

An abstract painting by Noelle Lee depicting a landscape. The foreground features a river with dark, swirling lines. The middle ground shows a forest of dark, stylized trees. The background is a vibrant, colorful sky with a large, bright sun or moon in the upper right corner. The overall style is expressive and painterly.

CANADIAN MINING IMPACTS AND RESISTANCE MOVEMENTS

Cover art: Noelle Lee



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This handout was created on the overlapping unceded, ancestral, and stolen land of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish), and Tsleil-Waututh Nations. The creators of this handout live, laugh, love, and organize on what is currently called Vancouver. As majority non-Indigenous organizers and uninvited guests on this land, we recognize our complicity in the settler colonial project.

The handout was created by students in support of the Mining Justice Alliance. Through information, art, and poetry, we aim to expose the impacts of Canadian mining practices in Latin America and highlight mining resisters.

With this in mind, we ask that you reflect on your own positioning in relation to the Indigenous land we stand on, and the advancement of Canada's settler colonial project through mining.

ABOUT THE MINING INDUSTRY GALA:

May has been proclaimed “Mining Month” here in British Columbia, Canada. The Mining Association of British Columbia (MABC) is the voice of BC’s mining operations that make up the province’s reputation as a leading jurisdiction for mining. The MBAC is holding an opening reception on May 1st where they will announce their Mining Person of the Year award. This award recognizes “an outstanding individual who has shown leadership in advancing and promoting the mining industry in British Columbia”.

Illustrious past winners include Pierre Lebel of Imperial Metals (whose Mount Polley Mine spilled an estimated 25 million cubic metres of mining waste into Quesnel Lake) and John McManus of Taseko Mines (which has repeatedly pushed to build their New Prosperity Mine, despite firm opposition from the Tsilhqot’in Nation).

The Mining Justice Alliance is holding its second annual counter-gala for their “Mining Resisters of the Year” awards celebration. This event protests BC Mining Month and an industry that often destroys communities, devastates ecosystems, and funnels profits into tax havens. The reception will feature hors d’oeuvres, music, speakers, and fancy dress.

This counter-gala will commend individuals and communities on the frontlines who have stood up for justice and self-determination in the face of this powerful industry. Please join us in celebration and protest!



CANADA'S INVOLVEMENT IN MINING:

Canadian-headquartered mining companies account for over half of the world's total mining companies.

As of 2013, 1500 Canadian mining companies operated in over 100 countries around the world.

Canadian mining has a long history of exploitation and violence.



Canadian owned mines harm communities and ecosystems.



The toxic by-products of the mines contaminate the lands, waters, and air, negatively affecting the health of the community and decreasing agricultural yields.



Those that resist mining companies and defend their lands are often met with violence: ranging from assaults by mining security to the targeted assassination of prominent community members and activists.



Mining projects displace communities from their lands, threatening their physical, social, cultural, and spiritual well-being.

Case Study: HudBay Minerals

HudBay Minerals operated and abandoned Spruce Point mine in Manitoba, leaving a wetland heavily polluted and devoid of life decades after closing. HudBay ignored the sovereignty of the Nation of Missinippi Nehethowak and built a mine on their lands without consent or legal consultation.

<https://www.wildernesscommittee.org/news/wc-exposes-provincial-park-bog-polluted-toxic-mine-waste-ahead-international-bog-day>

<https://www.thompsoncitizen.net/news/nickel-belt/first-nation-demands-hudbay-stop-work-on-mine-near-snow-lake-1.1372230>



SPOTLIGHT ON LATIN AMERICA:

Over half of Canadian-controlled mining properties are located in Latin America.

A recent study implicated Canadian mining companies in 44 deaths and 403 injuries in Latin America from 2000 to 2015. 363 of these injuries occurred during protests or other confrontations between members of local communities and mining personnel.

A study commissioned by PDAC (Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada), which investigated international mining corporations' involvement in human rights violations, community conflict, and illegal and unethical practices, linked more Canadian mining companies to these incidents than those from any other country.

There are countless stories of violence linked to Canadian mining companies.

HudBay Minerals security forces allegedly murdered, injured, and raped several members of an Indigenous Maya Q'eqchi' community in Guatemala. HudBay is facing three separate lawsuits in Canadian courts due to this violence.

https://aboveground.ngo/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Cases_22January2019.pdf

Goldcorp's mines in Guatemala and Mexico have too often been at the centre of violent--even deadly--conflicts.

<https://justice-project.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/the-canada-brand-report5.pdf>

Barrick Gold security forces have allegedly killed 65 and injured 270 people in Tanzania since 2006.

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/international-business/african-and-mideast-business/police-killed-65-injured-270-at-tanzanian-mine-inquiry-hears/article32013998/>

CANADA'S PENSION PLAN:

Canada's Pension Plan (CPP) is basically a retirement fund for Canadian citizens. By depositing ~6% of their monthly income into the fund, they ensure that they can receive monthly benefits after retiring.



The money we deposit into the pension plan for our retirement is used to buy shares in other companies, such as mining companies.

These 5 companies take up more than half of the shares bought using funds from the pension plan:

- Entertainment One
- Seven Generations Energy
- TORC Oil & Gas
- Canadian Natural Resources
- WSP Global

Canadian and B.C. union and public pension funds, especially the CPP, have some \$3.5 billion invested in mining corporations (along with arms manufacturers and the tobacco industry).

Recognizing that the funds that Canadians use for their retirement is consistently invested in extractive industries helps us to recognize how we are complicit in the mining economy as well as the violent impact it has on local communities.

VANCOUVER'S INVOLVEMENT IN MINING:

The site of over 800 mining corporations headquarters,

Vancouver is the world's mining capital.

Vancouver's hospital foundations, cancer centres, arts organizations and children's charities are funded by mining companies repeatedly accused of water contamination and violent repression. The names of these mining companies are plastered on the walls of our university campuses and tourist attractions. But stories of devastation from mine-affected communities are rarely reported in our mainstream media.

There have been countless accounts of violence allegedly performed by Vancouver based mining companies. Here are just a few:



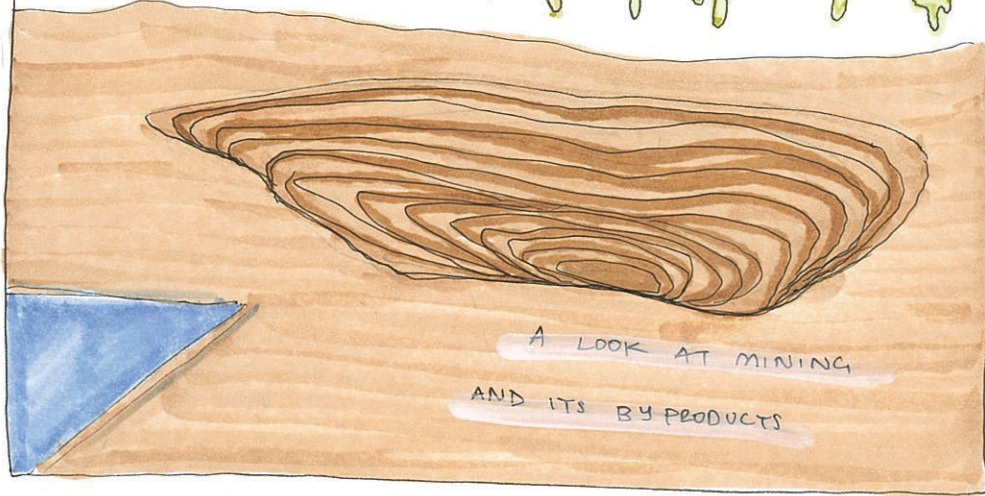
Nevsun Resources, based in Vancouver, is facing 11 lawsuits from over 80 plaintiffs who are seeking damages for Nevsun's alleged use of forced labour, slavery, torture, and other crimes against humanity in Eritrea.
<https://www.cciij.ca/cases/nevsun/>
<https://www.siskinds.com/class-action/nevsun-resources/>



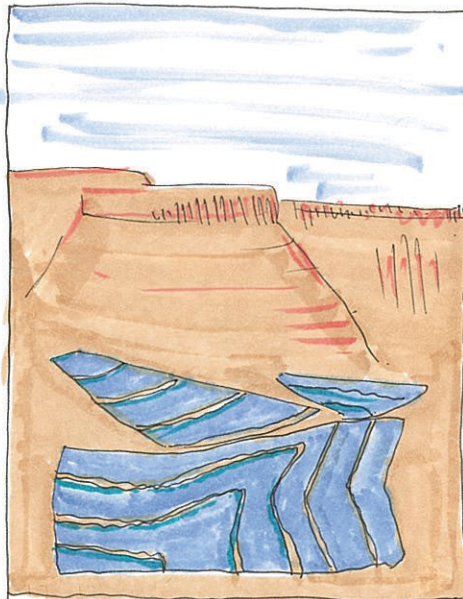
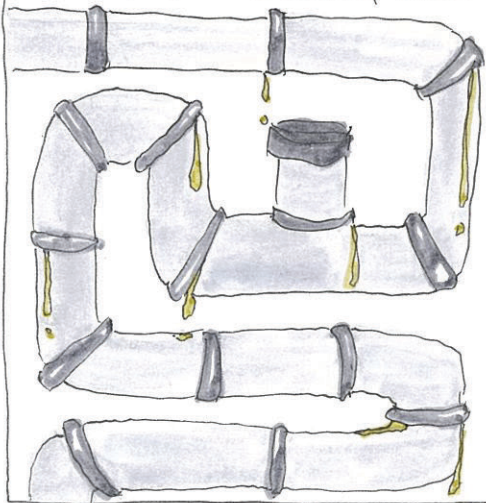
Tahoe Resources, founded in Vancouver, is being sued by a group of seven Guatemalans who were allegedly shot at and injured by Tahoe security workers during a peaceful protest.
<https://tahoeontrial.net/>



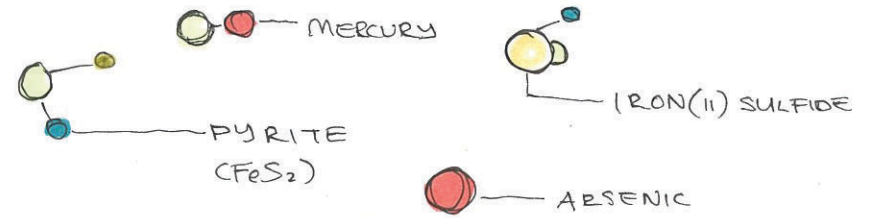
WHAT ARE TAILINGS?



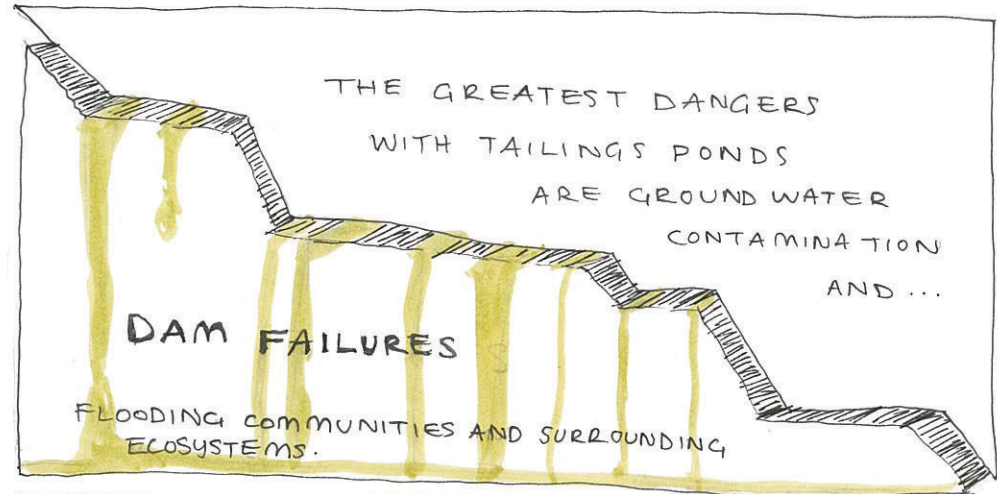
TAILINGS, ALSO KNOWN AS
MINE DUMPS, ARE THE
WASTE MATERIALS LEFT
OVER FROM MINES
AFTER PROCESSING ORE.



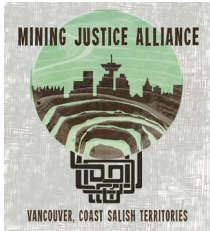
IT IS OFTEN A MIX OF
FINE WASTE PARTICLES
MIXED INTO A SLURRY
WITH WATER...



... AND THESE WASTE PARTICLES CAN BE HIGHLY TOXIC.



RESISTANCE ORGANIZATIONS:



Mining Justice Alliance

A Vancouver-based group of activists, social organizations, unionists and students allied in response to shared concerns about the practices of Vancouver based mining companies in Canada, the Americas, and around the globe.

<https://miningjusticealliance.wordpress.com/>



Mining Watch Canada

Blog, updates, information, and action requests on Canadian mining law, policies, corporate accountability, and environmental issues.

<https://miningwatch.ca/>



Mining Justice Action Committee

Advocacy and peaceful action for change. Raising awareness about unethical international mining practices by Canadian corporations and their connections with investment, laws, and foreign policy in Canada.

<http://mjacvictoria.ca/>



UBC Social Justice Centre

A resource group that works toward progressive social change, inclusivity, and equity through a survivor-centric, harm reduction, radical, feminist, decolonial, anti-oppression framework.

<https://www.facebook.com/ubcsocialjusticecentre/>



Intercontinental Cry

News and film on the world's Indigenous peoples; many posts are about environmental and human rights struggles in the face of extractive projects.

<https://intercontinentalcry.org/>

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Solidarity Actions!

Discover ways to support Indigenous sovereignty and grassroots environmental protection movements in Canada and elsewhere.



Raise awareness!

Share information, show a film, or arrange for a speaker about mining justice at local conferences, public events, or in your community, workplace, local libraries or school, etc. Send a letter to the editors of local papers; call radio or TV phone-in shows; write an article for a newsletter, or your local community paper.



Advocate!

Work with your friends, neighbours, unions or associations to demand pension reforms, lobby politicians, and build support for legislation that would hold Canadian corporations accountable.



Divest!

Withdraw your own investments in harmful extractive projects. Demand full, public, and ethical funding for local arts and culture, education, health, and social welfare programs, and reject 'goldwash' or 'greenwash' funding from companies that engage in mega-extraction.



Activism!

When you participate in protests and campaigns against a harmful extractive project, you discourage investment by creating a climate of uncertainty and financial 'risk'.



Get in touch!

The Vancouver-based Mining Justice Alliance (MJA) welcomes members and allies with creative ideas to end mining injustice and support the self-determination of mining-affected communities.

POETRY: CALLS TO ACTION

because i am part of the problem i can also become part of
the solution
although i am part of the problem i can also become part of
the solution
where i am part of the problem i need to be part of the solution
while i am part of the problem i can also be part of the solution
one part silt one part clear running water one part blood love
sweat
not tar but tears, e inserts a listening, witnessing, quickening eye
broken but rebinding, token but reminding, vocal buck
unwinding
the machine's gears rust in rain, moss & lichen slowly creep life
back
the rate of reclamation is humble while the rate of destruction
blasts fast
because we are part of the problem we can also become part of
the solution

Who are we? We are the beings who need clean water in order to live a life of dignity, joy and good relation. Maybe you are a part of "us" without even knowing that you are. Maybe we are the one who are too often taken for granted or ignored, the quiet witnesses to atrocities, greed, mean-spirited hierarchies, hostages of capitalism. Maybe we are remembering what it means to respect water, because doing so is to respect ourselves, our shared, fluid vulnerability, our funny contradictions, our stumbling, dancing, crying, laughing, eating, drinking, pissing, working, playing, burping, farting, messy selves. Maybe we are the thunderstorms that precipitate when too much has been repressed, the weeds that refuse to stop, the coyotes, the grandmothers, the yet unborn. Maybe we are flash floods, demoralized workers, the hospitalized, the angry entitled children who don't even remember to thank the water that keeps them alive. Maybe we are system change as well as climate change. Dripping & spitting, we rise.

Excerpts from Declaration of Intent, from Rita Wong, Undercurrent (2015) Nightwood Editions.

Rita Wong is a Vancouver-based activist who has generously allowed us to share her words in this handbook. Through poetry we hope to highlight spaces for art as a method of resistance and resurgence of alternative ways of being to dominant forms of extractive capitalism. Mining, as depicted here, is only one part of the exploitative, destructive system.