

"UNDERMINING GUATE"

As follow-up to a photo-essay about "Gang rapes, forced evictions & the endless nightmare of nickel mining in Guatemala", published on Rights Action's listserv, May 27 (http://rightsaction.org/Alerts/Guatemala_nickel_nightmare_052710.html), we present this Spoken Word Piece, "Undermining Guate", by Rachel Small.

Rachel is studying environmental justice at the University of Waterloo. Rachel first visited the Mayan Qeqchi community of "Lote 8" with a Rights Action delegation, and later returned to gather testimonies from community members, including powerful testimonies from women who were gang raped by soldiers, police and security guards hired by then Skye Resources (now HudBay Minerals) mining company, that is trying to operate a nickel mine on traditional Mayan Qeqchi lands.

- Please redistribute and republish this information'
- What to do: See below

* * * * *

"UNDERMINING GUATE"

(By Rachel Small, rachelblumesmall@gmail.com)

View Rachel's Spoken Word performance: <http://rachelblumesmall.wordpress.com/>

The first news I heard when I got back to Canada told me that:
"Prime Minister Stephen Harper wants to make the plight of mothers and infants in the developing world Canada's "signature" initiative at the G8 summit."
And gee doesn't that sound great?

Only...
all that comes to mind for me
and refuses to leave
are the testimonies
of communities
like Lote ocho, Lot 8.
Up high in the hills in Guatemala
near Lago Izabal;
a community whose mothers and infants
that Harper cares so much about
have been completely plight-ed, blighted
by hate and fate and rape and...Canada.

Lot 8, where the nickel in the ground
has brought Canadian corporations:
Inco, Skye, now Hudbay,
all determined to do aways
with anyone there who's in their way
no matter how long they
have been there
lived there
no matter whether they have anywhere else to go
to grow

mais frijoles platano
to sow the seeds
for the plants that feed
their families
in a country where 18 families
own over half the land
and where 80% of Guatemalan land
that can grow food
is not being used,
in the hands of the few
who go to western supermarkets to buy their food.

And I guess it's true
that when the name you give a town
is a number - lot 8 -
and when you demarcate, delineate
the borders of a place
with mineral exploration trenches,
it becomes easier to designate
people, as property.

But Lot 8 is the people's property
and the people of lot 8 have nowhere else to go
and so, after being evicted illegally
by a Canadian company
arriving unexpectedly
with the police, private security, and what looked like half the army
over 700 men with guns
who burned their homes, crops, lives to the ground
raining tear gas canisters
gunshots drowning out the sound
of the town
screaming
mourning
disbelieving
what they were seeing
what was happening.

But Lot 8 had nowhere else to go
and so, after this eviction this attack
they had to come back
and start rebuilding.

And 8 days later,
the 700 men came back too
only this time the town men were off in the fields
and the police, army, security found
only women and children in the town.

And I feel like you know what I'm going to say
what the army, the police,
and the private security hired by our Canadian company

did on that day,
January 17th, 2007,
But I promised Elena Choc Quib
that I would repeat
how 8 men
beat her
and raped her
left her unable to move
on the ground
and how she never gave birth
to the child she was eight months pregnant with at the time.

And I wish I hadn't heard the same story
from Irma Yolanda Choc Cac
or lots of other women in the town.

and I don't even think we can begin to comprehend
how alone these women are.
cause if it's the
the Canadian company,
the police,
and the army
who have raped you
then who the hell do you have to turn to?

I wish these stories didn't exist of mothers and infants
on whom Canada has certainly left its "signature mark."
But they do, stark
and clear and so
it makes me sick
to sit and ingest the hypocritic bullshit
stories our leaders feel fit
to share.
And they say it all with a straight face.

I can't face that the only thing I could stand up straight
and say in Lot 8 was
Lo siento.
I'm so sorry.
Lo siento.
Lamento mucho.
And I said it so many times,
lo siento,
I began to wonder,
lo siento,
who I thought I was apologizing for.

And it killed me to know
that all I could promise
was that I would tell their stories
when I got back home
I explained that I'm a nobody in Canada

that mining companies, the government wouldn't listen to me
that the g20, g8
are meetings of states
where people sign "signature initiatives
for the plight of infants and their mothers"
without ever speaking to mothers,
or listening to Canadians who have.
Or coming close to looking
at the origins of this "plight"
or who should share in the fight
of campesinos in Guatemala
who know
that if we would only go
leave them alone
and bring our companies home
that would help much more
than Harper's signature whatever.

I want a g20, a g8
where Canadians articulate
that we want a say in what companies we all invest in
through the Canadian pension plan.
Where we can take a stand and di-vest in Hudbay,
create laws that keep our companies at bay
so Guatemalans can protest
without facing arrest
or being killed or abused by Canadian companies.

I want a summit
where we call it
as it is.
Because if this isn't a new generation
of colonization
then I don't know what it is.
Or maybe these systems of raping
and razing
and segregating,
creating euphemisms
like "community resettlement"
do have a name.
Maybe we call it development.
And I do believe this is development work
if the worth you're developing
is Canadian stocks.

I want a G8 or 20
where we take stock
of our country
and the companies of our nation
that run 60% of mines and mineral exploration
around the world.
And where we ditch the reputation,

the idealization,
of us as a peaceful nation
and instead work towards
joining in solidarity
with la lucha, the fight
of indigenous nations of Guatemala
which is our fight too.

I want a g8
where millions of us
cause a ruckus
put up one hell of a fuss
and finally admit
that the "plight of mothers and infants in the developing world"
is us.

* * *

WHAT TO DO

TO MAKE TAX-DEDUCTIBLE DONATIONS for indigenous and campesino communities resisting the harms and violations of mining projects and carrying out their own environmental justice, community development and human rights projects in Guatemala and Honduras, 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>

* * *

WRITE YOUR OWN LETTER OF COMPLAINT AND DENUNCIATION to your own politician and to the offices below, denouncing the rapes and forced evictions, to make way for nickel mining, demanding: -1- a cancelling of ill-gotten nickel mining licenses in Guatemala. (As in the case of Goldcorp's gold mining in Guatemala, community consultations were never held in Mayan Qeqchi communities to get their consent as to whether mining could proceed or not); -2- a public international inquiry into the illegal forced evictions and repression (including rape); -3- the passing of comprehensive criminal and civil law reform in Canada, so as to be able to hold Canadian companies and investors accountable for environmental and health harms and human rights violations; -4- compensation and reparations for Mayan Qeqchi communities harmed by illegal evictions and repression.

- EDUCATIONAL DELEGATIONS TO CENTRAL AMERICA: Form your own group or join one of our delegations to learn first hand about community development, human rights and environmental struggles (info@rightsaction.org)
- EDUCATION IN YOUR HOME COMMUNITY: Contact us to plan educational presentations in your own community, school, place of worship, home (info@rightsaction.org)

WWW.RIGHTSACTION.ORG

- JOIN our listserv. Click: <http://www.rightsaction.org/lists/?p=subscribe&id=3>
- JOIN our newsletter mail list. Send name and address to: info@rightsaction.org
- CREATE YOUR OWN email and mail lists and re-distribute our information
- RECOMMENDED DAILY NEWS: www.democracynow.org / www.upsidedownworld.org / www.dominionpaper.ca
- RECOMMENDED BOOKS: 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"; Dr Seuss's "Horton Hears A Who"

* * * * *

CANADIAN GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS

Governor General of Canada Michaëlle Jean
 Rideau Hall, 1 Sussex Drive, Ottawa, ON, K1A-0A1
info@gg.ca, (613) 993-8200, 800 465-6890
 Duncan Mousseau, Director, Policy, Planning and Correspondence
 Office of the Secretary to the Governor General
DMousseau@GG.CA

Prime Minister Stephen Harper
harpes@parl.gc.ca

Minister of International Cooperation Bev Oda
 509-S Centre Block, House of Commons, Ottawa, ON, K1A 0A6
Oda.B@parl.gc.ca
 Minister of Foreign Affairs Lawrence Cannon
 509-S Centre Block, House of Commons, Ottawa, ON, K1A 0A6
cannol@parl.gc.ca

Minister of State of Foreign Affairs (Americas) Peter Kent
 125 Sussex Dr, Ottawa, ON, K1A 0G2
 (613) 992-0253, kent.p@parl.gc.ca

Gilles Duceppe, leader, Bloc Quebecois
 1200 Papineau Av, #350, Montreal, QC, H2K 4R5
ducepg@parl.gc.ca

Jack Layton, leader, New Democratic Party
 221 Broadview Ave, Suite 100, Toronto, ON, M4M 2G3
laytoj@parl.gc.ca

Elizabeth May, leader, Green Party
 Saanich Gulf Islands EDA, PO Box 20076, Sidney, BC, V8L 5C9
emaytowin@greenparty.ca

Michael Ignatieff, leader, Liberal Party
 656 The Queensway, Etobicoke, ON, M8Y 1K7
ignatm@parl.gc.ca

Bob Rae, liberal, Foreign Affairs Critic, (613) 992-5234, RaeB@parl.gc.ca
 Francine Lalonde, Bloc Quebecois, Foreign Affairs Critic, (613) 995-6327, LalonF@parl.gc.ca
 Paul Dewar, NDP, Foreign Affairs Critic, (613) 996-5322, DewarP@parl.gc.ca

Larry Bagnell, liberal, bagnell.l@parl.gc.ca
Stockwell Day, conservative, days@parl.gc.ca, 613-995-1702
Mr. Peter Julian & Mr. Henri Sader, NDP International Trade Critic, Rm 178, Confederation Bldg.,
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6, julian.p@parl.gc.ca
John McKay, liberal, Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development,
(613) 992-1447, MckayJ@parl.gc.ca, 613-947-4609
Kevin Sorenson, Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development, Room
518, Justice Building, Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6, (613) 947-4608, SorenK@parl.gc.ca, 613-992-2971
Mr. Dean Allison, Foreign Affairs Committee Chairperson, 4994 King Street, Beamsville, Ontario,
L0R 1B0, allison.d@parl.gc.ca, 905-995-2772
Mr. Paul Dewar, NDP, Foreign Affairs Critic, 1306 Wellington St. W, Ottawa, Ontario, K1Y 3B2,
dewarp@parl.gc.ca, 613-946-8682

Alexandre Leveque, DFAIT, Caribbean, Central America & Regional Policy,
125 Sussex Dr, Ottawa, ON, K1A 0G2, 613-992-2971, alexandre.leveque@dfait-maeci.gc.ca

GLOBAL CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY COMMISSIONER
Marketa Evans, Marketa.Evans@international.gc.ca

CIDA

Barbara Curran, CIDA Director, 200 Promenade du Portage, Gatineau, K1A 0G4, 819-994-
4092, barbara.curran@acdi-cida.gc.ca; Kate Stefanuk (kate.stefanuk@acdi-cida.gc.ca) will
serve as Acting Director (& responsible for Honduras); Johanne Dupont
(johanne.dupont@acdi-cida.gc.ca), Country Program Manager for Nicaragua, Guatemala,
and Cuba

CONTACT YOUR MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT:

<http://www2.parl.gc.ca/Parlinfo/Compilations/HouseOfCommons/MemberByPostalCode.aspx?Menu=HOC>

CANADIAN Embassy in Guatemala
Ambassador Leeann McKechnie
leeann.mckechnie@international.gc.ca
Karin Reinecke, Assistant to the Ambassador
karin.reinecke@international.gc.ca
13 Calle 8-44 Zone 10, Edificio Edyma Plaza, Ciudad de Guatemala
(502) 2363-4348, 2365-1201, gtmla@international.gc.ca

* * * * *