

ENCA

Environmental Network *for* Central America

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www.enca.org.uk

Berta Cáceres

Tributes to winner of Goldman
Environmental Prize

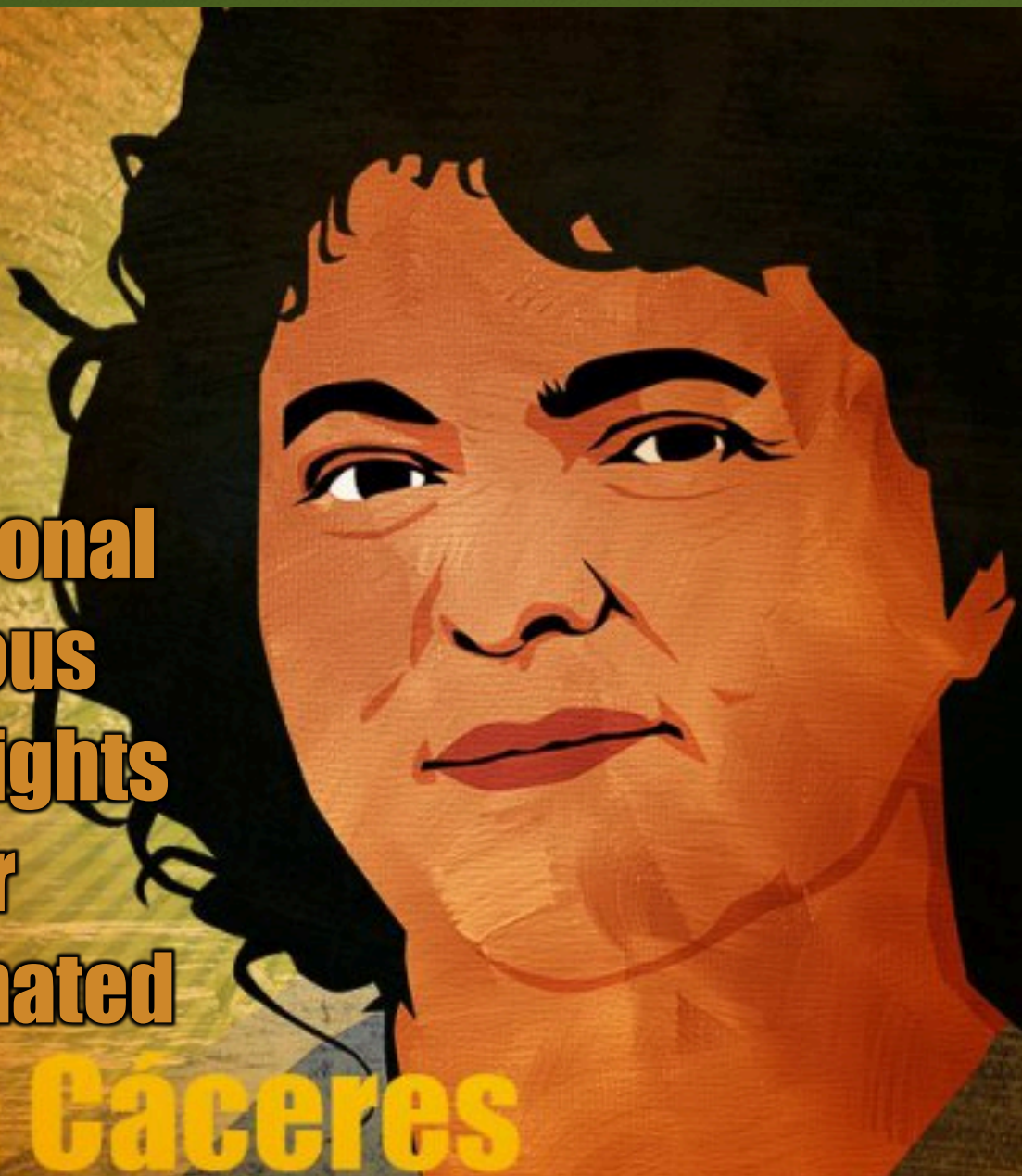
Muralismo

Building solidarity in Honduras
through art

TTIP

As negotiations begin again,
what can we learn from CA?

**Inspirational
Indigenous
human rights
defender
assassinated
Berta Cáceres**





ENCA aims to work directly with people in communities who are seeking to arrest environmental degradation and who are often struggling against the repression and violence of armies and police forces acting under the command of wealthy individuals, transnational corporations and corrupt politicians. We campaign with them to place environmental rights within national constitutions and to ensure that all natural resources are made to benefit the many and not the few.

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Berta Cáceres

In the early morning of Thursday 3rd March Berta Cáceres was murdered when armed men broke into her home while she slept. Berta was one of Honduras' most well-known and respected campaigners, a leader of the struggle for

indigenous rights, human rights and environmental protection. She was the director of COPINH – the Council of

Indigenous and Popular Organisations of Honduras which has featured heavily in ENCA's newsletters and web articles in recent years.

Berta has always faced threats of violence and murder for her work. Because of this the Inter-American Commission for Human Rights accorded her Precautionary Measures – meaning the Honduran state was obliged to protect her. Last year she was awarded the prestigious international Goldman Environmental Prize – a prize that exists in part to raise the profile of threatened environmental campaigners and help protect them from violence. In Honduras none of this was enough. Honduras is a country steeped in government corruption, pillaged by international companies who suck out its resources for rock-bottom prices, and intimidated by a military funded heavily by the United States to protect their economic interests.

Berta's bravery and strength were clear to anyone who met her - she made it clear she would never give up fighting for the rights of her communities regardless of the danger to her. The people responsible for her death sought

to silence her and terrorise the communities she supported. They have underestimated the esteem with which she was held internationally, and the passion which

her memory will instill in those who knew her. Within hours of the news of her death, vigils and protests were being organised globally. Her name was featuring in articles in major global newspapers. The Honduran government was forced to release a statement, and others sent statements of condemnation that this could have been allowed to happen.

Berta Cáceres' name will always be synonymous with a spirit of resistance that joins the dots from international exploitation by amoral corporations, to the long history of Central America's socioeconomic elite's corruption and violence, to the destruction of the environment, homes and people. Her death will only see this spirit reflected more and more in those who remain to continue this fight.

James Watson



March 3rd, 2016 - The Day Berta Cáceres Was Assassinated

Berta: Who She Is and What She Lived For

Rights Action is a North American organisation which supports and advocates for grassroots organisations in the northern triangle of Central America – that is, El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras – the organisation has supported and worked with COPINH and Berta Cáceres since 1998. ENCA is happy to collaborate with Rights Action and has benefitted on numerous occasions from the on-the-ground information provided by Rights Action. Rights Action director Grahame Russell wrote the following piece in response to the assassination of Berta.

Berta Cáceres, a great Lenca woman from western Honduras, was assassinated early this morning.

She was killed because of who she is, because of what she lived, stood and fought for, her whole life. And for her life, *sicarios* (paid assassins) broke into her home in La Esperanza, Intibucá, Honduras, and shot her dead in the dark of early morning, March 3, 2016.

A mother of four children, a grandmother, a sister and daughter.

And, to all who knew her, learned from her, got strength, courage and wisdom from her, followed her, a *compañera*.

Who Killed Her?

She was killed by all those people and economic and political institutions whose greed and interests she lived, stood and fought against. Berta lived against all injustices, all inequalities, all discriminations, all Mother Earth destroying activities.

She was killed ...

by 500 years of European racist, violent, dispossessing imperialism, by 200 years of U.S. military interventions, exploitation, corruption and impunity,



by generations of violent and exploitative, racist and sexist 'governments' of Honduras, ... all propped up, all the time, by the 'international community': the United States, Canada, global corporations, the IMF, World Bank, IDB, ...

Berta was killed ...

by eons of patriarchy, by centuries of racism against the Indigenous and Afro-descendant peoples of Honduras and the Americas, by the greed-conceived and violence-imposed 'free trade' agreements of the Americas, by the inherent, endless avarice of global corporations and investors, supported all the time by the wealth and power of rich 'democratic' nations (many being members of the exclusive and despicable G8 club) that exploit, repress and denigrate the 'third world', that make, prop up and mock 'banana republics', by the IMF, World Bank, IDB - institutions created and dominated by those same rich, powerful 'democratic' nations.

Berta was killed ...

by corporations and investors who conceive of the world – its forests and earth, its natural resources, its rivers, waters and air, its people and all life forms – as exploitable and discardable objects, and then steal, kill and destroy mightily to make their millions and billions, by the infamous banana monopolies (United Fruit Company, etc.) and railway barons of the 1800s and 1900s; by the producers of African palm

As a part of me dies
with Berta, a huge
part of Berta lives on.

(World Bank funded Dinant corporation, etc.) and sugarcane for global consumers of 'green energies' (ethanol and bio-diesel fuels); by maquiladora sweatshop exploiters of cheap labour (Gildan Inc., etc.); by hydro-electric dam companies (DESA Agua Zarca) profiting from privatized rivers and water sources; by exclusive tourism enclaves (operated by the Canadian Randy 'porn king' Jorgensen) violently evicting

indigenous Garífuna peoples from their communal lands on Honduras' north shore; by mining companies (Goldcorp Inc.) ripping apart Mother Earth for gold profiteers, poisoning the waters of the Siria Valley and the blood of local residents.

Berta was killed ...

by the U.S. created, funded and armed 'war on drugs' that took undemocratic and unjust, corrupt and violent situations in Honduras, Guatemala, Mexico and made them worse, all while drug consumption in the U.S. increases, while profits to the weapons producers increase, while tax-payers' money to the military establishments increase.

Most recently, Berta was killed ...

by the U.S. and Canadian backed military coup in June 2009, that ousted a democratically elected government and brought back to power the same elites that for so long have dominated and abused Honduras; who – once back in power - took all the above and made it worse again, who use repression as a tool of societal terrorism and control, hiring *sicarios* to target and kill so many hundreds of people since the coup, people like Berta.

The U.S. and Canada helped kill Berta. Seven years after the coup, Honduras has the highest per capita murder rate in the world, and amongst the highest rates of repression, femicide, journalist killings, corruption and impunity in the Americas. Ignoring all this, the U.S. and Canadian

governments sign 'free trade' agreements and promote the expansion of mining, tourism, sweatshop, banana, companies and investments.

Berta was killed by all these people, institutions and interests, because – as anyone will tell you who knew her, learned from her, got strength, courage and wisdom from her, followed her – these are the things she lived against, stood and struggled against, all her life.

What Did She Live, Stand and Struggle For?

For you and me and everyone. For your rights and mine. For all human rights, collective and individual, of all people, in all countries. For all life forms, and for Mother Earth herself – the earth, fields and forests, the air and water, and all life forms on this most precious and solitary of planets. Berta lived, stood and struggled for another world is necessary and possible.

What To Do?

I am desperately sorry for Berta's children, her mother, her sisters and brothers, her family and friends in La Esperanza, and Honduras, and across the Americas. My heart today is again broken by this global human order we live in.

As a part of me dies with Berta, a huge part of Berta lives on.

What to do? Do what Berta would do, what she always did. Live, stand and struggle together. Hold hands. Give one another *abrazos* (hugs). Reach out to and support the so many victims of this global order. And always live, stand and struggle against all injustices and inequalities, all discriminations, all Mother Earth destroying activities, and for another world is necessary and possible.

Thank-you Berta. You are so utterly missed. You are so completely loved and respected.

Grahame Russell
grahame@rightsaction.org

(I met Berta in 1998. Rights Action has supported COPINH and Berta's work and struggle since that time. Berta and her family became very dear friends over this time.)

What To Do

Go to the Rights Action website – www.rightsaction.org – and click on the 'Donate' button to find out about the different ways of making a donation. Rights Action will be setting up funds to support Berta's family and COPINH's on-going work for justice and fundamental transformation and change in Honduras.



More on Berta Cáceres' assassination.

Readers may like to visit a number of websites where video clips of Berta may be viewed.

In 2015, Berta was awarded the prestigious Goldman Environmental Prize. For information about the reasons for her nomination for the Goldman Environmental Prize and for her inspirational acceptance speech, go to: <http://www.goldmanprize.org/recipient/berta-caceres/> The Goldman video outlining why she was awarded the prize and the video of her acceptance speech can also be viewed at: <https://theviolenceofdevelopment.com/berta-caceres-receives-the-goldman-environmental-prize-2015/>

A photo slide show of memorial demonstrations for Berta has been set up by Daniel Langmeier and is a moving illustration of how global was her reputation and how high is the esteem in which she is held. It can be found at:

<http://s1070.photobucket.com/user/bertacaceres/slideshow/?sort=3>

And for this issue, a last word from ENCA expressing our anger as well as sadness at Berta's death.

Honduras is a failed state, thanks largely to the Clintons and the US who were happy to let it sink into a state in which US transnational companies could operate with no meaningful regulations, oversight or monitoring, who allowed a coup to overthrow a democratically elected president in 2009 when it would have been perfectly feasible to prevent it and who have continued since 2009 to promote its 'return to democracy' which has been anything but a return to democracy. We aren't in favour of US intervention, but the coup only went ahead because of tacit US approval when Hillary Clinton was US Secretary of State.

Honduras now has the highest homicide rate in the world and offers human rights defenders no security whatsoever, even when the government has been ordered by the Inter-American Commission for Human Rights to provide protection

for specific individuals or groups such as Berta and COPINH. Since the 2009 coup the gang culture has grown hugely and has intertwined itself with organised crime, which in turn has intertwined itself with the security forces of the country (mostly US-trained), which in turn have intertwined themselves with the business elite and the few families which make up the oligarchic rule over the government elite. There is now little or no difference between organised criminals and government politicians and no difference between the security forces and the hired assassins – many gang members and hitmen are hired from the ranks of the police and the army.

A sad and sorry state of affairs, made so much more sad and sorry and desperate as a result of the loss of the leading light of Berta Cáceres. ENCA will continue to support COPINH in whatever ways we are able to.



ENCA members joined the vigil for Berta outside the Honduran Embassy in London

Muralismo

Exploring the integralist and collectivist tradition in Lenca Honduran protest art

Doug Specht¹ and James Watson²

This article is based on a year of conversations and work with Javier Espinal, an Indigenous Lenca artist, who travelled to Europe in 2015 to highlight the injustices in Honduras and to share the process of Muralismo.

To understand art, and the motivations of artists such as Javier Espinal, we must first understand the conditions from which it is born. In 2009 a military coup deposed the democratically elected president of Honduras and put in place a right wing junta. Since this time the country has descended into being the murder and repression capital of the world. Highly suspect elections, supported by many Western nations, have since consolidated the Right's power, while presenting an illusion of democracy to the international community. Resistance to the neoliberal regime has been fierce, but has been met with equally fierce rebuttals. This violence has been used by the authorities to justify the militarisation of the country. The regular police have become secondary to the expanding 'Tigres' military police, who now roam the country from cities to the campo armed with assault rifles.

A sense of hopelessness has descended across much of the country as unemployment spirals out of control. In cities such as San Pedro Sula gang culture has taken over. Drug cartels are able to offer young people a role, and status, and their injections of money have fuelled yet more violence. This despite the proposed benefits of

Honduras becoming a free trade haven. Multinationals have poured into the country since the coup, especially from the extractive industries – logging, mining and increasingly damming rivers to export hydroelectric energy. In the last couple of years a staggering near 30% of the country's land area has been sold as mining concessions. Meanwhile, Honduras' so called 'model cities' project may be the greatest sell out of national integrity seen in the world – selling large areas of the nation into corporate hands, to be run as semi-independent cities with their own rock bottom taxes, salaries and labour standards.

This is the reality of neoliberal, free trade-based macroeconomic development. International corporations provide so called 'investment', while employing as few local people as possible, at the lowest wages possible. They invest as little as they can, while sucking out resources and produce. This process, fuelled by corruption at the highest levels, is the reason for the descent into violence since 2009. Yet those who speak out against these economic adjustments, or in defence of human rights and the environment place themselves at increasing risk of execution and disappearance.

Despite the hopelessness in some quarters, the stoic resolve of the Honduran people continues to resist and fight for their rights and dignity, a pattern seen across Latin America in the face of the neoliberal onslaught. One such way that the resistance to the coup manifests itself is through the use of collective art projects, a process known as *muralismo*. Throughout 2015 we were privileged to spend time with Honduran artist Javier Espinal as he worked for ten months across Europe highlighting the plight of the Honduran people and working on collectivist art

projects. This short article explores the integralist ideology behind his work and what this means for resistance movements both in Honduras and here in Europe.

Integralism is a tradition according to which a nation is an organic unity. Integralism defends social differentiation and hierarchy with co-operation between social classes, transcending conflict between social and economic groups. For Javier, and the Lenca peoples, integralism is a spiritual position, ever present in Central American indigenous culture, which says that human individuals, animals and the natural world are all diverse and different, but are all linked to each other and are all equally important. Javier's collective mural painting started in Honduras where he is from, and from where there is a strong tradition of *muralismo* that tells local stories and empowers communities and individuals. This tradition is also present across Central America, a region that has been faced with violence from both without and within throughout much of its modern history.

Integralism celebrates each of us as ourselves, as important actors, contributing to the diversity of the universe. We are equal with each other, and we are equal with the rest of the universe that we share. Javier's description of Integralism sees people each as individual colourful and distinct threads, but each one woven together into the fabric of the universe itself. Individually we are bright and equal parts of the whole, but we go together to make up this iridescent multi-coloured tapestry. We're distinct from one another, but we all rely on each other and the universe, of which we're part, for support.

It is this deep-rooted and embodied sense of equality, diversity and sharing

¹ Doug Specht is a Research Associate with the Communication and Media Research Institute at the University of Westminster, he also directs the Voz Human Rights mapping project.

² James Watson worked closely with Javier Espinal during his time in Europe and curated an exhibition of his work at the Institute of Latin American Studies.

that informs the collective nature of Javier's art. Collectivist art for Javier involves a whole community in its creation. Generally producing large murals in open public spaces, the community - including people just passing in the street - are invited into the shared space to take part in the painting. The creative process of the work itself was also a collective work in itself.

Javier's work was not art just for the sake of art. His work forms part of a vibrant resistance movement, which has continued to grow since the 2009 coup. The process of painting and creation of such murals can, he says, "serve as a form of subversive dissemination of resistance themes". They express the assault by the oligarchy and their military support on the indigenous and cultural heritage of Honduras. Yet, by expressing this through art they go under the radar of the authorities - becoming a form of resistance "hidden in plain sight". They serve as a tool of empowerment and a rallying point for communities against the authorities.

While the finished art works themselves may not depict the kind of strong anti-regime sentiments seen in the Zapatista tradition, it is the process in itself that is the protest. The collective act of *muralismo* is about reducing the sense of alienation, and actively brings people into its process and makes them a part of it. Javier laments the alienation created by the Honduran ruling classes, "people are no longer connected to their surroundings, or their own culture". This kind of enforced alienation is used as a further weapon against the people. It supports people's ignorance and apathy towards global economic injustice and destruction of the environment.

While the situation in Honduras is one of pure desperation on the part of many, the parallels between events in Europe and Honduras were as clear to Javier as they were numerous. The same forced alienation that feeds apathy in Honduras breeds hatred toward foreigners in Europe. This manifests itself both in our own communities and without - the so called refugee crisis and the rise of right

wing political groups are just two ways in which the ugly face of alienation rears its head in Europe - a situation likely to get worse before it gets better as the bitter war in Syria continues to displace yet more civilians causing a humanitarian catastrophe on our doorstep. This kind of alienation forms a backdrop to our current Western society, leaving us impotent to change.

Javier highlighted these parallels as he worked with communities in the UK, Italy and Spain. As he does with his work in Honduras he aimed to support communities in being strong in their own sense of identity, to fight this alienation. Through unearthing local stories - such as the Victorian era train track that runs through Irlam in Manchester - the murals give people both a sense of identity within themselves, and within their communities. He said he found this harder in Europe than in Honduras. "In Europe people didn't think they'd be able to be artists" he said. Javier felt this was part of the loss of our sense of creativity or connection to the universe - the loss of a sense of integralism, which has come about through Western Individualism and Fatalism. In this he felt strongly that the Western culture has lost something, something that Indigenous Central American art can help us see again.

Integralism expresses an important alternative to what is happening in both Honduras and in Europe. In Honduras his art offers alternatives to youths and communities otherwise seemingly

doomed to being ensnared in gang warfare and militarisation. His indigenous message offers a spring of resistance against the economic exploitation and military repression that supports this violence, creating hope in a country under the thumb of a rich elite and global business interests. In Europe it helps to arrest the alienation that closes us off from one another, and takes away our hope that there are alternatives to what we are given. Important as we are increasingly faced with a right wing political and economic message that says that there is no alternative to their agenda, that there is no alternative to Austerity, to the erosion of our rights, to the loss of democratic power to big businesses as seen in free trade agreements like TTIP.

Resistance in Honduras continues to grow, the *Indignados* have unquestionably changed the face of Honduran politics through 2015, but the military and *Tigres* continue to be used to suppress local resistance to expropriation of resources for the country's rich and for selling onto the global market. As rivers are dammed, forests logged, land sold off, a desperate population is pushed into the hands of gangs, and those who resist are silenced. The resulting militarisation plays into the hands of the economic and social elites of Honduras. Javier and many grassroots organisers in Honduras believe that the corrupt authorities support the gangs in places they want to control with terror - not dissimilar to the way in which the war in Colombia has been used in recent years.



The message that Javier and the integralist and collectivist tradition of Honduran and Lenca protest art brings is one of strong community spirit, of an integral and equal value to all of us alongside nature and the universe, and seeks to empower us. Javier's time and work in Europe has served as a point of contact between our countries. His work and the Indignados movement in Honduras reflect just how powerful we can be, together – we must resist alienation, be it through military oppression in Honduras or divisive political rhetoric in Europe. We are each a *“colourful and distinct thread, but we are all woven together into the fabric of the universe itself”*. Integralism and the Lenca tradition remind us that there is an alternative. It is we, the masses, our communities, the grassroots organisers and the artists – **WE are the alternative**.

Auction for original acrylic by Javier Espinal – support the indigenous Lenca Resistance in Honduras

Javier left one of his paintings with ENCA. Raices Ancestrales, en las Sonrisas Infantiles (Ancestral Races, in the Children's smiles) is a beautiful and powerful 100 x 70cm acrylic on canvas piece. It was inspired by seeing African refugees in Italy, and the divisions and racism that are a part of European society and have been exported to the rest of the world. Its sense of connection conveys the indigenous integralist message which transcends these divisions.

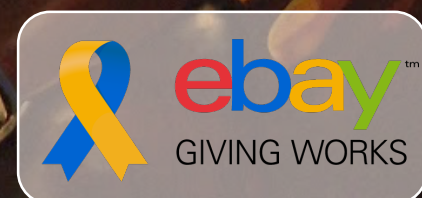
ENCA will auction this work on eBay, starting with a £200 reserve (although it is worth considerably more than this). The winning bid money will be sent directly to Javier to support his work with COPINH's communities around Rio

Blanco. Javier is planning an international art conference to raise the communities' profile and express their stories in public art. The work will empower and strengthen their identity and their struggle at this darkest of times. This is a very unique and special way to connect to and support the Lenca – please bid generously and spread the word to others who might want to.

To bid:

enca.org.uk/auction

More of Javier's work can be seen on his blog:
<http://javierespinal.blogspot.co.uk/>



18 Former Guatemalan Military Officers Arrested for Crimes Against Humanity

Here we include a very few extracts from a report by Annie Bird on 7th January 2016.

On 6th January Guatemalan authorities arrested 18 high-ranking Guatemalan military officers on charges of crimes against humanity and forced disappearance.

The crimes with which they are charged were part of operations conducted from a military base in the department of Cobán between 1981 and 1988, including acts that formed part of the Maya Achi genocide. Exhumations at the base in 2012 recovered remains from over 550 victims – a fraction of the tens of thousands of killings the military is believed to have conducted in Alta and Baja Verapaz.

These prosecutions are the result of over 20 years of efforts by the victims, coupled with hard-fought gains in cleaning up corruption in the justice system promoted by human rights and judicial reform activists. ADIVIMA, the association of Maya Achi genocide victims, is a co-complainant in the prosecution, along with the national victims associations, the Association of Relatives of the Detained/Disappeared in Guatemala (FAMDEGUA) and the Mutual Support Group (GAM).

The full article by Annie Bird can be found at:

<http://www.cipamericas.org/archives/18204>

ENCA has recently subscribed to the newly-founded organisation Rights & Ecology of which Annie Bird is Director [annie@rightsandecology.net].

Visit to the UK of Noé Ramírez Portela, General Secretary of the Izabal Banana Workers' Union, Guatemala (SITRABI)

The following report is taken from The Make Fruit Fair! Newsletter produced by the organisation Banana Link. We are grateful for their permission to reproduce the report here.

26-28 November 2015

Noé Ramírez Portela, General Secretary of the Izabal Banana Workers' Union of Guatemala (SITRABI) visited the UK from 26 to 28 November 2015, during which he met UK trade unionists, government and opposition officials and journalists. He also spoke at the Latin America 2015 Conference.

Noé's visit was funded by **Aslef, GMB, TUC Aid, UCU, Unite** and **UNISON**, and was co-ordinated by the TUC and Banana Link. Banana Link works towards fair and sustainable tropical fruit trade and production in partnership with plantation worker unions and small farmer organisations in Latin America, Africa and the Caribbean.

Background

Guatemala has been described as the most dangerous country in the world for trade unionists by the International Trade Union Confederation. Since 2007, a total of 68 trade union leaders and representatives have been murdered, and a high number of attempted murders, kidnappings, break-ins, and death threats have been reported, along with torture.

SITRABI is the oldest private sector union in Guatemala and represents over 4,000 members in Del Monte and Del Monte supplier farms on the Caribbean coast. SITRABI has good relations with other local unions in other multinational and national plantations. Noé was elected General Secretary of SITRABI in 2000, shortly after the union's Executive Committee was forced at gun point to resign their posts and call off strike action over contract violations.



Noé speaking to the plenary session at the Latin America Conference in November 2015.

The Whole World Turns Upside-down¹

A future under The Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership

This story was first presented at a panel on TTIP at the Latin America Conference 2015 and has been rewritten here for Unite.

The dark morning air hung low with a sharp cold that pinched at the ears. The once white snow had long turned to a black sludge, churned by the boots of the workers as they plodded across the factory car park. It is a fortnight before Christmas, the year is 2025.

Shift had just ended, and a hundred pairs of boots trudged heavy, lifeless steps in union. The night shifts felt particularly long on these chilly winter nights, but it was the broken spirits of a workforce who had so recently lost so many friends that made their boots feel heavier than usual.

Some of those friends were lost as the company's newly deregulated US owners used new laws brought in to protect the corporations to dismiss those who had sought to unionise. The ones that weighed heaviest though were those lost to the cold lead of the security forces brought in to break the picket lines. The workers shuffled forward with the weary endurance required in order to feed their families. Some continued to protest and fight for rights, but this was becoming more and more dangerous as they found themselves increasingly ostracised through state surveillance and spying. ACTA (Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement) had of course slipped through by this time.

Food too had become an issue - sure there was plenty of it around, the removal of legislation over the use of GM, hormones and pesticides had seen yields like never before. But the true costs were starting to show. Cancer rates were increasing, along with kidney failure and other painful and deadly illnesses. Now it might be unfair to blame the food here, perhaps it is one of



the 1200 previously banned chemicals that are now being used in everything from cosmetics to construction.... To be honest it's hard to know, the corporations run the tests, do the experiments and always reach the same conclusions... they are safe... the food is safe.

These increases in illness are helping to fuel a massive surge in the medical business... and that is all it is now, a business. Some remember their last free treatment, but they no longer have access. The National Health Service was privatised a long time ago. Sold bit by bit to large medical conglomerations, eroding little by little the services provided free. Now the companies no longer have to offer medical cover, even those in the most dangerous jobs are left to fend for themselves when a lack of safety checks leaves them maimed.

The poor have become poorer, now forced by their poverty to pick through the chemically enhanced foods, work in the deregulated, de-unionised factories handling chemicals previously thought too dangerous. When they fall ill, they fall victim to the corporations a second time. They cannot afford the health care, they

cannot afford to be sick. Protest is met with dismissal or worse.

The masses have fallen into stoic silence.

A gust of wind sweeps across the factory car park, a short stocky man pulls his heavy wool jacket tighter and pushes his hands deeper into its pockets. As he passes under the orange glow of a street lamp he catches a fleeting glimpse of his deeply scarred face in an oily puddle.

He's reminded of a time when there was more hope. A time when a group of self-proclaimed activists fought against a major extraction project. Great swathes of land had been sold off to a multinational which quickly took advantage of conditions at the time to invest up to \$80 million into a new mining project. They of course produced environmental impact assessments, and these were submitted to the government, but as with the food and chemical standards tests, the internally organised impact assessments found there to be little in the way of issues.

This was highly contested by environmentalists, opposition to the project began to grow, and a national

¹ The World Turned Upside Down is an English ballad first published in the middle

of the 1640s as a protest against the policies of Parliament

campaign was launched. The company continued its exploration, both here and at other ventures around the world. Soon though farmers began to notice that springs and wells were beginning to dry up and opposition grew and grew.

He smiled as he remembered the waves of protest that swept right across the country, and then swept in a new government. Victory! After a hard fought campaign, the conservative government was ousted and the incoming government promised tighter environmental laws that would see the end to this project and many others. This victory was short-lived, realisation dawned among the activists and politicians alike, it was already too late. Trade agreements had already been signed. The government tried to stop the mine, backed by popular support, but later that year the company carried out their threat to sue the nation for \$100million through the *International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID)*.

As the company held the country to ransom, the campaign against the project took a dark turn. Four activists were murdered. Journalists from a local radio station who reported the murder themselves received death threats, and a local priest was kidnapped after denouncing the murders.

Inside the courts the government filed against the suit, but the rights of the company to sue the nation for loss of profits and investment was upheld. Blood continued to be shed on the streets with three more activists losing their lives before the end of the year.

Tensions had continued to grow both inside and outside of court, and in the years that followed the company, in the face of growing resistance, upped and upped its claim for reparations.

Nobody remembers how it started, but those who had once stood in the streets seeking a right to water and life now lay in the street. We had hoped we wouldn't see blood on our streets again, not the blood of those seeking democracy. But we killed democracy a long time ago. We handed the power to the corporations, whose idea of corporate responsibility is seeing how far you can push capitalism; we killed democracy; we killed the NHS; will killed the unions and now we kill the people in the name of growth.

The cold wind chilled a tear as it rolled down the stocky man's face. As he lifted his head to wipe it away, the first rays of the morning sun greeted him. The signing of TTIP was quite quick and nobody really remembered the moment that things

started to fall apart. Rights and liberties were taken slowly over the years after the signing, but looking back it was easy to see that the whole world had been turned upside down, and we had been turned upside down right along with it.

As the sun began to warm his face, so too did it warm his resolve. The chemicals killed some, the lack of health care killed more, those who were left and fought against the government were killed by bullets. This though was not the end. This is London 2015 and the fight will continue another day.

This is a hypothetical story, a work of dystopian fiction, but every single one of these things has already taken place. At different times, in different countries across Latin America, but all under the guise of Free Trade agreements such as CAFTA-DR and NAFTA. Both of which look a lot like TTIP and its partner trade agreements. There is still time to stop TTIP, to avert this bleak vision of the future. And as we move towards that, we also have a duty to stand in solidarity with those already affected by such trade deals in Latin America, and to work to undo the hundreds of years of injustice inflicted in the name of neoliberalism and progress.

Doug Specht

HEP Plants Stopped in Longo Mai

Received from Cristoph Burkard, resident of Longo Mai, Costa Rica, 24.12.15. Longo Mai is one of the communities which would have been affected by plans for hydro-electric projects on the Rivers Sonador and Convento. ENCA has briefly reported on this particular struggle in past newsletters (nos. 59 and 62).

"The resistance against the hydroelectric plants here in the region has just had good news: our rivers, Sonador and Convento are safe for the time being. The investors' plans have been shelved. They would have to start anew if they were to insist. Of course, we cannot let down our guard!"

Cristoph

And later (26.02.16):

"First off, we're glad to confirm the good news: the hard and long fight of the people of the Zona Sur of Costa Rica against hydro-electric power plants bears fruits. The government institutions have not allowed these projects to destroy our magic tropical forest rivers Sonador and Convento and many other rivers in our region. This is yet another proof that resistance is worth your and our while. We invite you to bathe in the saved waters – see www.sonador.info

The team of 'Noticias Del Sur'





Adelante Latin America Conference, London

In November last year London once again played host to the UK's main conference on Latin America's Social and Political movements. ENCA was there again in full force, and just as our numbers have been expanding over recent years, so we expanded our space from half a table last year to a whole table of our colourful newsletters and fliers.

Having a stand at the conference afforded us the great opportunity to share the work of ENCA, and more importantly the work of our partner organisations in Central America.

Alongside the networking around our stand ENCA was also involved in a number of talks at the conference. ENCA

member Doug Specht talked alongside MPs and War on Want in one of the workshops, describing the damage that could be done to UK social and environmental rights under the Free-Trade Plus agreement (TTIP) - using chilling real examples from Latin America. ENCA's James Watson also spoke, presenting Honduran Muralist Javier Espinal's paintings (shown elsewhere in this issue) and gave a moving and inspiring first hand account of the trials of the 'Honduran Spring' protest movement that arose in that country last year.

Thank you to all the ENCA members who contributed on the day, and everyone who stopped to talk to us and sign up. And we very much look forward to being back at the conference next year.

Appeals on behalf of the AEPS and Radio Faluma Bimetu

As reported in ENCA 65, at the end of 2015 ENCA made special funding appeals on behalf of two Central American organisations, the Permaculture Association of Suchitoto (AEPS) (El Salvador) and Radio Faluma Bimetu (Honduras).

Our appeals enabled us in January this year to transfer \$500 (£359) to the AEPS and \$280 (£200) to Radio Faluma Bimetu. Many thanks to all who donated to the appeals. The sums may not sound great, but they are sufficient to make a difference in both cases. The solidarity is also crucially important.

The appeal on behalf of the AEPS was prompted by the robbery of over \$1,200 of the funds that they had received from the Educational and General Charitable Trust for a programme of permaculture training and dissemination amongst various Salvadoran communities. ENCA had been instrumental in applying for these funds on the AEPS's behalf.

The appeal on behalf of Radio Faluma Bimetu was made due to the urgent need for repairs and new parts for the broadcasting equipment of the community radio station whose purpose is to promote and preserve the Garifuna language and culture, and to mobilise the Garifuna community against powerful economic interests which are trying to take over their ancestral land for tourist schemes.

Again, many thanks to all who contributed to these two appeals.

enca.org.uk
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Meeting Dates 2016

Sunday 26th June and Sunday 23rd October 2016

ENCA meetings are held at the NSC's office at the Durham Road Centre, London, N7 7DT. Meetings are held on Sundays from 12:30 pm to 5 pm and we start with lunch which is made up of whatever people attending choose to bring to share.