gold. Students from the Student School, an alternative high school in Toronto, also gave impassioned speeches about why they had decided it was important to take the day off of school to speak out and participate at the protest.

Despite Barrick's dirty tricks in denying voices within the meeting, outside, Occupy had attracted the media that were able to bring messages of resistance to mining to a mass audience. Even Peter Munk could not ignore that his company had become the target of the local manifestation of a global mass movement and that year the Barrick protest received more press than it ever had in the last five years. Occupy had successfully lent its platform to a struggle whose front-line voices had been traditionally marginalized by the media and shut out of decision-making forums. Our strong stand the night before had resulted in real consequences for a just cause, and we left on our own terms to occupy another day!

Round-up of BC Mining Resistance

B.C. Premier Christy Clark says there will be eight new mines open in the province by 2015. She claims her government has found a template for negotiations with Indigenous people throughout the province. But most of the lands have never been ceded and the BC government has no legal jurisdiction within them. Opposition has been effective, shutting down mega mine proposals like Kemess North, and will continue to be fierce. What follows is an informal, unofficial summary of some of the ongoing struggles around mining in “British Columbia.”

Ajax

The proposed Ajax mine is located on unceded Secwepemc Territory in the Okanagan region. The proposed open pit gold and copper mine is inside Kamloops City Limits, with eight elementary schools, four secondary schools, four senior’s residences, a hospital and a university located downwind and downslope, less than six kilometers from the mine’s perimeter.

The Kamloops Area Preservation Association (KAPA) is a group of local ranchers, physicians, former mine employees, and residents of Knutsford and Kamloops who are concerned about the location of the Ajax Mine. Environment Minister Peter Kent recently announced there would be no federal review of the project.

Ajax is a joint venture between Vancouver-based Abacus Mining and Exploration Corporation (AME) and Polish copper giant KGHM Polska Miedz S.A. (KGHM), which plan to begin construction in early 2013 and production in 2015 if the project receives the required permits.

right: sign warns passersby about an abandoned mine site, in the same place the Ajax mine is proposed



Mt. Milligan

The proposed Mount Milligan mine is on unceded Nak'azdli territory, in an area known as Shus Nadloh. From the beginning, the mining company has been made aware that they are not welcome in the area, which lies about 150 kilometers northwest of Prince George. Community members have blockaded access roads multiple times over the past years, preventing the company from bringing in construction equipment. "We never sold our land. Show us the deed and the bill of sale and we will remove our blockade," said Charlie Sam during another blockade in 2010.

Three people were arrested at a blockade in January. Similar to Taseko's proposed Prosperity mine, the Mount Milligan project proponent plans to dump waste into a local watershed. Ottawa approved the Mount Milligan mine in December 2010, the same day they rejected Taseko's first application to destroy Teztan Biny.

Thompson Metals will invest close to \$1 billion in order to get the Mount Milligan mine off the ground, the company says they expect to produce from this copper and gold mine by the end of next year. They have two other exploration projects just south of Mount Milligan, currently operate the Endako Molybdenum mine in Central BC, have an office in Vancouver, and various other mines in Canada and the U.S.

below: Blockade against Mount Milligan Mine, 2010



Prosperity

Taseko Mines appears not to understand that no means no. Or what it means when the legitimate owners of the land, in this case the Tsilhqot'in people, want it to stay away. The company, which had planned to build a gold mine and dump toxic waste into a Teztan Biny, one of B.C.'s most plentiful fish bearing lakes, has already faced ongoing, organized, nation-level resistance by the Tsilhqot'in people, supported by Indigenous folks across BC. A federal panel rejected the mine, but has accepted a resubmission from Taseko.

The new plan would destroy the same lake, by dumping waste into two other bodies of water -- destroying them would mean destroying Teztan Biny.

"The company is on record admitting this new option is worse

than the one that was rejected last year, and a CEAA review panel has already agreed with that assessment," said Chief Joe Alphonse, Chair of the Tsilhqot'in National Government, which represents six First Nations. "To proceed any further will place an unjustified burden on us and on taxpayers and will demonstrate the excessive influence that this company, its lobbyists and hired guns have on government."

On Friday, June 1st, the Tsilhqot'in have called for solidarity at a demonstration against Taseko Mines' AGM, 837 West Hastings Street at noon.

below: Tsilhqot'in drummers protest Taseko at the company's Annual General Meeting.



Red Chris

The proposed Red Chris copper and gold mine is on unceded Tahltan territory, south of the town of Dease Lake on Highway 37. The project has faced significant opposition since its proposal, that combined with a legal ruling on a case brought forward by NGOs has held back mine development, though BC Premier Christy Clark has recently given Imperial Metals the go ahead on the open pit mine.

If built, Red Chris would destroy the Klappan Valley, threatening the Nass, the Skeena and the Stikine Rivers, known to the Tahltan people as the Sacred Headwaters. The proposed mine is one of nine mega projects capitalists are trying to push in Tahltan territory, another of which is new power lines up Highway 37.

Imperial Metals is based in Vancouver and currently operates two open pit mines in British Columbia, the Huckleberry Mine and the Mount Polley Mine.

Catface

Imperial Metals also plans to build an über controversial, mine, known as Cat Face, in Nuuchahnulth Territory. For decades, there has been corporate interest in developing the copper resources on Chitaapi (Catface) Mountain, located on Vancouver Island, in the Clayoquot Sound. Along with nearby environmental organizations, Nuuchahnulth people from various communities have spoken out against the project, while others have stood in favour of the mine. Imperial Metals reports that the company did not conduct exploration of the copper and molybdenum deposits in 2011 and has no planned field work in 2012.

Raven

The proposed Raven Mine is on Penticton Territory, one of three proposed coal mines on Vancouver Island. The company that wants to yank coal from this area, which is known as Comox, is called Compliance Coal Corporation. The project continues to face widespread opposition in the Comox Valley and beyond. Hundreds of people attended a rally against the proposed underground coal mine in January 2012, with the slogan “Solidarity, Not Compliance!” The project is located a few kilometers away from oyster beds in Fanny Bay and require the construction of a tailings pond over the fish-bearing Cowie Creek. The company plans to extract 40 million tonnes of coal and ship it overseas via Port Alberni.

Compliance Coal promotes coal as “an organic rock-like substance found in the earth” while ignoring the devastating local environmental and global climate ramifications of coal mining. The company’s timeline is unclear as they have yet to secure environmental permits. That in addition to the fact that they are facing an organized and militant resistance.

Ruddock Creek

Not to be outdone, Imperial metals has a third mine proposal in British Columbia, this time in unceded Secwepemc territory. The Ruddock Creek mine is a lead and zinc mine.

GRASSROOTS RESISTANCE LINKS

Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug First Nation Lands and Environment

kilands.org

Mines and Communities

minesandcommunities.org

Mining Injustice Solidarity Network (MISN)

solidarityresponse.net

Mining Justice Alliance Vancouver

miningjusticealliance.wordpress.com

Protect Teztan Biny

teztanbiny.ca

Protest Barrick

protestbarrick.net

Rights Action

rightsaction.org

Solidarity Not Compliance (Against the Raven Coal Mine)

solidaritynotcompliance.blogspot.ca

Unis'tot'en Action Camp

unistotencamp.wordpress.com

Vancouver Media Co-op

vancouver.mediacoop.ca





CONNECTING THE DOTS: Mining and Migration

Fact sheet by the Mining Injustice Solidarity Network

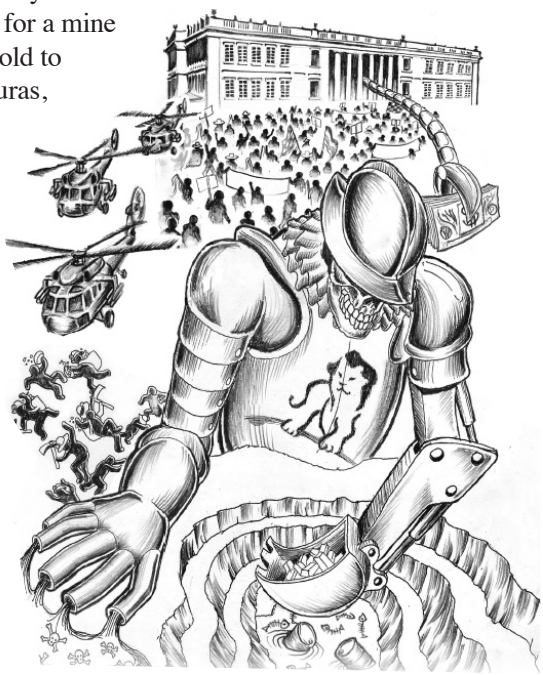
According to the World Bank Group, more than 10 million people are involuntarily displaced every year to make room for development projects (Sustainable Development Sourcebook).

Canadian companies benefit from a global economic system that forces people out of rural areas subsequently used by large industry to extract resources, be they cash crops, minerals, lumber, oil and gas, or the industrial infrastructure needed to produce and export these goods (such as dams, highways, and pipelines).

Mining companies in particular are often responsible for the economic displacement, the environmental devastation, and the reappropriation of land that forces people to migrate every year. This often violent imposition of mining “development” on communities destroys traditional livelihoods and provides short term mining jobs in return.

Examples abound of this phenomena from hundreds of thousands of small-scale miners displaced for a couple thousand Barrick Gold jobs in Tanzania, to the forced displacement of Indigenous Mayan Q’eqchi’ from their lands in Guatemala for a mine then owned by Skye Resources (since sold to Cyprus based Solway Group). In Honduras, severe water shortages stemming from Goldcorp’s now closed San Martin mine have forced many farming families to leave the once fertile Siria Valley region.

According to a 2009 report—commissioned (and then suppressed) by the Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada (PDAC)—Canadian companies were involved in 34 per cent of the high-profile violations in the mining sector over the previous 10 years. That works out to four-times more frequently than the next offending nation.



UnderMining Community Struggles?

A few years ago, some organizations in the North got together to work on a shareholder resolution, in solidarity with Indigenous communities in the South affected by a mine and others organizing against the mine's expansion. The resolution included an obligation to consult with communities in a meaningful way.

They had shares. They sent the draft around to other people and organizations from the North for comment. They had the resolution ready before the company's deadline, leading up to the AGM.

But the authors of a shareholder resolution proposing meaningful consultation with affected Indigenous communities did not consult the affected Indigenous communities about the shareholder resolution in any meaningful way.

There is a widespread tendency to misuse the word 'irony,' but that example could be a good one to include in a dictionary.

In another country in the South, as in many countries, a great deal of energy has gone into mining legislation initiatives. Affected communities and many organizations are pretty much all in agreement that it is sorely needed.

But there are mining laws and then there are mining laws. A mining law, by any other name, may actually stink (like rotten herring). And plenty other half-applicable cliches that are pretty fun to use.

Communities affected by a mine are at the forefront of the movement against corporate metallic mining in the country in question, along with communities around the country facing mining concessions in their lands and territories. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and church organizations have also been involved.

For years, the groups with more funding and more political connections- often funded by international NGOs- were behind the initiatives to reform the mining law. Although many affected communities had a position of unequivocal opposition to mining, they were invited to attend occasional dialogue meetings, received updates on the draft reforms, and gave their input.

And even though they didn't follow the lead of the communities, the NGOs reported to their funders that the communities participated and were on board. There was consultation, they claimed.

It's the same model mining companies use when they come to town. Although affected communities may have a position of unequivocal opposition to mining, they are usually invited to occasional dialogue meetings, receive updates on the company plans, and give their input.

And the companies report to their investors that the communities participated and are on board.

Some non governmental groups do good work, and many are comprised of eager people who want to see real change. But there are huge compromises that folks working for these groups make in order to see their paycheck. Usually, they can't talk about capitalism, criticize their home government, or strategies of resistance and solidarity that go beyond letter writing and shareholder activism.

Groups have their moments, some of which are just rank. Amnesty International recently ran an ad campaign during the Nato Summit in Chicago stating "Human Rights for Women and Girls in Afghanistan, NATO: keep the progress going!" They claimed it was an anti-war message. Ridiculous, right? There's many other examples, like the role of NGOs in Canada in negotiating with forestry corporations behind the backs of communities, as in the Great Bear Rainforest or the Canadian Boreal Forest Agreement.

We think it is past time to emphasize and celebrate community resistance to destructive mining, and create a space to discuss when it is strategic to engage with funded organizations and their media messaging, instead of watching those strategies be imposed from above on local struggles.



above: Rosalia stands on what used to be part of her farm until the mine expanded a single lane dirt road to accommodate large mining trucks. Rosalia's family says it was never consulted or compensated for the loss of their land. When the company first arrived in the area, they carried out a series of presentations on the benefits of mining. The company claims to have held 74 meetings with people in San Miguel Ixtahuacán and Sipakapa. Those who attended the meetings were asked to sign a list in exchange for a free lunch. Community members say that these lists were then used by Goldcorp to prove to the Government and the World Bank that they had consulted the local communities. "There was no dialogue and no consultation with the communities about the company coming here," they say, "the public was not consulted. That is why we are very upset, because these people have money, they are millionaires, they can do what they want. They don't care about our lives. We did what we could, but it didn't make any difference. The old Mayor and Judge sided with the company for the money. So the people couldn't defend their rights."

Myths vs. Fact and the Canadian Mining Industry

MYTH: NGOs are independent from the government

FACT: The largest NGOs in Canada are heavily dependent on government funding. Groups once critical of mining have been silenced by funding cuts.

MYTH: Ethical Funds are Ethical

FACT: Despite its promising name, “Ethical Funds” does not offer the opportunity for investing in ethical companies. They invest in companies like Barrick Gold and Goldcorp, despite these companies’ human rights abuses. They justify these investments by asking these companies to increase their self-reporting, while the larger issues of chronic human rights abuses and lack of consent go unchecked.

MYTH: NGOs respond to community organizations.

FACT: Instead of responding to communities, NGOs respond to their funders. That means that instead of helping build grassroots movements and support local struggles in Canada and elsewhere, most NGOs come and go depending on the wishes of their funders.

MYTH: Bad mining companies are just bad apples

FACT: The extractive industries are integral to modern capitalism. Mining can’t be understood separate from an increasingly militarized world, where displacement and violence is exercised against poor people and the last healthy ecosystems are destroyed.

MYTH: Most of the help the Canadian government gives mining companies takes place through Canadian embassies overseas

FACT: The most important help the Canadian government gives to the mining industry are doled out in Toronto, Ottawa and Vancouver. The lack of binding legislation allows Canadian mining companies to carry out crimes abroad totally unchecked. Huge subsidies exist at the provincial level through tax breaks and other incentives for Canadian companies.

MYTH: Mining executives are feeling the pressure in Canada

FACT: With a few notable exceptions led by grassroots activists carrying out direct action and interruptions at Annual General Meetings and mining conferences, mining executives enjoy total impunity in Canada. Instead, they are part of the 1%, ranking among the country’s highest paid executives.

MYTH: Stephen Harper and other members are the Canadian government are all about “business as usual.”

FACT: Harper’s Conservatives are designing a long term strategy through which increased corporate extraction across Canada and around the world will be facilitated, and resistance, criminalized. Canada supports war, imperialism, police and prisons, all in the name of capitalist expansion, at home and elsewhere.

When the rubber hits the road, it is people directly confronting toxic mining, forestry, oil and gas, who take the biggest risks. Indigenous land defenders, concerned community members, brothers, sisters, mothers and fathers, anarchists, grassroots supporters, and others are the first to be on the other end of a police baton, or worse. Repression against our comrades, including militant mine workers, around the world has been harsh and deadly. The list below is incomplete, but provides information on some of the more recent murders of anti mining activists.

Here we remember a few of the fallen, killed because they wouldn't stop the struggle.

Bernardo Vásquez Sánchez, murdered in Oaxaca, Mexico on March 15, 2012 when his killer(s) opened fire on his vehicle. His brother Andres Vásquez Sanchez and his cousin Rosalinda Dionicio Sánchez were both injured in the attack. Bernardo was a prominent voice against Vancouver based Fortuna Silver.

Mariano Abarca Robledo, murdered in Chicomuselo, Chiapas on November 27, 2009. He was shot to death while sitting in a vehicle in the town centre. Mariano had been maintaining a blockade against Calgary based Blackfire Exploration Ltd.

Ramiro Rivera Gomez, vice president of the Comité Ambiental de Cabañas, El Salvador was murdered December 20, 2009. He was an outspoken opponent of Vancouver based mining company Pacific Rim.

Marcelo Rivera, also a member of the resistance from Cabañas, El Salvador, disappeared on June 18, 2009. He was later found dead, having been tortured before his assassination.

Adolfo Ich Cháman was hacked up and killed in El Estor, Guatemala on September 27, 2009, by a private security guard working for Winnipeg based HudBay Minerals. He was a community organizer and a critical voice against mining.

Father José Reinel Restrepo Idárraga was killed on September 1, 2011 in Risaralda, Colombia. He had previously spoken out against Gran Colombia Gold Corp's proposed Marmato open pit gold mine.

**“Pray for the
dead, and
fight like hell
for the living.”**

**-Mother
Jones**



image: on-going protests against mining in Peru