

GOLDCORP INC. – MORE ON MINING and GREAT PROFITS & HARMS

BELOW:

- an article on Goldcorp's May 22 AGM in Vancouver
- an interview with a campesina woman about health harms in her community next to Goldcorp's "Marlin" mine in Guatemala

WHAT TO DO? SUPPORT NEEDED: See below.

EDUCATIONAL DELEGATION TO GUATEMALA - JULY 6-14

Please join this trip that will investigate "Dam 'Development' Projects under-mining human rights & the environment". Over 9 days, delegates will meet with development, enviro and human rights activists; visit Chixoy hydro-electric dam affected Mayan-Achi communities; visit Mayan Q'eqchi communities that may well be harmed by the pending Xalala hydro-electric dam; visit Mayan-Mam communities being harmed by Goldcorp Inc's huge gold mine. Information: Karen Spring: spring.kj@gmail.com

To get on/ off Rights Action's email list:

<http://www.rightsaction.org/lists/?p=subscribe&id=3/>

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WHO IS PAYING FOR YOUR PENSION?

Telegraph-Journal, Wednesday May 27th, 2009

JANICE HARVEY, <http://telegraphjournal.canadaeast.com/search/article/680053>

If you pay into the Canada Pension Plan, you need to know what your pension money is doing in Central America.

Last Friday, simultaneous demonstrations in Guatemala City and Vancouver targeted the gold mining operations of Canadian mining giant Goldcorp Inc. (TSX:G if you're interested) in the Guatemala highlands, home to several Mayan communities. Goldcorp's shareholders gathered at a sumptuous Vancouver hotel for its annual meeting to hear of the company's record profits in the midst of a global recession - a 27-per-cent increase in first quarter profits to US\$290.9 million [...].

To add some realism to the event, representatives from communities in Guatemala and Honduras, where the company is mining, along with members of Canadian and U.S. solidarity groups, were present to raise critical issues of corporate culpability in the destruction of communities adjacent to the mines.

Gold, of course, attracts investors looking for a safe place to park their money in hard times. The CPP is one of those investors, probably to the relief of Canadians who expect economic security in their retirement years.

No such security is offered to those who live next to the mines. Several hundred of them, mostly indigenous Mam Mayans, marched in the streets of Guatemala City protesting the alleged destruction of their way of life by oldcorp's Marlin Mine near San Miguel Ixtahuacan. Marking what they called the 'national day dignifying the victims of open-pit

mining,' they marched peacefully to the headquarters of Goldcorp's Guatemalan subsidiary Montana Explorador, the office of the UN human rights commission, and the Canadian embassy.

Community member Gregoria Crisanta Perez explained,

"We are here because today, in Canada, Goldcorp shareholders are dividing up their earnings. Meanwhile, here in Guatemala, the people from San Miguel remain in poverty. But now, finally, San Miguel Ixtahuacan is waking up."

Back in Vancouver, the mine activists questioned company executives about allegations regarding health effects, the loss of water, cracks in houses caused by explosions, metal and cyanide contamination of water supplies, violation of property rights, violation of indigenous land rights, and intimidation, coercion and legal action against mine opponents.

The company executives denied it all. Near the mine site the same denials take place. The company allegedly told Irma Leticia Mendez that the new cracks in the walls of her home were caused by her corn grinder, not the blasting at the mine site. Activists say more than 100 homes have been structurally damaged.

Local leaders accuse the company of using coercion to force 600 families to sell all their land for "pitiful prices." Seven people were arrested for leading a protest after the mine's private security used force against a delegation which went to mine officials requesting redress of harm and increased compensation for those who sold their land.

The company is also accused of building a high voltage power line through private property and very close to homes without permission or compensation. Eight women have been charged for their resistance to the power line. One of them, Crisanta Hernandez, stated,

"Just as we cannot enter the mining company's grounds, we do not want anyone entering our property... We will no longer allow them to come and take samples from our plots. I will beat them out with a stick! I don't want to see the mining company taking more gold from here because we have already seen the consequences. All it does is lead us to jail."

The debate over Goldcorp in Central America is extensively documented at <http://mimundo-jamesrodriguez.blogspot.com/>

All CPP (Canada Pension Plan) beneficiaries owe it to the mayan people of guatemala to learn their story.

The Goldcorp shareholders, by the way, were unmoved. Observed the Guatemalan representative, "The shareholders have no heart."

(Janice Harvey is a freelance columnist and president of the New Brunswick Green Party. She can be reached by e-mail at waweig@nbnet.nb.ca)

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INTERVIEW WITH CAMPESINA WOMAN ABOUT HEALTH HARMS

This interview was done in January 2009 (by Karen Spring and Francois Guindon, of Rights Action) with an indigenous Mayan Mam woman from a community located next to the mine. She is a school teacher and a mother in search of a cure for her baby's rash. She asked that her name not be published.

WHERE ARE YOU FROM?

I am from another town in San Miguel Ixtahuacán. I live here now, after arriving a few years ago to work in the school.

HOW WAS THE TOWN'S SOCIAL ATMOSPHERE WHEN YOU ARRIVED?

Everything was calm. I arrived at the school. People were very nice and united. When the mine started, everything started to change. Six years ago, no, not that much, maybe three years ago this started... everything changed.

HOW DID EVERYTHING CHANGE?

People became divided. People are more conflictive, rude, and arrogant. Everything has changed. The environment too. Because we would go out for walks in the mountains with the children, we would go see the leaves, plant leaves. Now we don't see the mountains, only dust that comes from there because the school is very close to the mine.

WHAT CHANGED IN THE ENVIRONMENT?

The environment is hotter, and more so with the dust. Before it wasn't like this, we would go out for walks in the mountains with the children and we would go by foot because there was no road. We liked to go in the mountains with the children until Salem, it was very humid. There's only dust.

We don't take the children out anymore because where would we go with them? Only there inside. We don't go out for anything. We cannot go walking to other towns, on other paths, because it is private property, danger to cross through, restricted places, we can't go. We are shut in. We lost inter-school, inter- classroom communication.

AND THE WATER AVAILABILTY CHANGED SINCE THE MINE CAME?

When I arrived there was water. There was even water in the school. We would water with hoses in the classroom. The children washed their hands. But not any more. We go to the school bathroom and there is no water and the sanitary sink is dry. We don't water anymore. The school does not get water anymore and the children don't wash. Only sometimes is there water.

ACCORDING TO YOU, HOW MANY CHILDREN HAVE SKIN PROBLEMS IN THE TOWN'S SCHOOL?

15 children between 6 and 14 years of age.

HOW MANY CHILDREN ARE IN THE SCHOOL?

Nearly 180.

IS THIS THE FIRST TIME IN THE TOWN'S RECENT HISTORY THAT ONE HAS OBSERVED SO MANY CHILDREN ILL OR WITH SKIN PROBLEMS?

Yes, it is the first time in 10 years that one has observed so many.

WHAT DO THE PARENTS OF THESE CHILDREN SAY ABOUT THESE ILLNESSES?

Nothing.

IN YOUR OPINION, WHY NOT?

The important thing is that they have money. We have talked to them but they say: "I treated him, but he does not get better" but who knows... because they don't want to say anything. The teachers have spoken to some parents and they were told that they don't want to go to the mine to show their children, "no" they say... until some of them die because a baby has already died.

A BABY DIED?

She is an abandoned mother. Her husband was in the mine and he looked for another woman. She stayed home with her children and did not have a way to treat her baby. She didn't have money, nor food or anything. She cried and...she didn't have a way, not even to talk about it. And her baby died.

HOW WOULD YOU QUALIFY YOUR OWN HEALTH LEVEL: EXCELLENT, GOOD, BAD, OR VERY BAD?

Bad, because my son does not get better. He continues with this. He has had this rash for 10 months. He is a year and half old, but he started this when he was 3 months old.

WHERE IS THE RASH ON HIS BODY?

On his entire body from his face to his feet, to the tips of his toes. He had a lot on his feet and now they are on his legs, his face, and his fingers.

DID YOU GO TO A DOCTOR?

I went everywhere. I went to Guatemala City for my son's rash. I went to San Marcos and Huehuetenango. I used homemade medicines. Now he has the rash on his leg. I went to dermatologists, pediatricians, doctors like that, general medicine.

WAS A BLOOD TEST DONE ON YOUR BABY?

They took a skin sample, a blood test, but they did not tell me if there were heavy metals and they did not give me the results.

WHAT DID YOU DO ATTEMPT TO SOLVE YOUR BABY'S SKIN PROBLEMS?

I already used medicine for scabbies—but it is not scabbies because I had already used soap, creams, lotions, and I even boiled his clothes in water with bleach... and I boiled the water and the clothes were destroyed in the water... yes, I threw away the clothes, but nothing happened!

Because they told me it was due to fleas. But I don't have any animal. I don't have a dog, cat, nothing, not even chickens. Because if it were due to dogs-- dogs sometimes give fleas-- I don't have one. Mosquitoes, they said, but that is not possible.

CAN YOU DESCRIBE THE REACTIONS THAT YOUR BABY HAS WITH HIS PROBLEMS?

He cries a lot, cries, and it is like he feels uncomfortable. When I bathed him, he felt calmer. My baby suffered a lot. Now he is 11 months old.

YOU MENTIONED THAT THERE IS A LOT OF DIVISION AMONG THE COMMUNITIES' FAMILIES. IN YOUR OPINION, WHY IS THIS?

I recognize that people do not get along and they are always fighting, being divided... and those are in favor of the mine and those are against, so they two parts are fighting. They always fight for the mine's cause because they are in agreement for money. And they don't take health into account. Even if they are getting sick, they continue there.. I know a father of a family who got ill in the mine.

HOW DID THIS MAN GET SICK? WHAT DOES HE HAVE?

Oh God, he is only sick. They found metals in his blood, but he does not have results. Headache, fever, red eyes. His work is surely the cause of his illness.

An intestinal infection—a big one—struck him. The doctor told him that he swallowed some chemical powder and a horrible illness struck him. He almost died. The doctor said to him “You are ready for death. Where do you eat?” and he explained where he ate.

WHAT IS YOUR OPINION OF THE RESISTANCE ORGANIZED BY THE COMMUNITIES AFFECTED BY THE MARLIN MINE?

Truly from my heart, I have wanted people to rise up. That is what I have wanted, that all the people recognize their reality. But they don't do it. They don't do it. There are several

of us who would like the people to wake up but they don't want to. Oh no! The mine, oh God, they are so good! They are providing projects with the hopes that the people shut up....

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WHAT TO DO

TO MAKE TAX-DEDUCTIBLE DONATIONS

for indigenous and community organizations resisting the harms of large-scale "development" projects (mining, tourism, hydro-electric dams) and implementing their own development projects (schools and scholarships, health clinics, solidarity economy, etc), human rights and environment projects, make check payable to "Rights Action" and mail to:

* UNITED STATES: Box 50887, Washington DC, 20091-0887

* CANADA: 552 - 351 Queen St. E, Toronto ON, M5A-1T8

CREDIT-CARD DONATIONS: <http://rightsaction.org/contributions.htm>

JOIN our listserv: <http://www.rightsaction.org/lists/?p=subscribe&id=3>

JOIN our quarterly newsletter list: info@rightsaction.org

CREATE YOUR OWN email list and re-distribute this and other information

DAILY NEWS: Watch, listen to and read: www.democracynow.org/

www.upsidedownworld.org/ / www.dominionpaper.ca

READ: Eduardo Galeano's "Open Veins of Latin America"; Howard Zinn's "A People's History of the United States"; Naomi Klein's "The Shock Doctrine"; Paolo Freire's "Pedagogy of the Oppressed"

WWW.RIGHTSACTION.ORG: Based in Guatemala, Rights Action (with tax-deductible status in Canada and USA) funds and works with indigenous, development, environment and human rights organizations in Guatemala and Honduras, and also in El Salvador, Haiti, Oaxaca and Chiapas; and educates about and is involved in activism related to global development, environmental and indigenous and human rights struggles.