



INTERNATIONAL WOMEN AND MINING NETWORK

'Mujer y Minería'

Newsletter

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(Should any of our members find information on campaigns that is inaccurate we apologise for the same and request you to write to us with the corrections)

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EDITORIAL

It is becoming more and more evident that communities, especially indigenous communities, are well aware of the serious negative impacts of mining operations and are fighting everywhere to protect their lands. It is also evident that governments and companies have stopped making any pretensions of democracy or decency in forcing people out of their lands and livelihoods to grab the ores hidden under every rock and house. Governments have surpassed each other in making a mockery of their constitutions in spite of civil society reports being submitted from many countries to the United Nations (UN) bodies or even from that of the Special Rapporteurs of the UN bodies itself, on the rampant human rights violations due to mining. In the organised sector, women are such a small minority and are so spread across working shifts and sections within their companies that they hardly get to even know each other, leave alone assert their rights. We have seen in many of the company profiles given in their websites that the social policies of most of the multinational mining companies have little to offer women, either

women workers or women in communities where they operate. It is time that we women demand for a proper stock-taking of the gender impacts of mining. There have been many torchbearers like Mother Jones, both in labour movements and community movements in the mining sector. There are several invisible Mother Jones today among indigenous communities who are putting up brave struggles to save their people. The International Women and Mining Network should exist to support these invisible women. We will work with a focus on bringing out the Gender Impacts of Mining and what policies companies or governments to address these impacts are adopting. We will also post the responses or dead silences from corporations and governments across the globe and we invite members, readers and those working on human rights issues concerning women affected by mining to join us in this assertion.

We are happy to announce that we have a website now www.rimmrights.org and we hope that we are able to make this a vehicle of information on women and mining concerns.



RIMM CAMPAIGN UPDATES

Australia

Open letter calling for ban on mine waste disposal into waterways

RIMM members have extended their support to the statement issued by Oxfam Australia calling for a ban on mine waste disposal into waterways. The statement issued as an open letter to the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) mining ministers, mining industry executives and financiers who gathered in February 2007 at Perth, Australia to discuss 'Improving Leading Practice Sustainable Development in the Mining Industry'. The open letter expressed concern about the dumping of toxic wastes by mining countries into the rivers and oceans of some of the world's poorest countries such as Papua New Guinea, Indonesia and the Philippines. These actions cause irreversible environmental damage, rob people of livelihoods and drive human poverty. In addition to adversely affecting aquatic life and therefore the food supply and livelihood of people, it also contaminates drinking water resulting in skin lesions and poisoning that causes death of local people. The letter also stated that many of the worst offending mines were owned and operated by companies from Australia, the United States of America (USA) and Canada; countries that have effectively banned the practice of dumping waste into their own rivers and oceans. Stressing that the safe disposal of mine waste is the single largest environmental challenge facing the mining sector worldwide, the letter called for an immediate worldwide ban on mine waste disposal in waterways. In addition to participating in the APEC conference Oxfam Australia was also able to stage a press conference outside.



India

Tribal people campaign against proposed bauxite mining in hills of Andhra Pradesh

The government of Andhra Pradesh (AP) is continuing with its plan to mine bauxite in the hills disregarding the protests by the tribal people who are threatened with displacement and destruction of their land and forest. Samata in April launched a campaign to create awareness among the people living in the plains; to show them that not only will the tribal people in the hills but also the farmers and city dwellers in the plain areas would also be adversely affected by the proposed mining. The campaign titled '*Health of the hills is the wealth of the plains*' focused on how hills that were the birthplace of many rivers would be destroyed as a result of mining, which in turn would affect the water supply to the farmers and the residents in the coastal towns. A 10-day rally covering nearly 35 cities in the four districts of Srikakulam, Vizianagaram, Visakhapatnam and East Godavari was carried out. In addition posters and pamphlets describing the harmful effects of bauxite mining were also used to generate awareness among the people. Signatures from people opposing the mining were also collected from the various towns.



Women have been in the forefront of this campaign against bauxite mining and setting up of refinery complexes on their lands. Recently the government officials wanted to hold a hasty meeting in S Kota, a town in Visakhapatnam district to pressurise the Gram Sabhas or village councils to pass a resolution allowing the setting up of a alumina refinery. But wherever they went the women from the villages refused to let them in and the officials were forced to leave.

Philippines

Continuing the campaign to end states violence against women and political repression

Innabuyog-Gabriela the regional alliance of women's organisations in the Cordillera continues with its campaign against the repressive regime of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. Two United Nations (UN) Special Rapporteurs, Prof Rodolfo Stavenhagen, the Special Rapporteur on the rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous peoples and Prof Philip Alston, the Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial, Summary or Arbitrary executions visited the country in February and submitted their report on the situation. While the former was an unorganised visit the latter was organised under the official mission of the UN.

Prof Stravenhagen's meeting included a national consultation held in Manila participated by representatives of indigenous peoples' organisations and communities, victims and survivors of extrajudicial killings, support NGOs, churches, government agencies, members of parliament and UN agencies, other multilateral bodies and bilateral donors.

In his report Prof. Stravenhagen has noted that the pattern of human rights violations on indigenous peoples continues. He

noted that 'the land issues heighten, as there is no genuine free and prior informed consent (FPIC) from the indigenous peoples on development projects and infrastructure where they are affected. Thus, more protests from the communities are being seen. The incidents of violence as a response to these protests 'continue to reflect the process of criminalisation of protest activities.' The government has not done enough to abate the increasing violence, land grabbing, deforestation, displacement and other forms of human rights violations against the indigenous peoples.

With a more focused mandate on extrajudicial killings, the dialogue with Alston held in Baguio City saw participation by victims and survivors of extrajudicial killings. The conclusions drawn by Dr Alston from his interviews with Non-governmental organisations (NGO) government agencies and representatives also state that the extrajudicial killings were 'distressing' and 'corrosive'.

Based on these two reports, the indigenous people's organisations and advocates have appealed to the international community especially the UN systems to consider the recommendations and as a first step appealed to the UN Human Rights Council to establish a country special rapporteur for the Philippines.



SOME NEWS FROM AROUND THE WORLD (GENDER/MINING)

Australia

Aboriginal group challenges Xstrata's planned river diversion in Northern Territory ©AAP (March 2007)

In a radical feat of environmental engineering, Swiss mining company Xstrata will divert the McArthur river, near the Gulf of Carpentaria, by 5.5 km. The A\$110 million expansion is part of a project by Xstrata subsidiary McArthur River Mining (MRM) to turn the operation from underground to open cut mining. But a group of Aboriginal land owners from McArthur river are taking legal action against the territory government for approving the project last October. They claim the government failed to follow proper process under the Mines Management Act and, when environmental concerns hampered the development, allowed MRM to unlawfully proceed with its expansion plans.

Tim Robertson, the Aboriginal land owners' lawyer said that the territory government should have started afresh when one of its own ministers rejected the project because of a damning Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Instead, he said it allowed the company to pursue a less stringent Public Environment Report (PER), which is yet to be completed despite the mine's approval last year.

Outside the court, one of the 20 Aboriginal land owners who travelled to Darwin for the five day hearing, told reporters the government had ignored them. They said that there was a lot of frustration and anger among the people and the government should be listening to the people.

Canada

Canada scolded over exploitation of indigenous peoples lands © OneWorld US (March 2007)

Canada, like the United States of America (USA), is facing international scrutiny for its treatment of indigenous people. In March UN's treaty body took the rare step of telling Canada to change its behavior on the human rights of native populations. In a report, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) said it was concerned about complaints of exploitation of indigenous resources by corporations registered in Canada.

The CERD report comes in response to a petition filed by indigenous organisations that charged that private businesses from Canada were unlawfully involved in the exploitation of their lands located in the USA. Their

petition particularly focused on the situation facing the Western Shoshone, a native American tribe, whom some non-natives also refer to as 'Snake Indians', although in their own language they are called Newe people.

Many areas where mining is going on have been used by natives for spiritual ceremonies and cultural purposes for thousands of years. In addition to losing their traditional rights to land the Shoshone elders have repeatedly charged that the enormous amount of toxic material produced as a result of mining is causing enormous damage to the health and well being of their people and the environment. Many of these companies, according to the complaint, are registered in Canada.

The Western Shoshone, in their petition to the UN panel, countered that 'gradual encroachment' in fact took place as part of a US policy to steal their lands, and that this constituted racism.

The Geneva-based panel agreed with the Shoshone by noting that Washington's claim to the land 'did not comply with contemporary international human rights norms, principles, and standards that govern determination of indigenous property interests.'

This is ground breaking news as this is the first time a UN treaty body has addressed government accountability to its corporate profiteering of ongoing human rights violations against indigenous peoples.

Ghana

'Mining is for macho people' ©news24.com (April 2007)

When Genevieve Tettey began working deep underground in the heat, dust and noise of one of Africa's oldest goldmines, the other miners laughed in disbelief. They asked her if she was the boss's daughter and if she had mistaken the Obuasi goldmine in Ghana for a hairdressing salon. And when she offered suggestions about work, she was told to shut up, as the mine was 'not a place for a woman.'

'Initially everybody thought I was a big joke,' said the 31-year-old. 'It took people a long time to believe this was a woman who wanted to do mining. People just wanted to see me, they couldn't believe there was someone like me.'

Five years since Tettey first turned up at AngloGold Ashanti's flagship Ghanaian mine, she is having the last laugh. Now a mine production captain, she oversees a

team of about 100 men responsible for a quarter of the mine's output. They drill and blast rock containing gold, then haul the ore above ground where it is processed into ounces of the precious metal.

'I have been accepted,' said Tettey, in the white boiler suit and hard hat she wears to supervise her team several thousand feet below ground, in shafts that spread like tentacles under Obuasi town. But she remains the only underground female miner in the West African country, the continent's second biggest gold producer after South Africa. Women are a rare sight inside a Ghanaian mine. Joyce Aryee, chief executive of industry lobby group Ghana Chamber of Mines says that few women work in mining and most of these are employed in soft areas, such as administration. It would, she says, take time before more women are found in hard core mining areas.

However, there are some women who do work as small-scale artisan miners, known locally as *galamsey*. They often operate illegally and in dangerous conditions, eking out a living on unsupervised digs, but it is not clear how many of Ghana's estimated 300,000 to 500,000 *galamsey* are women. This month, six women were among nine illegal gold diggers killed when the abandoned pit they were working in collapsed, near Wassa Akropong in the western region, said police.

More women are signing up to become mining engineers, although still only about 50 of the 1,000 or so students at the University of Mines and Technology in the town of Tarkwa are women, said university officials. The growth in female interest reflects in part the changing nature of mining. Mining requires mental capacity as much as it does brawn, said Tettey. 'Mining has now become a lot of brainwork. It is not just about going there and being macho. You have to plan what you do and be smart,' she said.

Women who show interest in a career in mining must face criticism, setbacks and jokes. They are also likely to meet scepticism from friends and family.

But Tetty thrived on the challenge. 'They thought I was mad. Mining is very physically challenging. It is tough, it is rough, it is not a natural environment, especially underground,' she said. 'I don't want to believe in limitations. I don't believe in a man's world or a woman's world, I believe in a people's world,' she said.

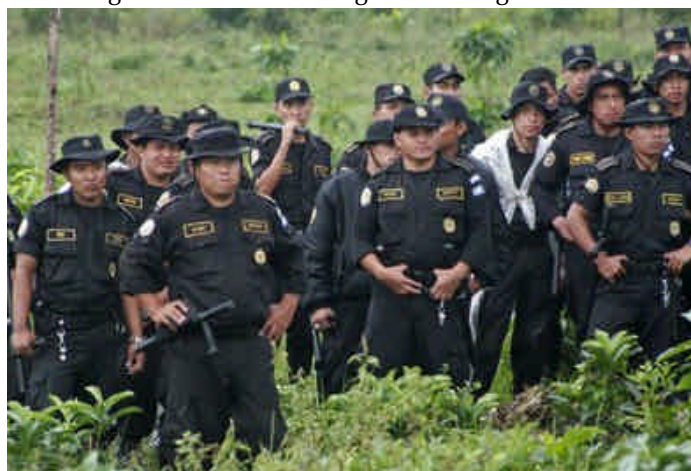
Guatemala

Mineral cartel evicts Kekchi Maya © Indian Country Today (February 2007)

On January 8th, 2007 some 600 Guatemalan national police and army troops occupied two Kekchi Maya indigenous

communities at El Estor, Izabal department. Their orders were to evict the 308 families that made up the settlements of La Union and La Pista. The following morning, 175 more Kekchi families were forcibly expelled from the nearby communities of La Revolucion and La Paz. A Kekchi community at Lote 8 in the neighboring department of Alta Verapaz was also evicted. The evictions were carried out on behalf of the Guatemala Nickel Co. (CGN), a subsidiary of the Vancouver-based Skye Resources Nickel Mining Co., which holds a disputed title to the lands.

Police set upon the wood-and-thatch structures dismantling them and then sacking and torching them.



Grahame Russell, co-director of Rights Action, a Connecticut-based group that supports Kekchi land reclamation efforts, called the actions illegal, and protested that '483 families were made homeless in less than 48 hours.'

He said the evictions show a deep iniquity in the Guatemalan legal system. 'The local communities that have lived there forever don't have title. It never gets resolved, because the courts do not work when its issues pertaining to human rights or the rights of the poor. They only work when companies come along and want an eviction order.'

In a press release, Skye Resources called the Kekchi 'squatters who had been illegally occupying' CGN lands.

The dispute goes back to the 1960s, when the Canadian mining giant INCO started to buy or force out local campesinos. At the time, human rights violations were widespread. In 1999, the UN Truth Commission for Guatemala found INCO directly responsible for killings and other rights abuses. INCO bought other lands from the Guatemalan government on very favorable terms.

Under INCO's local subsidiary, EXMIBAL, open pit mining began in 1979. Operations halted in 1981, and the lands lay vacant and unproductive for decades. In 2004, Skye purchased the mining leases and announced plans to resume operations.



In September 2006, hundreds of landless Kekchi families moved back to El Estor to reclaim their territories. Dona Fidelia, an elder in La Revolucion, told Rights Action: 'We are recuperating our lands, not invading them. Some of us were born on these lands, before any mining company arrived in the area. ... EXMIBAL was not here first, our parents were.'

(Pics © Mimundo.org)

Honduras

Protest mount against mining giant ©Inter Press Service News Agency (February 2007)

Dangerous levels of lead and arsenic have been found in the blood of Honduran villagers living downstream from a controversial gold and silver mine owned by Canada's Goldcorp Inc., the world's third largest gold mining firm. The tests were conducted on people living near the San Martín mine in San Ignacio, a municipality located in the central Siria Valley. The company has been the target of local and international protests since it opened in 1999.

Goldcorp in its mines uses a water-based sodium cyanide solution poured over huge piles of ore to separate the gold. The used cyanide solution is a deadly toxin and has to be carefully stored. This process is in common use, but environmental experts says it consumes huge amounts of fresh water and generates highly toxic by-products, including heavy metals like mercury and arsenic, and can contaminate water sources that are used for human consumption.

The people living in the Siria Valley have long complained about the effects on their health and the water shortages

resulting from the San Martín mine. The most recent studies that detected arsenic in the blood (which can cause serious problems in the gastrointestinal, cardiovascular and nervous systems), were done at the behest of environmental groups.

The company refutes complaints from local communities and says that the people were consulted and consent obtained before starting mining in the area.

Indonesia

Rio Tinto undermines Indonesian law © Jatam (February 2007)

The foreign mining company, Rio Tinto, will continue its pursuit for mining Contract of Work (KK) in Lasamphala, Central Sulawesi. Rio Tinto is requesting concession area of 70,000 hectares, covering Central and southeast Sulawesi territories. This move undermines Indonesian law because at the time being, the House of Representatives is drafting the new mining bill to replace Mining Act No 11/1967.

Rio Tinto is intentionally avoiding the new provision on mining permit (to replace mining contract) by moving ahead before the new law is passed. Mining contract, as a form of mining license that is personalised for foreign mining investment has been criticised because most of the large-scale mining operations with contract license have disadvantaged local people. Not only has land been taken over, but also violations of human rights, social injustice, horizontal conflict and environmental damage have occurred. The contract model has also triggered dispute between regional government against the central government and the mining company. The contracts that were all decided by the central government leaves prolonged problems to the regional governments starting from conflict, a low degree of income, up to abandoning mining areas in such a damaged environment. Ironically, the mining contract is always treated as holy bible that cannot be revised.

The new draft of mining bill (Minerba bill) will replace the contract model with permit. This actually will strengthen the government's position as regulator and alter its current position as one of the parties bound with contract provisions. From the national point of interest, the permit model will benefit the country when there is a problem caused by the company and the government is to take firm action (as regulator) against it. In the past, the government has always failed to do so because fearing the company will sue it through international arbitration for breach of contract.



Jamaica

Bauxite mining and pollution © Corpwatch (February 2007)

Wheezing children, contaminated water, dead crops, a constant stench and damaged garments are what the residents of districts surrounding the Alumina Partners of Jamaica (Alpart) refinery in Nain, St Elizabeth have to deal with daily. In addition men say that the bauxite dust is rendering them impotent. Similar cries echo from New Building, Myersville, Stephens Run, Punch Bowl and other districts close to the refinery.

The mining companies claim that they follow environmental friendly procedures but the resident's tales of woe don't seem to end. The companies who claim that it is not harmful for their health dismiss the people's complaints of unbearable odor from the water! Withering vegetable crops have resulted in losses amounting to thousands of dollars for farmers. The vegetation and trees are coated with a brown dust and the water is a pale colored hue. Another complaint is of damaged clothes and lack of any compensation. Neither is any reclamation done once the mining is completed leaving the soil degraded nor unfit for growing crops.

While the bauxite companies mine and export the ore to countries like the US for big bucks it is the local community that suffer from the toxic wastes generated.

Kyrgyzstan

Protest over gold mine © NBC Central Asia (February 2007)

Protesting villagers in Kyrgyzstan's Talas region are digging their heels in as the government tries to negotiate a settlement in their dispute with a gold-mining project in the area. Although most observers believe the Kyrgyz government and the Andash Mining Company will win the dispute in the end, some say the protestors' demand for an independent environmental study should be met.

Local residents have been protesting against the mining work since it began last May. They say it deprives them of winter pastures and upsets the ecological balance in the area. The company representative said that

there were only a few who were protesting against the mine and that environmental matters are regulated by Kyrgyzstan's emergencies ministry, and if the company were to cause any environmental harm it would be subject to large fines and damage payments.

New Zealand

Goldmine residents' get \$1500 compo-Waihi woman successful fight to get compensation © Waikato Times (February 2007)

A Waihi woman who led the charge for compensation for people affected by noise and dust from gold mining is leaving town, as the deal appears done.

In a landmark decision, the company has agreed to pay up to \$1,500 a year to about 100 residents living nearest to Waihi's Martha Mine.

Collette Spalding, the secretary of the Waihi Distressed Residents Action Team, has been a long-time crusader for compensation payments from gold mining company Newmont Waihi Gold for homeowners affected by noise, vibration and dust. Miss Spalding - who used to live one street away from the mine and later moved to three streets away - said she and her family were now leaving town for the peace of the King Country and 'some quality of life'. She was leaving town later this month.

Despite moving away from Waihi, she would continue the drive for compensation for residents, she said.

Others further away but still affected by the mine's activities could be in for up to \$1,000 annually but final compensation figures had yet to be decided. The impending deal is being heralded as a world first. Miss Spalding, who has lived in Waihi for 35 years, said she was pleased that the mining company acknowledged it caused suffering to residents with noise, dust and vibrations. She said getting the company to agree to look at some form of compensation was the end of a process that had taken about 18 years.

'While they are technically allowed to carry out the activity under their (resource) consent they have to realise that this (activity) affects residents,' Miss Spalding said.



GOLD MINING INDUSTRY OF GUYANA: IMPACTS ON INDIGENOUS AMERINDIAN WOMEN

(From the report 'All that glitters: Gold mining in Guyana. The failure of government oversight and human rights of Amerindian communities' by International Human Rights Clinic, Harvard Law School, Massachusetts, March 2007.)

Mining in Guyana has had widespread negative social effects on Amerindian communities. This report focuses on one discreet set of effects of the interaction of miners and Amerindians in and around mining settlements and camps: prostitution, trafficking in persons (TIP), and violence against women. The report documents the failure of Guyanese mining regulations to prevent severe human rights abuses and devastating damage to the natural environment and the communities in which Amerindians live.

Introduction

Amerindians in Guyana constitute 7% to 8% of the population. They live primarily in scattered communities in the interior of Guyana where they often constitute the majority of the population. Poverty, inadequate education, and poor health care affect Amerindians more than any other segment of Guyana's population.

Historically, sugar cane constituted the driving force behind the Guyanese economy, but more recently, gold and diamonds have assumed a significant and increasing place in Guyana's gross domestic product (GDP) and its exports. Because gold mining takes place almost exclusively in the country's interior, where the majority of the population is indigenous, the negative effects of this industry disproportionately impact Amerindians. As indigenous peoples, Amerindians are accorded special protections under international law, which the Guyanese government has failed to uphold in the context of gold mining. The government's unwillingness to recognise Amerindian land rights, the detrimental impact of gold mining on the health of rivers, and Amerindian communities' poverty and dependence on subsistence agriculture all exacerbate the particular vulnerability of Amerindians to the negative impacts of gold mining on human health, society, and environment.

Social effects of mining on Amerindian communities

Prostitution: The mining camps are generally staffed by coastland men, who are either single or have left their families behind in the coastal settlements, and by Amerindians, who leave their villages to find temporary work. Miners in the Mahdia area report that they typically work for six to eight weeks without breaks; when the mining operation is close enough to town, they may

occasionally go to town in the evenings. When the operation is further out in the rainforest, they may only come into Mahdia once every several weeks. In this environment characterised by large numbers of single men with raw gold in their pockets, drugs and prostitution are common. While many – perhaps most – of the prostitutes in Mahdia and other mining areas are coastland women who are drawn to the landings as a means of making money; a fair number of them are women and girls from local Amerindian villages. The social impact of the prostitution of Amerindian women is felt keenly in the communities they leave behind. For example, the exposure of Amerindian women to sexually transmitted diseases, particularly HIV, means that these devastating diseases are eventually introduced into the relatively insular society of the village, a situation that may easily overcome the capacities of the rudimentary health care facilities available in the hinterlands.

Trafficking in persons (TIP): A significant number of women in Guyana are forced into prostitution through trafficking. They are kidnapped or lured through deception to mining areas and prevented by poverty or violence (actual or threatened) from leaving prostitution and returning to their communities. Young women are taken from their homes and brought to towns and cities, where they are forced into prostitution. They generally cannot escape because transportation back home is either non-existent or too expensive for them to afford. Mining areas are particularly attractive destinations for traffickers, both because of the composition of the population there and because of the ease of escaping prosecution; the light police enforcement, difficulty of transportation, transience of communities, and weakness of underlying social structures all make it very difficult to track down and catch TIP culprits in the interior. Amerindians' involvement in the trafficking problem, both as traffickers and victims, seems to stem from their proximity to mining areas, combined with their relative poverty and the lack of economic opportunities in their communities. In one case an Amerindian woman had taken advantage of the confidence of her fellow villagers to lure girls away from her home village with promises of lucrative jobs. She brought the girls to work in her store at the landing, and then forced them to prostitute themselves in order to pay for their room and board.

Rape: Another troubling consequence of the growing interactions between miners and Amerindians in the interior is sexual violence perpetrated by coastlanders against Amerindian women. Many instances of rape of Amerindian girls by miners have been reported. Amerindian men in Mahdia try to avoid working with the coastlanders on mining operations because the latter have a reputation for entering Amerindian villages without permission and having sex with Amerindian women. When Amerindian men are away from their villages working at the mines, coastland miners have been known to enter the villages and rape their wives. Amerindian women are extremely timid and many times they do not even report that they have been abused. Instead they just

move away. Police investigation and prosecution of rape cases also appears to be inadequate. A 1999 report by Amerindian groups and the Forest Peoples Programme found that in the Upper Mazaruni region, a major mining center, '[f]requent acts of sexual abuses, including rape, perpetrated against Amerindian women occur without investigation.' Roxanne George, a High Court judge and former director of public prosecution, stated that the lack of female constables and the slowness of formal justice in the interior leads to underreporting of rape and the failure to prosecute effectively in the cases in which rape is reported.

ARCHIVES

Life of Mother Jones: Miners angel, hell riser, union crusader



'I'm not a humanitarian,' she exclaimed. 'I'm a hell-raiser.' And she was.

Mary Harris 'Mother' Jones size and grandmotherly appearance belied her fiery nature. Mother Jones changed the world's perspective on labour unions and proved that women were just as dedicated and strong enough as men were to fight for the union

and miner's rights. Although labour unions are very popular today, they were rarely mentioned in the 1800s. Mary Harris helped change that.

Mother Jones was born Mary Harris in Cork, Ireland, in 1836 whose family immigrated to North America. In her early 20s, she moved to the US where she married and worked as a dressmaker. There tragedy struck. A yellow fever epidemic in 1867 took the lives of Mary's husband and all four of her children. Mary moved back to Chicago and returned to commercial dressmaking. Her interest in the labour movement grew when she sewed for wealthy Chicago families. 'I would look out of the plate glass windows and see the poor, shivering wretches, jobless and hungry, walking alongside the frozen lake front,' she said. Mary lost everything in the Great Chicago Fire of 1871. That event also changed her life drastically, and she discovered a new path to follow. She became involved in the labour movement and began to attend meetings of the newly formed Knights of Labour. She lived with the

workers, in tent colonies or in shantytowns, near the mills or in the shadow of the tipples.

In 1877, she helped in the Pittsburgh railway strike; during the 1880s she organised and ran educational meetings. In the summer of 1897 when the 9,000-member United Mine Workers Association (UMWA) called a nationwide strike of miners and tens of thousands of miners laid down their tools, Mary arrived in Pittsburgh to assist them. She agitated in the anthracite fields of eastern Pennsylvania, the company towns of West Virginia and the harsh coal camps of Colorado. She was banished from more towns and was held incommunicado in more jails in more states than any other union leader of the time.

In 1898 she helped found the Social Democratic Party. After 1890 she became involved in the struggles of coal miners and became an organiser for the UMWA, attending

Quotes from Mother Jones autobiography

'No strike was ever won without the support of the womenfolk.'

'Pray for the dead and fight like hell for the living.'

'There are no limits to which powers of privilege will not go to keep the workers in slavery.'

'My address is like my shoes: it travels with me. I abide where there is a fight against wrong.'

'The future is in labour's strong, rough hands.'

her first UMWA convention on January 25, 1901.

As a union organiser, she gained prominence for organising the wives and children of striking workers in demonstrations on their behalf. In 1903 she organised children working in mills and mines in the '*Children's Crusade*', a march from Kensington, Pennsylvania to Oyster Bay, New York, the home of President Theodore Roosevelt with banners demanding '*We want time to play!*' and '*We want to go to school!*' Though the President refused to meet with the marchers, the incident brought the issue of child labour to the forefront of the public agenda.

Mother Jones was one of the founders of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW). In 1905, she was the only woman among 27 persons who signed the manifesto that called for a convention to organise all industrial workers. She came to national attention in 1912-13, during the Paint Creek-Cabin Creek strike in West Virginia, because of the publicity resulting from frequent violence. On September 21, 1912, she led a march of miners' children through the streets of Charleston, West Virginia; on February 12, 1913, she led a protest about conditions in the strike area and was arrested. She was convicted by a military court of conspiring to commit murder and was sentenced to 20 years in prison. Her trial, conviction, and imprisonment created such a furor that the US Senate ordered a committee to investigate conditions in the West Virginia coalfields. However, on May 8, 1913, before the investigation got underway she was set free. She was 83 years old. Later in 1913 Mother Jones traveled to Colorado to participate in the yearlong strike by miners there. She was evicted from mine company property several times, but returned each time. She was arrested and imprisoned twice.

Mother Jones was especially touched by the 'machine-gun massacre' of miners and their families by National Guardsmen in a tent colony of striking miners and their families at Ludlow, Colorado, on April 20, 1914, when 20 people were killed-mostly women and children.

Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, a nationally known labour organiser, called Jones 'the greatest woman agitator of our times.' She was denounced in the US Senate as the grandmother of all agitators. Mother Jones was proud of that title and said she hoped to live to be the great grandmother of agitators.

Mother Jones developed a tactic that later became her trademark. She organised men and women to take the union pledge. The wives and men rose and pledged themselves to see that no one went to work. Mother Jones was able to utilise the element of surprise by having the miners' wives step out of their traditional roles as housewives and cause company gunmen and strikebreakers to panic by surprising and confusing them.

Mother Jones died in Silver Spring on November 30, 1930, seven months after her one-hundredth birthday.



The first class-action sexual harassment lawsuit in the USA- Lois E Jenson v Eveleth Taconite Co.

Lois E. Jenson v. Eveleth Taconite Co. was the first class-action sexual harassment lawsuit in the USA, filed in 1988 on behalf of Lois Jenson and other female workers at the EVTAC mine in Eveleth, Minnesota on the state's northern Mesabi Range, which is part of the Iron Range

Affirmative action came to the Iron Range in 1974 when the US government forced steel companies to hand over 20% of their jobs to women and minorities. The following year, a petite and feminine, single mother on welfare named Lois Jenson was hired as one of the first female

workers in the Eveleth iron mine in northern Minnesota. She worked grueling hours cleaning soot from huge grinding machines, and, along with her fellow female coworkers, endured brutal sexual and gender harassment from the men who believed women should remain at home and not compete with men for scarce jobs. (Lois was also stalked by one of her supervisors.). At first, terrified of being fired, the women remained quiet. Ultimately the harassment became intolerable, forcing them to complain; however, the company did nothing.



Devastated by the abuse, Lois eventually found the courage to file a formal grievance against the company. In 1984, she mailed a complaint to the Minnesota Human Rights Department detailing the abuse she experienced in the mines. (Soon after, her car tires were slashed in retaliation.) After reviewing the case,

the state requested that Eveleth pay \$11,000 in damages to Jenson, but the company refused. It would take Lois another 14 years, and most of her mental and physical health, to battle Eveleth.

Jenson called more than 50 lawyers before an experienced employment discrimination lawyer named Paul Sprenger accepted her case. In 1988, Sprenger filed in district court. Three years later, the case became the first sexual harassment lawsuit in history to be given class action status. Two other women had joined the case; however, frightened by the possibility of retaliation, other women who worked in the mines circulated a petition speaking out against the lawsuit. The petition stated the women never experienced sexual harassment, even though all of them had. (The women also placed a hangman's noose above Lois' workplace, and shunned her both at work and in the community.)

A liability trial began in December 1992 in St. Paul, Minnesota. Six months later, the judge ruled that the company should have prevented and stopped the misconduct. He ordered Eveleth to educate all employees about sexual harassment, and implement a sexual harassment policy. More women joined the lawsuit to claim damages, including a number who had signed the petition against the lawsuit and had testified on behalf of Eveleth Mines in the first trial.

About this time, Lois and another plaintiff in the case were diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder, and had to stop working at the mine. In 1993, a retired judge was named special master to oversee a trial to assess the amount of money the women should be paid in damages. He had 'old school' beliefs and a past history of sexual harassment. Eveleth Mines' lead counsel during this phase

was a woman, and she planned a 'nuts and sluts' defense to minimize the amount of damages awarded to each plaintiff. Her strategy involved proving that the women either caused the harassment by their own behavior towards their male coworkers, or were lying about the severity and the psychological effects.

The judge permitted Eveleth's lawyers to obtain the women's medical histories from birth, and before the trial, the plaintiffs endured close to 80 days of brutal depositions that explored their past personal and sexual lives in great detail, regardless of relevance. Said one plaintiff, 'I felt I was raped on the stand.'

The trial commenced in 1995. According to Sprenger, throughout testimony about the savage sexual harassment that occurred at the mine, the judge frequently fell asleep; when awake, he seemed to enjoy hearing about the women's ordeal. After the trial, the judge expressed much skepticism in his 1996 report, calling the women 'histrionic.' In the end, he awarded each of them only an average of \$10,000. (Soon after the trial, the judge was arrested for shoplifting.) However, the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals reversed the judgment in December 1997. This time, a jury trial was ordered.

In 1998, on the eve of the actual jury trial, the women settled with Eveleth for a total of \$3.5 million dollars. Overall, Lois and the other women went through three humiliating trials where their character and personal lives were assaulted over and over again by Eveleth's lawyers. Judge Donald Lay wrote,

'It should be obvious that the callous pattern and practice of sexual harassment engaged in by Eveleth Mines inevitably destroyed the self-esteem of the working women exposed to it. The emotional harm, brought about by this record of human indecency, sought to destroy the human psyche as well as the human spirit of each plaintiff. The humiliation and degradation suffered by these women is irreparable. Although money damage cannot make these women whole or even begin to repair the injury done, it can serve to set a precedent that in the environment of the working place such hostility will not be tolerated.'

Throughout the process, Eveleth paid more than 15 millions dollars in legal fees and settlements. All of this could have been avoided simply if they had been willing to implement a sexual harassment policy. Instead, Jenson vs. Eveleth Mines became the first sexual harassment class-action lawsuit in America, and changed the legal system as well as lives of the women who fought the war.

