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Contesting big mining from Canada to Mozambique

Judith Marshall

During a visit to Mozambique in September 2014, I witnessed a protest against Brazilian mining giant, Vale. Villagers from Bagamoyo, adjacent to Vale's coal mine, were fighting construction of a chain metal fence through their community. Vale claimed it was fencing off "unoccupied land" leased from the Mozambican government. If a "trespasser" had an accident, Vale would be liable!

Chatting with community members as they made their protest signs, it became abundantly clear that this "unoccupied" land was, in fact, the village "commons". While their houses were within the village, they and generations before them had lived off land on the village outskirts and even used part of the land as a cemetery. The Mozambican government had included this land in the leasehold with Vale for its mining operations without informing the Bagamoyo community members. Their farms and their mango trees were on this land. They raised their goats and cattle there. This land was a source of firewood and charcoal for cooking, thatch for roofing and sticks for drying racks for cassava roots, and clay for building blocks. Vale had already bulldozed some of their kilns built next to the clay deposits.

What has given big mining companies the power to grab land already under traditional communal usage all around the globe? Why do governments of every stripe – dictatorial, liberal, socialist – baptise these extractive sector companies as 'development partners' and abdicate any stewardship role over their country's natural resources and the rights and well-being of their own citizens?

This essay explores the sources of power of the big mining companies through the historical shifts in the roles of the state and private corporations in economic development strategies, and the new – and promiscuous – intimacy between governments and mining companies. It uncovers instruments used to exercise power, from free trade agreements to investment protection agreements to land grabs. It explores the ideological offensive of big mining through corporate-funded think tanks and grants to universities tied to mining-friendly programmes of study and the revolving doors between government and corporate appointments. It examines corporate branding instruments from membership in the UN Global Compact to high profile philanthropy to local community pacifiers such as a clinic or a school baptised as 'corporate social responsibility'. It also looks at how mining companies exercise power illegally through bribery, spying and infiltration of popular movements. Finally, the essay looks at some of the innovative ways communities and workers are resisting the power and logic of big mining, all of it drawing on my trade union experiences over the past 20 years in building global solidarity.

Margie Adam / ArtWork

How mining companies gained their power

There are many excellent descriptions of neoliberalism today with its intimate relationships between corporations and governments and its recipe of deregulation, privatisation, cuts in social sector spending and downsizing of the state.[1] One easy way to understand neoliberalism is to remind ourselves of what it replaced. The financial collapse of the 1930s, sandwiched between two world wars and the horrors of fascism, resulted in a congruence of support in the early 1950s for a class compromise between labour and capital. A new world order was set up internationally with the Bretton Woods agreements on currency stabilisation, and institutions such as the UN, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank were created. General agreement prevailed that states should work alongside market processes, but also intervene or even substitute when necessary. 'Embedded liberalism' ushered in an era in which the market and the corporations operated within social and political constraints. The state established a strong regulatory environment but also often led economic and industrial initiatives. State-led planning and state ownership of strategic sectors like mining and steel and auto production were common in both North and South.[2]

All these constraints on the power of capital in the post-war period were abandoned in the mid-1970s. Owners of capital were frightened of the new energies released in the rebellions of the 1960s and '70s by students, civil rights activists, labour and women. A radicalising anti-colonial movement and militant anti-Vietnam war movement added to the perceived threat to corporate power. All were demanding social inclusion, more rights and fuller citizenship. In the famous report from the Trilateral Commission in 1975, set up to retune efforts to protect American, European and Japanese elite interests, lead author Samuel Huntington argued that there were now problems of governance stemming from an "excess of democracy".[3] Corporate interests reasserted themselves aggressively to reclaim the core tenets of the liberal vision – the rugged individualism of the private entrepreneur and market fundamentalism. New right-wing 'think tanks' were established to go on the ideological attack.

The unfettered power enjoyed by mining companies is one of the fruits of this neoliberal world order, because it precipitated the privatisation of access to natural resources in numerous countries. In the South, the instrument of choice for downsized governments, widespread deregulation and generalised acceptance of foreign direct investment as mandatory for economic development was structural adjustment programmes. Countries found themselves in a debt trap when repayment terms for low interest loans from northern financial institutions skyrocketed. They were forced to request International Monetary Fund and World Bank assistance with 'conditionalities' if further credit was to be forthcoming. The standard conditionalities consisted of devaluation, privatisation, deregulation and cuts in social sector spending.

Massive privatisation of public industries ensued with state mining companies among the first to go. By way of example, the largest iron company in the world, Brazilian state mining company Companhia Vale do Rio Doce, was privatised in 1997 through a public auction. Brazilian civil society cried foul, since the sale price of $3.3 billion omitted key assets and was far below the company's own assessment of its value at $40 billion. Even a decade later, Brazilian social movements were able to rally more than a million votes for a return to state ownership.

Governments relinquished their regulatory roles in favour of more flexibility in labour and tax regimes, all to create 'business readiness' to entice foreign investors. Mining companies labelled as corporate predators during the anti-colonial and anti-imperial struggles were redesignated a 'development partners'.

In the North, the instrument to move from 'embedded liberalism' to neoliberalism was free trade agreements, better named 'investor privilege agreements'. These went well beyond the established substance of trade negotiations, such as import tariffs, to open up a multiplicity of non-tariff barriers to trade.

Clauses requiring national treatment for foreign investors and prohibiting performance requirements meant that a host government could not treat foreign investors differently from local entrepreneurs. Quotas for employment of nationals or use of national raw materials or suppliers were ruled out. Under investor–state clauses, a host government could even be sued for policies protecting public health or the environment if they cut into the projected profits of the investor.

In 1997, the Canadian government was sued by Ethyl Corporation for banning imports of gasoline with a toxic additive called MMT. Under NAFTA investor–state clauses, this was deemed a violation. Canada chose to settle, repealing the MMT ban, offering an apology and paying a $13-million fine. If free trade agreements give corporations this kind of power over countries like Canada, how much more so in poorer countries? In El Salvador, Pacific Rim has been demanding a permit for a gold mining project that threatens the country's primary source of drinking water. Two successive governments have declined to grant this permit to the mining company and the country now finds itself in a costly lawsuit at the World Bank's International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes. The chill effect on any government trying to protect the public good is enormous.

To cover any mining investments without fulsome protection through free trade agreement clauses, Bilateral Investment Treaties (BITS) and Foreign Investment Protection Agreements (FIPAs) were introduced. Both are heavy on investor rights and yet have nothing on investor responsibilities. The Canadian government has already ratified FIPAs with 27 countries since 1990, with 23 more in the pipeline. A FIPA can be terminated with one year's notice, but investors typically include a 15-year sunset clause, meaning that a government coming to power on a platform of curbing the unregulated power of big mining would have to wait 15 years to implement its reforms! Another pro-industry clause in the FIPAs demands dispute resolution via binding international arbitration rather than use of domestic courts – that is, litigation using expensive lawyers in business friendly international courts.

In Canada, the transition to FIPAs illustrates the shift to neoliberalism. In the 1970s, the Foreign Investment Review Agency vetted new investors to Canada. Performance requirements included job creation for Canadians, use of national suppliers and government approval of location to prevent regional imbalances. Today they would be inadmissible as 'non-tariff barriers to trade' and Canadian government attention has shifted to protecting mining companies investing abroad. Company lawyers argue strongly that headquarters have no responsibility for actions by subsidiaries in other countries, much less for actions of sub-contractors. Communities and workers in disputes with mining companies about social, environmental and labour issues scramble to hold anybody accountable. However, the recent decision by a Supreme Court Justice in the Canadian province of Ontario to hear the claims against Canadian mining company HudBay for rape and murder in Guatemala sets a welcome precedent.

How miners see big mining

The growing power of big mining was a topic of concern at a union conference in Toronto in 2012. International delegates from Australia, Mexico, Peru, Brazil, South Africa and Mozambique shared their stories, starting with the aggressive push by mining companies for 'no third-party intervention'. Big mining today is openly anti-union and lobbies governments incessantly for less regulation and more 'flexibility' around labour, putting pressure for individual contracts rather than collective agreements.

One trend is the push to turn health and safety into a management function and deny workers' right to know about workplace hazards and to participate actively in creating safe working conditions. In Canada, where Vale purchased Inco's nickel operation in 2006, the company has dramatically weakened the structures for active worker participation in health and safety; five Vale miners have suffered fatal work injuries since 2011, a shockingly high statistic for Canadian mines.

Miners at the conference also highlighted the strong push by mining companies to sell the idea that modern mining can be sustainable and that it can and should self-regulate. This serves to downplay the need for government regulatory bodies and inspections, active unions and environmental watchdogs.

It was noted that in every country, mining investors woo governments and communities with promises that mining will create jobs. In fact, the propensity is towards highly capital-intensive mines that employ ever smaller numbers of permanent workers. There is constant company pressure for contractors, temporary foreign workers and technical specialists on short-term contracts.

Finally the delegates noted the trend for mining companies to negotiate low rents on terms highly favourable to themselves, coupled with a capacity to move capital with little or no transparency, outside the purview of the host country thanks to weak regulation and/or corruption.

Miners themselves, then, are deeply concerned about the expanding power of big mining. They see a steady erosion of job security, labour rights, environmental protection and workplace safety. The restraints on corporate power that were previously provided by government regulatory bodies and by unions through collective bargaining have disappeared.

How mining companies see themselves

Mining companies present themselves publicly as key contributors to economic growth, job creation and global competitiveness, all carried out in sustainable ways. When talking in-house, however, they focus on the realpolitik of mining: corporate expansion, profitability and risk management. James Cooney, when he worked for gold mining giant Placer Dome, gave a fascinating insider glimpse on his industry at a conference in 1995 in Reno.[4] His presentation to mining geologists on "Managing Political Risk in the Americas" began by extolling the unprecedented moment with virtually all countries wide open to foreign direct investment. The risks Cooney identified for mining companies in this new era were aboriginal relations, environmental regulations, small-scale mining, sustainable development and wealth distribution. He then outlined how canny mining companies could manage each of these political risks.

For aboriginal relations, Cooney advocated adoption of the Canadian strategy of creating a national mining organisation with carefully selected pro-mining aboriginal leaders playing prominent roles. For Latin American governments seeing mining and environment as incompatible, Cooney advocated corporate partnering with the World Bank for an international mining conference, targeting exactly those governments still reluctant to embrace mining. The risk of inequality included recognition of possible resentment that the highly visible wealth from the mining operation was being exported directly by a foreign company or benefiting only a small elite in the national capital city. Far-sighted mining companies actually needed to lean on host governments to adopt visible redistributive tools, not because it was good public policy but because it could lower the risk of community resistance to the mining company!

Intimacy between governments and mining companies

In this deregulated paradise, governments have not only ceased to constrain big mining; in both the global North and South, governments have become pro-active in support of mining company interests. Jean Charest's provincial government in Quebec (Canada) pinned its economic strategy to Plan Nord, launched in May 2011. It committed 1.2 billion of tax-payer dollars to build massive infrastructure in northern Quebec in order to open up rich mining and forestry resources for export. Public officials went courting big foreign investors, but were profoundly silent on royalty and tax regimes, redistributive mechanisms or beneficiation. In Quebec as in Latin America and Africa, the vision was to implement mega projects linked to transport corridors, carrying unprocessed ore onto global markets.

Steelworkers in Quebec asked tough questions about *Plan Nord* at their annual conferences in 2011 and 2012. Would these new mining projects be harnessed to provide revenue for Quebec's much-vaunted social programmes? Would foreign workers be brought in to build these mines? How many good, permanent jobs would really be created? Did plans to export unprocessed ore mean, in effect, exporting jobs? What about the environmental impact on fragile northern ecosystems and the role of aboriginal communities?

Quebec students during their 'Maple Spring' protests of 2012 were quick to connect the dots between a liberal government that cried poor as justification for raising university tuition while spending freely on infrastructure for private mining companies. Issues converged to build a full political crisis that brought down the liberal government but the government that replaced it showed little propensity for establishing a different relationship with big mining.

The pro-active role of governments in supporting "their" mining companies is seemingly boundless. In Brazil, the National Bank for Social and Economic Development (BNDES is the acronym in Portuguese) was a key institution historically in promoting a national economic strategy to control the country's natural resources. In recent years, the Bank's mantra has become "making Brazil competitive in the global economy". This has translated into huge loans for the global expansion of companies such as iron ore producer Vale. Luis Inácio Lula da Silva, renowned labour leader and former president of Brazil, has travelled frequently with Brazilian corporate executives. In Africa he has traded on sentiments of South-South solidarity. After his presidency in November 2013 he joined current Vale president, Murilo Ferreira, on another Mozambique mission. His programme included joining Ferreira in lobbying the Minister of Labour to increase the 15 per cent quota on foreign workers in Vale's future projects!

The pro-active role of the Canadian government in support of mining is multi-facetted. Despite active pressure from unions and NGOs for enforceable government mechanisms to regulate Canadian mining companies abroad, our government has been steadily increasing its direct support. Mining company executives are included on "Team Canada" missions to promote trade. In some instances, the Canadian Embassy serves as a virtual operations base during the start-up phase of mining projects and even well beyond. Bilateral aid related to mining has ranged from behind-the-scenes embassy pressures in Honduras and Ecuador for policies favourable to the industry, to direct financing for rewriting Colombia's mining codes.[5] Government officials from the pro-mining Alberta province – with its vast, environmentally disastrous tar sands projects – travelled to Bolivia to advise on natural gas management.

These overt Canadian government initiatives in support of mining companies are expanding. The Trade Commissioner's Service teamed up recently with international development NGO World Vision and the Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada to produce a manual for the corporations. *Preventing Conflict in Exploration: A Toolkit for Explorers and Developers* uses a popular education approach to help mining companies win consent from communities for their projects. The first step is analysing the context and identifying key stakeholders: land owners, women's groups, traditional chiefs, local priests, unemployed youth and anti-mining groups. The second step is to map out stakeholder positions, interests and internal power relations. The toolkit has activities to determine stakeholders' status, interests, influence and networks, thus enabling the mining company to determine the risk each presents for stopping the mining project. Lamentably there seems to be no equivalent Canadian government initiative to fund a tool for rural communities to decode and challenge the big mining companies' strategies.

Canada's international development agency had already begun to divert aid money into project partnerships with mining companies before 2013 when it became part of a merger to create the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development. World Vision, Plan International and World University Service of Canada partnered with Barrick Gold, Rio Tinto and Iamgold in 2011 to carry out community development and training projects alongside the mining operations. After the merger that brought aid and trade closer together, a similar funding window for NGO–mining company projects opened in the mineral-rich Andean region specifically. Meanwhile, organisations doing public education critical of the behaviour of mining companies abroad, such as Development and Peace and Kairos, have seen their government funding cut. Yet despite public criticism for diverting aid money to help mining companies pacify local communities, the practice continues unabated.

Power through illegal activities

In May 2013, a case study was released on Canadian Embassy support for Alberta-based Blackfire Exploration in Mexico. It documented how readily a mining company used illegal means to assert its power, but also how far the Canadian government went to support it. Blackfire had strong diplomatic involvement throughout a lengthy and highly conflictive situation. Many community members were strongly against the mine in Chicomuselo, Chiapas, because it disrupted their farming and damaged the environment. Blackfire's bribes to the local mayor to control community protesters went public. A Blackfire private security guard was accused of the drive-by assassination of community leader Mariano Abarca. Despite

Abarca's death, the suspension of the mine's operations for environmental damages and enough proof of Blackfire's corruption to warrant a police investigation in Canada, the Embassy continued to stand by the company. The parting gesture of support was advice from Embassy officials to Blackfire about using NAFTA investor-state provisions to sue the state of Chiapas, arguing that the mine closure had curtailed projected profits from Blackfire's investment.[6]

Powerful global players like Vale revert regularly to illegal means. Brazilian colleagues have long commented on Vale's propensity to buy union, community and government leaders. During my first visit to Moatize, site of Vale's coal mine, the briefing by the District Administrator to our trade union delegation made reference to the vehicle Vale had given to the provincial trade union head. A few months later, workers constructing the mine stoned the vehicle during a wild cat strike. Local union leaders have recounted that they are regularly offered job security or company credit cards in return for silence on workplace issues.

In Brazil, a disgruntled former director of Vale's Department of Intelligence and Corporate Security became a whistleblower in 2013, presenting documents to the Brazilian state prosecutor as proof of how Vale engages in widespread spying throughout its operations in Brazil, accessing phone records of prominent journalists and infiltrating groups such as the Landless People's Movement and Justice on the Rails, a coalition supporting community struggles in northern Brazil.[7]

For workers and local communities, the dream of what a mining project will bring is simple: jobs and housing, education and health care, a better future for their children. These hopes are quickly dashed. When their disappointment translates into anger and acts of resistance, they are quickly confronted with another phenomenon of contemporary mining, the criminalisation of dissent. All too often dissenters face both government and mining company security forces acting simultaneously against them.

Power through lobbyists and lawyers

Establishing new regulatory measures to hold mining companies to account for their activities abroad has long been a concern of civil society groups in Canada and other parts of the global North. Canadian organisations have engaged in tri-partite processes involving mining companies and government. They have garnered widespread support for private members' bills. In every case, however, the zeal of civil society organisations in pressing for tougher standards with sanctions has been completely eclipsed by industry lobbying activities.

In 2010, civil society groups mobilised widespread support for the Private Member's Bill C-300 to promote "best practices and to ensure the protection and promotion of international human rights standards in respect of the mining, oil or gas activities of Canadian corporations in developing countries." Complaints under this proposed law would result in investigations by the Canadian government. Companies not in compliance with Corporate Social Responsibility guidelines would become ineligible for financial support from Export Development Canada, the Canada Pension Plan and the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade. Mining companies lobbied hard; Barrick alone met with 22 MPs and three

Senators while the Canadian Mining Association lobbied 29 MPs. Other companies registering lobbyists against the same bill included Vale, Goldcorp, Kinross and Iamgold. The intense corporate lobbying paid off. Bill C-300 was not passed.

The world of lobbying and the revolving doors between government and corporate appointments goes largely unregulated, veiled in secrecy and seemingly flourishing, despite moments of exposure in the media. In the US, for example, a *Washington Post* story in the wake of an explosion in April 2010 that killed 29 miners at a Massey Energy mine in West Virginia, revealed that more than 200 former congressional staff members, federal regulators and lawmakers were currently employed in the mining industry. They were in positions ranging from lobbyist or consultant to senior executive. This included dozens working for coal companies with some of the worst safety records in the mining industry.[8]

In Canada, former Conservative cabinet minister, Chuck Strahl, moved from his position as government-appointed watchdog over the Canada Security and Intelligence Service to the private sector. Shortly thereafter he emerged as a registered lobbyist for Enbridge. Enbridge is a subsidiary of Northern Gateway Pipelines, one of the three transport systems to carry tar sands oil to global markets. There have been recent revelations that the Canadian security services, whose operations Strahl had been charged with overseeing, have been spying on opponents to the pipeline.

Power through corporate branding

For mining companies, producing a positive corporate image nationally and globally is as important as producing iron or nickel. Mining companies link themselves to prestigious global institutions, wrapping themselves by association, in the aura of these institutions. The companies have carried out a "greenwash" with their adoption of sustainability as a watchword and their talk of adherence to "environmental bottom lines".

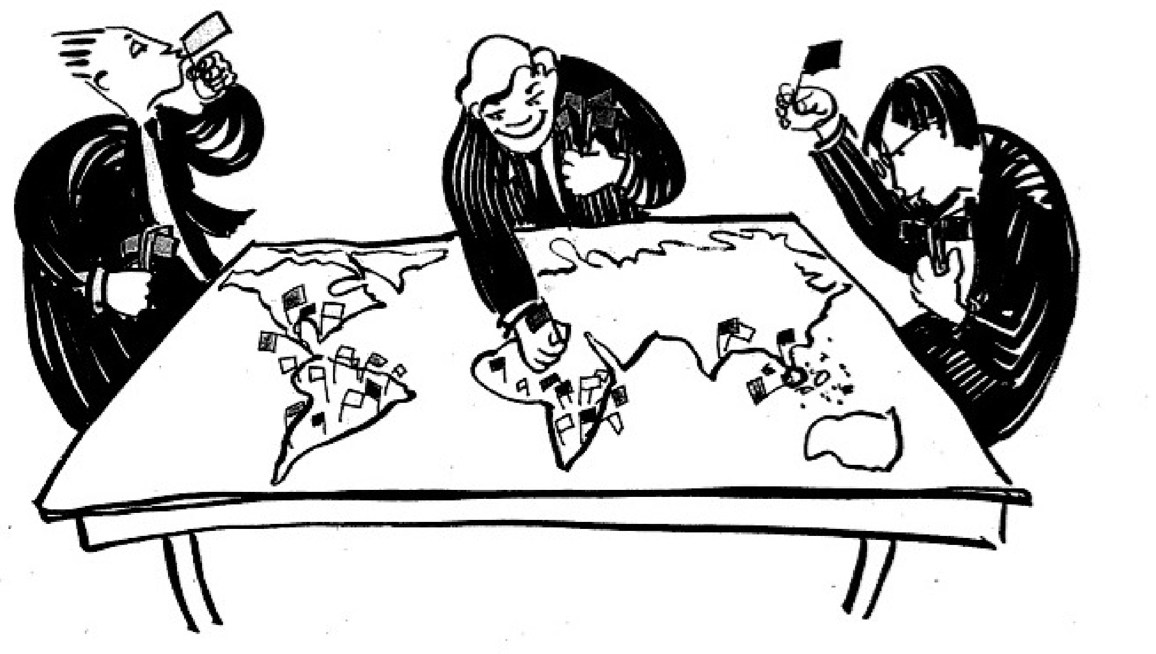
The UN Global Compact provides a tool for "blue-washing" (referring to the colour that identifies the multilateral body). Announced at the World Economic Forum in 1999 by then-UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, the Global Compact serves to legitimise big corporations through their association with UN principles of sustainability and social responsibility covering areas of rights, anti-corruption, environment and labour. The International Council of Mining and Metals and the International Organisation for Standardisation play similar branding roles. Compliance with the Global Reporting Initiative through which corporations publish annual reports on their application of all of these principles enhances credibility and maintains the fiction of effective self-regulation. The companies project themselves as globally responsible players through glossy in-house publications with no third-party verification of the contents.

The branding also happens at national and local levels. Rather than exercising corporate citizenship by paying royalties or taxes, enabling host governments revenue sources to build infrastructure and implement social programmes, mining companies fight for tax breaks. Then they project themselves as good corporate citizens through high profile and inexpensive 'corporate social responsibility' programmes and philanthropy. These range from schools, clinics and sports events close to the mine to highly visible social and cultural institutions at the national level.

Barrick has branded itself through projection of its founding president, Peter Munk, as a great philanthropist. The stories of rape and pillage in Barrick operations in Tanzania and Papua New Guinea, and of how governments in Chile and Argentina have finally reined in Barrick's high-risk plans to move glaciers in the Andes rarely make the news. The carefully cultivated Barrick image in Canada is shaped by the Peter Munk Cardiac Centre at the Toronto General Hospital and the splendidly refurbished heritage building housing the Munk School of Global Affairs at the University of Toronto. The most recent is the Barrick Gold Gallery at the Royal Ontario Museum where it joins the Vale Earth Gallery. The museum plans extensive programming in these galleries for school children, introducing them to the importance of mining. If only the children living near Barrick's gold mines in Tanzania or Vale's coal mines in Mozambique could mount an exhibit with their stories and drawings about mining...

Mining megaprojects and national development

Big mining companies claim national boundaries are *passé*. These corporations operate very much in the world of flows rather than territories, establishing their global supply chains to link one self-sufficient mining enclave with another. All of them are articulated into global flows of information, capital, technology, services, markets, private security forces and legitimacy. Even labour is part of a global flow. To build its mine in Mozambique, Vale promised jobs but also pressures constantly for more foreign workers. At one point during construction, a Vale sub-contractor operating in 30 countries, Kentz, brought in hundreds of Filipino workers on short-term contracts.



Margie Adam / ArtWork

A typical mining operation today, whether physically isolated with 'fly in, fly out' operations or located in a sparsely populated hinterland, under-resourced rural town or an aboriginal hunting and fishing territory, takes on the characteristics of an enclave. The mining company is basically self-sufficient, operating on a scale vastly superior to its local context, bringing in everything from construction materials to giant equipment, from food to a labour force. Many hire their own private security forces. In many countries, these arrangements are sanctioned by an elite clique with some claim to be arbiters of national sovereignty, prepared to legitimise the autonomy of the mining enclave in return for a piece of the action, sometimes openly, sometimes under the table.

A dual process is taking place with the megaproject enclaves destroying national economic spaces at the same time that they articulate with each other to construct new global spaces. These global spaces are not based on territories and national boundaries, but on flows. They are characterised by a 'flexibility' that is the hallmark of neoliberalism. Giant transnationals and networks of small contractors and subcontractors spanning the globe are fully articulated in a global flow or chain that spans miles and continents effortlessly to create a powerful, new borderless instrument for wielding power.[9]

Mining companies operate in these new global spaces with a staggering sense of entitlement. They actually identify "resource nationalism" as the greatest threat for limiting "their rights and profits". The 2012 and 2013 annual reports on major risks facing the mining industry prepared by business advisory service Ernst & Young, mentions four ways that states exercise "resource nationalism": government ownership, increased taxes and royalties, import/export restrictions and mining law reform. Other corporate law firms take a broader view to include performance requirements such as local sourcing of goods and services, local hiring and "mandatory beneficiation" involving in-country processing.

In other words, the very policies on mining that workers, communities, concerned citizens and future generations are pressuring our governments to adopt are deemed by mining corporations as their greatest threat. Governments exercising wise stewardship over their non-replenishable natural resources are denounced and attacked with all the tools these powerful mining companies have at their command.

Workers and communities challenging the power of big mining

Having mapped how contemporary mining companies gain, exercise and legitimise their power, we can better analyse points of leverage for contesting them. Mining companies operate globally. We also need to go global, building networks linking those affected by particular mining companies on multiple continents. This means building mechanisms to share information, strategies, common actions and mutual solidarity. Networks linking only communities or only environmentalists or only trade unionists have limited effectiveness, given the multi-facetted operations of big mining. The International Articulation of People Affected by Vale created in 2010 has been working to invent new ways to operate globally. Its founding meeting included delegates from 14 countries. Members include popular movements fighting against land grabs and insecure employment, trade unionists, rights and environmental activists, academics, public policy advocates and faith groups in multiple countries.

Counter-information strategies are urgently needed. Voices from the mining regions themselves need to be heard globally to counter the dubious veracity of the companies' own reports. In Vale's Sustainability Reports, for example, the two forced resettlement communities built in Mozambique are presented as models of excellence. Yet for the Mozambican families forced off their land to make way for the open pits, the relocation has been a nightmare of broken promises by Vale and their government. Five years after the forced removals, issues of land, water, electricity and compensation are still unresolved. The sub-standard resettlement houses began to crumble after the first rainy season. With neither Vale nor the Mozambican government prepared to resolve their problems, the resettlers blocked the railway line carrying the coal to the port in Beira in 2012. The problems and the protests continue.

The International Articulation of People Affected by Vale published a *Vale Unsustainability Report*[10] in 2012 to counter Vale's earlier reports. The graphic format and reporting categories were similar to those in the company's report but the contents included testimonies from workers and communities negatively affected. The Network also succeeded in having Vale voted in as "Worst Company in the World" at the Public Eye Award alongside the World Economic Forum in Davos in 2012. Other global networks are also providing counter-information as a major strategy. The Protest Barrick Network also published a counter-report to Barrick's own annual report in 2013 entitled *Debunking Barrick*.[11]

Specific shareholders can be targeted, including churches, universities and public sector employee pension funds. Shareholders become anxious when the distance between corporate image and the rawness of the reality around the mine site are exposed to public scrutiny.

The Bench Marks Foundation in South Africa, which grew out of the church-supported divestment campaigns during apartheid, works effectively at two levels to document these gaps. First, it researches the companies' own policy statements and publicity material to establish the benchmarks the company has set for itself. Some time later, Bench Marks carries out a second study, measuring the gap between the company's policies and its actual practices.

A few weeks before the police massacre of 34 striking mine workers at Marikana in South Africa, Bench Marks had released a document[12] measuring the shocking distance between the Lonmin platinum mining company's promises and the actual working and living conditions of the miners, housed in miserable shacks, still on short-term migrant labour contracts and now vilified for "disturbing investor confidence" by striking for a living wage.

The other Bench Marks strategy is to work with local community members, ensuring that youth and women and workers in the mining communities get to tell their own stories about the impact of the mining company. Community monitors do interviews, take photos, make podcasts, and then share their stories with other communities online. They cease to be just victims of mining and become protagonists themselves.

There is a range of other strategies being employed throughout the world to get at the power of big mining. These include Popular People's Tribunals, global campaigns to end corporate impunity, campaigns against trade agreements, on water and others issues of the global commons, on global warming, campaigns around international financial institutions, campaigns around rights violations. All of us are challenged to connect the dots, showing how mining is related to land grabs, poverty and social exclusion, financial speculation, conspicuous consumption, throw-away cultures and corporate greed, all of which highlight the need to transform the prevailing global system and protect our planet.

The collaboration through the International Articulation of People Affected by Vale has had moments when the battlelines with the mining companies and the need to resist are revealed with startling clarity. One of these moments came through a letter from a Brazilian lay missionary who had participated in a network event in Brazil before going to teach at a mission school in Mozambique. Several months after his arrival in Nampula, he reported to the network that peasant farmers had been arriving at the mission with stories of strangers arriving on their farms, measuring land, asking about crops, wanting figures on yearly earnings. The strangers asked the farmers for identity documents. These were later returned with a payment and a receipt for signature. The payer was Vale Mozambique. The farmers were excited, because the strangers had given them more than the previous year's earning, failing to grasp that they had just lost their land to a powerful mining company.

Many of us in the movement of people affected by Vale replied to the lay missionary, expressing our indignation. Didi Travesso, a much-loved and recently deceased Brazilian union leader from CSP-Conlutas, replied almost in poetry:

> They move about as if they own the earth…
> With receipts and whatever else they need to demonstrate that they lord it over every level, above ground and sub-soil, from one end to the other of our lives.
> They conjugate verbs like divide, profit, possess, command.
> As for us?
> We respond with verbs like unite, share, resist, dream.

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