

On Monday, 21 March 2011, eleven women from the community of Lote 8 presented a public demand in civil court against the Canadian mining company HMI Nickel and its corporate owner, HudBay Minerals, stating that they had been victims of rapes committed in an area near El Estor, Isabal. On 17 January 2007, during the forced removal of one hundred Maya Q'eqchi' families from their humble living quarters in the community of Lote 8, the eleven women assert that they have been violated as a group by the security personnel of the mining company and by members of the police and the military.

The image that follows shows what remains of the home of one of these women.



The first edition in paper of this catalogue was made possible in 2011 thanks to the help of





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This digital edition 2012

was made possible thanks to

Bruce Dahlstrom of the

Wired Humanities Projects, University of Oregon

Panzós, 33 years later (1978-2011)

Marlon García Arriaga

Photographs by
Mario Adler
Jorge Morales
Marlon García
James A. Rodríguez



To the members of the Foreign Investments Research Commission of the University of San Carlos of Guatemala (USAC), 1969-1970:

Julio Camey Herrera, Adolfo "Fito" Mijangos López, Rafael Piedra Santa Arandi, Alfonso Bauer Paiz.

And to the 53 assassinated persons, in the municipal center de Panzós Alta Verapaz, Guatemala 29 May 1978:

Adelina Caal (Mama Maquín), Abelardo Ac Caal, Alfredo Choca, Andrés Chub, Andrés Rax, Antonio Sub, Apolonio Tux, Bartolomé Chun Chub, Bartolomé Chub Chun, Bartolomeo Sacul Chun, Domingo Cac, Domingo Coc Pérez, Domingo Cuc, Félix Caal Seb, Félix Caal Xo, Francisco Choc, Francisco Coc, Francisco Seb Ché, Francisco Tzalam, Hilario Choc Pop, José Chen Ac, José Coc Pop, José Maquín, José Xol Coc, José Yat Chun, Juan Ché, Juan Cuz, Juan Meza, Lorenzo Choc Cuz, Manuel Cabral Tzi, Marcelino Cuz Choc, María Luisa Cabnal, Marcos Choc, Mena Chun, Miguel Cahuec, Miguel Quib, Norberto Chub Choc, Pablo Call Chun, Pablo Cuz Mo, Pablo Rax, Paulino Cuz Mo, Pedro Caal, Pedro Maqui, Ricardo Bac Chub, Roberto Ical Choc, Sabina Tuc Xo, Sabino Cuz Coc, Santiago Choc, Santiago Ché, Santiago Seb Caal, Santiago Seb Ché, Tomás Chen Quib, Tomás Coc.



Aerial photo of the surroundings of the town of Panzós in the Polochic River Valley.

R-8 L-20-1 13 February 1991 DMA/SNA Instituto Nacional Geográfico no. 1574

- 1. Panzós plaza (town square).
- 2. Panzós cemetery.
- 3. Route toward El Estor, municipality, Guatemala.



Aerial photo of the EXMIBAL Niquegua pyrometalurgical Pirometalúrgica nickel processing plant land surroundings, on the shore of Izabal Lake, 1991.

R-8 L-20-1 13 February 1991 DMA/SNA Instituto Nacional Geográfico, no. 1556

- 1. Niquegua pyrometalurgical nickel processing plant and EXMIBAL/INCO open.
- 2. Route toward the municipal headquarters of El Estor, Izabal.

Panzós 33 Years Later

Although several radio transmissions first gave notice of events the same day that they happened, it was not until two days later that the public would come to know, although still without any detail, the magnitude of the tragedy that had taken place on the 29 May 1978 in Guatemala: the MASSACRE OF PANZOS.

On 31 May numerous accounts of the events emerged in the morning and evening papers. The daily paper, La Nación had the following headlines: "Campesino leaders denounce: 100 dead in Panzós;" another daily, El Gráfico reported: "Those wounded during the events of Panzós speak; Maya Kekchi [or Q'eqchi'] people indicate that they had been called to Panzós to listen to a message;" the evening paper La Hora wrote: "The President was informed regarding events yesterday in Panzós;" and, La Tarde, stated: "The campesinos arrived without arms; Panzós: 100 dead and 600 escaping to the mountains."

A torrent of information about what had happened rushed through all corners of the city and even overflowed its borders. In the midst of so many descriptions, four contrasting versions began to emerge: that of the government, the landholders, the campesinos (i.e. humble, rural people, who were the very victims of the deed), and that of the Diocese of Verapaz. What had actually happened?

With time and owing to the tenacious effort of individuals, as well as national and international institutions, more detailed and trustworthy information about the incident eventually became known. Preliminary investigations documented events in the following manner: "On 29 May 1978, indigenous Kekchi [or Q'eqchi'] campesinos from the municipality of Panzós were massacred by the Guatemalan military after people from the outlying settlements in the direction of Panzós Park had been congregated with the intention of resolving conflicts over land with the owners of large estates."* "Land conflicts?" yes, in theory, this appeared to be another one of the thousands land disputes that have marked the history of Guatemala. But this dispute, which resulted in the "massacre at Panzós," had many authors and a connecting thread that takes us back to the early 1960s. One could say that the basic conditions that led to the Panzós massacre began to take root with the arrival in 1960 of the International Nickel Company of Canada (INCO), represented by its subsidiary EXMIBAL (Compañía de Exploraciones y Explotaciones de Izabal), and the construction of a mining plant in the town of El Estor, on the shore of Izabal I ake.

^{*}Beatriz Mendizábal P., "Estado y políticas de desarrollo agrario. La masacre campesina de Panzós," in *Política y Sociedad* (Escuela de Ciencia Política, Universidad de San Carlos de Guatemala), julio-diciembre 1978, 76.

Before launching new mining operations in the developing world, international companies typically require that the targeted country have -- as essential conditions -- both political stability and laws that allow such companies a great latitude in achieving their economic aspirations. At the start of the 1960s, Guatemala was experiencing a growing guerrilla movement, precisely in the area where the EXMIBAL nickel plant would be established. The military provided a "solution" to this problem when it initiated a cruel, intensive, counterinsurgency campaign, marking the first wave of mass terrorism in the contemporary history of Guatemala. Furthermore, when the government discovered that the laws pertinent to the exploitation of non-renewable natural resources did not line up with the aspirations of the company's investors, the Guatemalan Ministry of Mining quite literally rewrote Guatemala's mining code to suit the company's interests.*

Although the Economic Minister of that time, José Luis Bouscayrol, rejected EXMIBAL's petition to be classified as part of the "industry of transformation," which transforms primary resources into products and which would have allowed for special treatment, including excessive advantages that were in direct conflict with Guatemalan national interests, the ascension of Colonel Carlos Arana to the presidency brought about a change of direction. Arana's new economic minister decided that the company did indeed fit the profile of a transformational industry. Although many Guatemalans looked upon these negotiations with great distrust, only the University of San Carlos (USAC) undertook concrete actions to condemn the accord that was drawn up between the military government and the multinational corporation.

In May of 1969 university students and assorted political leaders gathered at USAC to demand a public inquiry. This culminated in the formation of the Commission for the Study of Foreign Investments in Guatemala, composed of the professors and researchers Julio Camey Herrera, Adolfo Mijangos López, Alfonso Bauer Paiz, and Rafael Piedra Santa Arandi. The work of these professionals resulted in a report whose title precisely reflects its findings: "EXMIBAL against Guatemala." The report lays out the unequal nature of the accord and identifies a clear opposition to ceding the riches of Guatemala by means of the terms of the pact.

The only concrete governmental response to the public presentation of the report was a sharpening of the repression, which took among its more notable victims the four commissioners from USAC. On 26 November 1970, Julio Camey Herrera was assassinated. Several days later, on November 30, unknown assailants attempted to take the life of Alfonso Bauer Paiz, a lawyer who managed to escape unscathed but nonetheless had to leave the country. On 13 January 1971, Adolfo Mijangos López perished in a hail of gunfire. In May of the same year, in the midst of constant threats, Rafael Piedra Santa Arandi had to leave for exile. Thus, these four men serve as the first casualties provoked by the intrusion of the mining industry, which eight years later would factor into the Panzós Massacre and its macabre toll of 53 campesinos assassinated by the army, among them women and children.

^{*}Latin American Working Group, "EXMIBAL en Guatemala: De República Bananera a República Minera," in Política y Sociedad (Escuela de Ciencia Política, Universidad de San Carlos de Guatemala), julio-diciembre de 1979.

The slaughter at Panzós was not only a shocking incident but really a tragic, predictable event tied to the new phase of capitalist development in Guatemala in which EXMIBAL, or INCO, the multinational company behind it, was the major player. The growing union movement, coupled with religious and student organizations, not only condemned the official government version of events, but also managed to compile a complete list of the victims and a chronology. Published in the newspaper El Gráfico on June 18, 1978, the group's reports "make it clear that the campesinos were murdered because they occupied landholdings to be redirected in the name of modern, capitalist development. They had been allowed to use the lower, previously unoccupied region for years, seeing that no one had been able to imagine a more lucrative use of the land... [Then] the price of the land skyrocketed. The Kekchi [Q'eqchi'] Maya, [despite] being one of the most remote indigenous groups on earth, were informed that they had to vacate the region."*

"Panzós 33 Years Later," a publication with pictorial, photographic, and documentary evidence that reveals the multiple facets of Marlon García, has to our minds two principal virtues: the first is having punctually documented each discernable phase that took place from the arrival of EXMIBAL in Guatemala through the events in Panzós (1978 and more recently). Historical and official documents, press clippings, key personages, and landscapes included herein show us the long path taken to arrive at this tragedy. The second virtue resides in the impressive, realistic paintings and photographs that contextualize and underline these historical deeds.

Marlon is a diligent investigator not to mention a talented painter, who has dedicated his abilities to the pursuit of social justice and to the pursuit of truth about what happened in this country, tirelessly seeking so many answers in the face of the extreme and violent acts that marked the extended internal conflict.

For the FLACSO-Guatemala office, it was a moral obligation and a necessary institutional and historical commitment to offer our support to this book, which began its journey eleven years ago with a traveling exposition in several Canadian cities. In this most recent version, the author has incorporated new documents, additional information that lets the reader sketch out the complicated face of the historical truth.

FLACSO-Guatemala extends its gratitude to the Extension branch of the University of San Carlos for the support it has provided to bring the project to fruition; to Rights Action for partially financing this catalogue; to each of the individuals of the institutions who, with great effort and dedication, involved themselves in this project; and, finally, to you, the reader, a friend whose participation contributes to the pursuit of truth and justice.

FLACSO-Guatemala, April 2011.

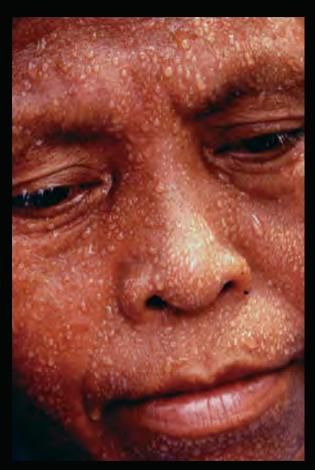
^{*}Ibid.

"When you know your history, we'll talk!"

declared my clearly angry friend who had worked in the communities of the Panzós municipality in 2006 and who disagreed with the thesis of this exhibition about the responsibility of the government for its stance toward the mining business and the violence suffered by the inhabitants of Panzós on 29 May 1978. My friend especially took issue with the idea that this company could influence the agrarian situation of the present. However, shortly thereafter, following the events of 2007 in El Estor, he sought my collaboration in his own investigation. Just as he was, I too had been surprised that the presence of an industry that appeared to be relatively unknown in Guatemala could be the crucial historical link between the Guatemalan armed conflict and Canadian transnational corporations. The name of Adelina Caal (Mamá Maquín) and those of the other 52 victims of 1978, in my view, quickly became linked with those of Julio Camey Herrera and Adolfo "Fito Mijangos."

With great concern I see that this violent historical link manifests itself in the form of community leaders assassinated, populations evicted, and the apparent rape of eleven women, all as a result of their opposition to the mining interests. Despite its importance, knowledge of this historical link gets obscured by the tricks memory and history can play when we are hindered from access to knowing, investigating, and teaching the ways in which businesses, the military, and the Guatemalan government have responded to the presence of multinational mining companies in our territory. It should be said that essential to establishing this thread were: the exposé, "EXMIBAL against Guatemala," written in 1971 by Rafael Piedra Santa Arandi and which I found in the Central Library at the USAC; interviews with the survivors of the violence in Guatemala City, in the eastern portion of Alta Verapaz, and to the southeast of Izabal; consultations with historians; and, discussions with the relatives of those who had been "detained" or "disappeared," including former employees of INCO. All of this allowed me to identify the first traces of what is finally distilled in this exhibition.

To all my friends who have played a part in the production of this publication and to those who, for all these years, have believed in this project--FAMEDGUA; the Widow's Association of Panzós, Alta Verapaz; the Quebec-Guatemala Project of Accompaniment (especially to Marc, Anie, Karen, and Esteban); Bill Howson of the Amicus Foundation; to all my friends from the Breaking the Silence Network, Rafael Piedra Santa Arandi, Alfonso Bauer Paiz, Ana Maria Cofiño and her team Ediciones Del Pensativo, Anna Carla Ericastilla, James A. Rodríguez, Julio Donis, Carlos Fernando Bautista, Edgar Figueroa, Larissa Mendoza, Naomi Savage, the García Arriaga family, the Arreaga Monterroso family, Hugo de León, Rebeca Vargas, Oswaldo Morales, Olga Camey, Violeta Carpio, María Maquín, Angélica Choc, María Magdalena Cuc, Raúl Caal, the comunidad of Lote 8 of El Estor, Rights Action, FLACSO, Stephanie Wood, Michelle McKinley, and the whole team at the University of Oregon--to all of you and your families, I wish for you the peace that comes with justice.



The face of a woman during the reburial in 1998 of the victims of the Massacre of Panzós.

Photograph by Marlon García Arriaga

PANZÓS Land of Verdant Waters

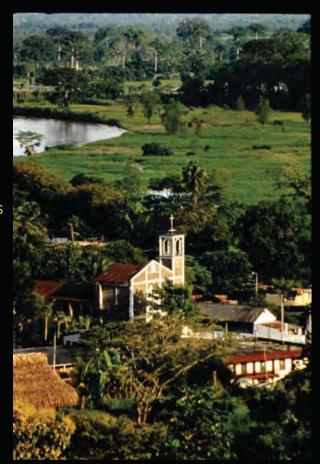
The town of Panzós is located in a tropical area on the eastern side of Guatemala, in the department of Alta Verapaz, right in the middle of the valley of the Polochic River, the body of water that flows toward nearby Lake Izabal. In the Q'eqchi' language, Panzós means "land of verdant waters."

The town abuts on the north with the Santa Cruz mountains and to the south with the mountain range known as Las Minas. Directly to the east of Panzós is El Estor, a town in the neighboring department of Izabal.

Panzós is the administrative center of the municipality with the same name and occupies nearly 730 square kilometers. The economy has as its focus agricultural exports and stockraising. Between 1970 and 1980, more than 25,000 people lived in the municipality, of which 7,000 lived outside of the municipal center. The indigenous Maya Q'eachi'

comprise 93% of the population.





View of the plaza of Panzós from the Sierra de Santa Cruz, at the end of the Polochic River valley. Marlon García Arriaga 1997

La niña de Panzós (Margarita Cuz)

Óleo sobre tela, 1.5 m. x 2 m.

Marlon García Arriaga 2003





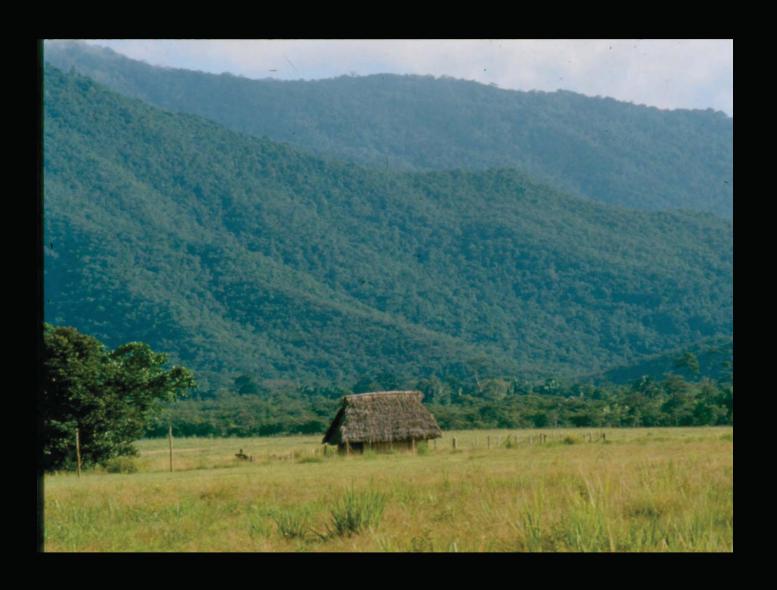
Q'eqchi' Culture

Archeological evidence of the earliest Q'eqchi' presence dates back to the Preclassic or Formative Period in the Maya chronology. Since then, the Q'eqchi' area has extended to the south as far as Rabinal, which means "Place of the Daughter of the Lord." This is a reference to the worship of the old god of the earth, Tzultaq'a, and to his daughter, the future lunar god, Qana Po. This practice of worship has been observed since remote times in other cultures and places across Guatemala, as well, such as in the Ixil Region of the modern-day Quiché (or K'iche') Maya.

Later expansions of the Poqomam and K'iche' groups, respectively, forced the expulsion of the Q'eqchi' Maya toward the north. Anthropologist Ruud Van Akkeren argues that the name Q'eqchi' reflects the historical depth of the culture: Q'eq literally means "black" but also "darkness" and "night," and chi denotes "speech." In K'iche' documents, the Q'eqchi' are called A'qaab', "those of the night," and "those who came before the first dawn," in other words, a population so ancient that it existed before the most recent creation. In fact, in the well-known Maya creation account, the Popol Wuj, this creation is associated with the Gods of Xib'alb'a, whose kingdom is located in Nim Xol Karcha, an ancient town in Alta Verapaz. In the same part of this sacred book, we read about the Tukur, who were the messengers of those lords: Tukur, or Tecolote, is the name of the neighboring community of Poqom, now known as San Miguel Tucurú.



Q'eqchi' Maya women at the Polochic River, circa 1920 Photographer unknown. Heinemann Collection, Guatemalan Photo Archives, CIRMA



Left: Home at the edge of El Estor, Izabal.



Above: Homes being constructed using traditional Q'eqchi' methods.

Panzós

Marlon García Arriaga 1997



An owl's wing, hanging at the entrance of a home during a storm in Cahabón, Alta Verapaz. This practice is believed to ward off bats from entering people's homes.

Left: "Espantamurciélagos" (Bat Frightener)

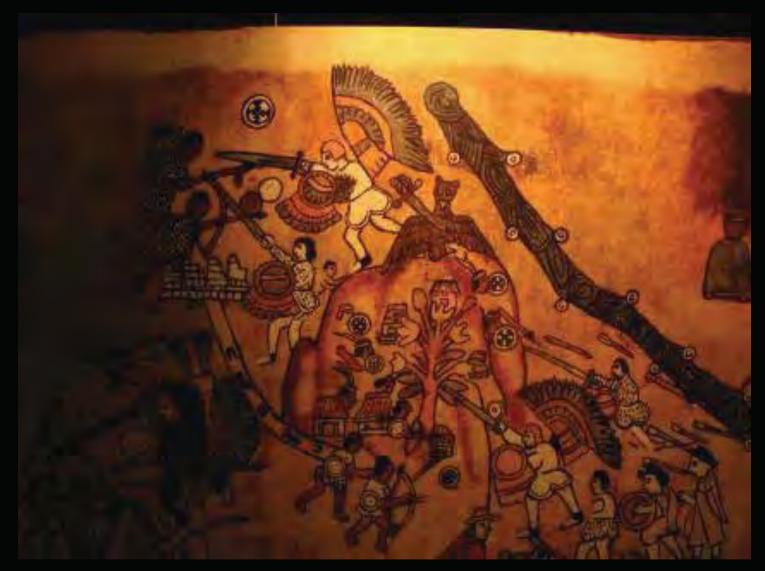
Marlon García Arriaga 1998





Above: "Manatee and Iguana" from the Recordación Florida, a manuscript from 1690 by Francisco Antonio de Fuentes y Guzmán, General Archive of Central America.

When the Europeans arrived, they encountered the natural wealth in this region of what is modern Guatemala, and from that first contact forward they left registers and constructed archives.



The Spanish language borrows the word tecolote (originally tecolotl, owl) from the Nahuatl language. Central Mexican groups in the Spanish conquering expedition knew this area as Tecolotlan (also spelled Teculutlan), place of the tecolote. This illustration of an attack against the city of Teculutlan led by Jorge de Alvarado appears in the Lienzo de Quauhquechollan, which was painted in approximately 1529. Expedition leader Hernando Cortés had already visited the very same region, according to an account in his Fifth Letter to the Emperor of Spain. When he was looking for provisions he entered in the town of Chacujal, a prehispanic site near the Polochic River, between Panzós and Telemán.

Left: A combined Spanish and Quauhquecholteca attack on Teculutlan, ca. 1527.

Lienzo de Quauhquechollan, cloth painting.



Above: Ixil woman asking for the earth's blessing prior to an exhumation in San Juan Cotzal, Quiché

Marlon García Arriaga 1999



Musicians in the Polochic Valley Oil on cloth. 1.5 m. x 2 m.

Marlon García Arriaga 2008

Tzultaq'a and life with dignity

The God of the Hills and Valleys was also known as the old God of the Earth and was thought to be the lord of all that grows or walks on its surface. This god is of great importance in the Maya religion of the highlands and the Q'eqchi' Maya who refer to him as the Tzultaq'a. Popular tradition holds that one owes respect to this god and must ask permission to make use of natural resources for human consumption.

Failure to perform certain essential rituals directly associated with what was deemed honorable behavior by the community and how one ought to perform tasks, mu, resulted in grievous sins, mäc, which for transgressors spiraled to consequences that could imperil the soul, muhel, including diseases and shame for either one's family or community, acuás. "You can perform pretty Maya ceremonies, mayejak, for the launching of the mining project, but if you ultimately do not maintain a respect for the mountain, then all the same, you will have committed a grave offense against our culture," asserted an elderly Q'eqchi community member when interviewed.



An exhumation ceremony reveals massacre victims' remains found on the private estates of Tusbilpec and Dinelda, municipality of Cahabón, Alta Verapaz.

Marlon García Arriaga 1997

According to this local perspective, continuity in the order of the universe depends upon living in harmony with these principles, including the inherent function of every being, male or female. In the case of natural resources, they should be used for what they were intended, which is the common good. When fulfilling their proper role or fate, natural resources, just as human beings, must protect their dignity, a concept known as xecuanquilal.





The myth of the peaceful Spanish conquest of Las Verapaces in Guatemala was embodied by the sculptor Thomas Murh. This sculpture bid farewell for many years to the travelers who exited Guatemala City en route to Cobán.

Q'eqchi' Customs

With the consolidation of the Spanish colony, examples of syncretism became evident in Q'eqchi' culture. Q'eqchi' religiosity or "customs" survived, making simultaneous use of some prehispanic and colonial religious-administrative elements. The lay brotherhoods (cofradías) and the community service of their stewards (mayordomos) represent a good example, as they illuminate the hierarchical relationship between the God of the Hills and Valleys, the Catholic saints, and the believers, governing the relationship between humans themselves and their surroundings, with the latter being made up of natural and spiritual forces. These community institutions operated as much for religious expression as they did for mediation in community administration. Q'eqchi' customs are also essential to what would now be considered common law practices.



Q'eqchi' Maya planting according to their custom, through community effort, ca. 1920 Heinemann Collection, Guatemalan Photo Archives, CIRMA





Q'eqchi' family at the start of 20th c. Indigenous population of Alta Verapaz ca. 1920 Heinemann Collection Guatemalan Photo Archives, CIRMA (unidentified photographer)

Raxche' (Rax, "green;" Che', "tree") Q'eqchi' altar with reverence for "our earth and that of our ancestors." The shrine has associations with prehispanic representations of the ceiba tree. Marlon García Arriaga 1997

Free Citizens

With the end of the Spanish colony and the beginning of the Liberal regimes, the indigenous campesinos and ladinos (Spanish-speaking persons of indigenous or mixed heritage) shifted from the colonial model of servitude to the new concept of citizenship, infused with a racial discourse that pointed to a hierarchy determined by class and ethnic origins.

These contradictions provoked continual rebellions: in 1865, after months of petitions, the aged Jorge Yat led a group composed of hundreds of Q'eqchi' Maya to the center of San Pedro Carchá as a protest against the undue influence the ladinos had administering the towns and the economy, asking the authorities to "put yourselves on our side against our enemies." Townspeople were also demanding the expulsion of the outsiders and a reduction in taxes. The demonstration ended when soldiers in Cobán opened fire against the protestors, causing the death of eight campesinos.

The laws pushed by the hegemonic coffee and industrial lobbies—specifically, the Labor, Highway Administration, and Anti-Vagrancy Laws—established a veneer of legality for the increased explication of campesinos through forced labor.

It is in this context that several German agro-industrial companies appeared within the territory, most notably in the Polochic River Valley. These firms financed a train, the "Verapaces Train," with Panzós as its final destination, making Panzós the most important port in the area for the coffee industry.



Indigenous women sorting coffee beans Alta Verapaz, ca. 1920 Heinemann Collection Guatemalan Photo Archives, CIRMA



Group of campesinos carrying a huge stone Alta Verapaz, ca.1920 Hempstead Family Collection Guatemalan Photo Archives, CIRMA



"Without female servants, there can be no plantation."

The German immigrant Ervin Dieseldorff set foot in Guatemala in 1888. Upon his arrival, he started compiling an empirical, anthropological study of Q'eqchi' culture. He took advantage of his relationship with local specialists of that period to gain an understanding of the indigenous socio-cultural structure, thereby providing the German coffee industry in the area with a leg up. Estate owners exercised their influence to win the cooperation of indigenous town government and confraternity authorities in provisioning servants to the plantations, a process that led to the bureaucratization of the community government. This system was established in 1920.

In his understanding of the importance of these community structures—a belief contrary to that of many of his peers, who wished to eliminate them—E. Dieseldorff warned: "Without female servants, there can be no plantation."

Foreman inspecting the work of indigenous women
San Andrés Osuna Plantation, Siquinalá,
Escuintla, ca. 1900-1940

Anonymous photographer German Collection Guatemalan Photo Archives, CIRMA ca. 1900-1940



Chamá 7 Drawing of a prehispanic ceramic vase Erwin Diesseldorf Collection Latin American Library, Tulane University



Train, Verapaz, ca. 1925

Anonymous Photographer Hempstead Family Collection Guatemalan Photo Archives, CIRMA



Ferry "Gral. Reyna Barrios" crossing the Polochic River, ca. 1920–1940

Anonymous Photographer Hempstead Family Collection Guatemalan Photo Archives, CIRMA

"Freedom for the Indian"



José Angel Icó de Chitaña of San Pedro Carchá, as was the case with other activists for indigenous rights, suffered incarceration and persecution on the part of the authorities and plantation owners for openly leading numerous, and many of them successful, struggles on behalf of indigenous communities at the beginning of the twentieth century. In 1920, building upon his thorough knowledge of the laws and his clout in the indigenous world, he directed the now defunct Unionist Club with the moniker, "Freedom for the Indian." This was an initiative that did not meet with success. This club presented a petition before Congress asking for "a law requiring all of the authorities of the Republic to recognize the indisputable Laws of the Indian," an initiative that likewise failed.

It was not until the advent of revolutionary laws of 1944-1954, such as the Work Code of 1947, that the legal exploitation of the campesino was outlawed. This was an obvious advancement in the defense of indigenous rights, and it brought to the forefront another cause of social tension: land ownership.

Icó died on 15 November 1950, a day after Jacobo Arbenz Guzmán was officially declared the winner of the presidential elections.

Left: Agrarian Reform
Linocut
Map Library,
General Archive of Central America

Arturo Martínez 1953

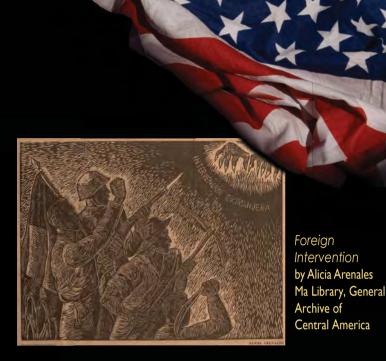


A Reality!
The Agrarian Reform Law
Map Library,
General Archive of Central America

Rafael Aroche n.d.



President Jacobo Árbenz Guzmán ca. 1954 Private Collection



U.S. INTERVENTION

President Árbenz initiated a series of reforms that sought to remedy disproportionate land distribution and the uneven exploitation of natural resources. In 1949 Congress produced Decree 659, which took the suggestions put forth by the Minister of the Economy and Labor of that period, the lawyer and politician Alfonso Bauer Paiz, who tried to respond to the detrimental effects of the growing monopoly held by the United Fruit Company in Guatemala. The reforms embraced by President Árbenz were cut off prematurely by an intervention organized by the U.S. Department of State, which resulted in the overthrow of Árbenz in 1954 and his substitution with the hand-picked figure of Carlos Castillo Armas. It was during the latter's government that we saw the enactment of Decree 272, which facilitated mineral exploitation on a grand scale and established that:

- a. taxes would rise:
- b. the tradition of parceling out square kilometers to be explored conveniently dovetailed with the interests of the concerned party;
- c. the edict that "it will not be necessary identify in detail the place or places that will be explored or the names of the landowners;"
- d. exploration permits "must stipulate the principles" that would govern the resource extraction.

According to expert economist Rafael Piedra Santa Arandi, the intent of clauses b and c are incompatible with one another.



Richard Nixon visits Guatemala ca. 1954 Private Collection



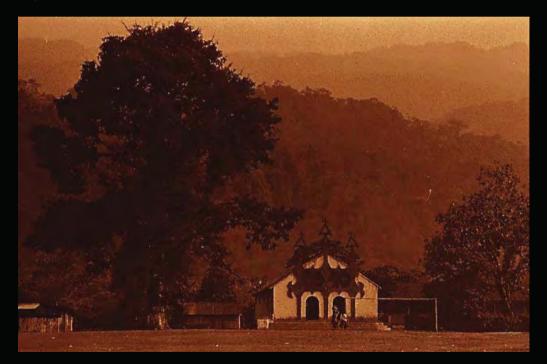
Campesinos held captive by the invading counterrevolutionary forces of 1954. Guatemalan Photo Archives, CIRMA

"With the counter-reform in 1954, a majority of the affected landholdings were returned to the old plantation owners. It was in this time that Flavio FMonzón, from the National Liberation Movement (MLN), was elected as mayor of Panzós. He held office until the 1970s and used his position to become one of the largest property owners in the region. In 1964, several communities with decades-long ties to the Polochic River region banded together to win back titles to former landholdings. They appealed to the National Institute of Agrarian Transformation (INTA), which awarded the land to Flavio Monzón. A Maya campesino from Panzós affirms that Monzón "strong-armed the signatures of the elderly in order to request the lands from INTA. He returned and assembled the people, declaring that it was due to a mistake by INTA and their lawyers the land had ended up under his name." According to a witness who pertains to the powerful landowning class, Monzón had purchased the lands from "other legitimate landowners." (Taken from illustrative cases in the book La Masacre de Panzós. CEH, Guatemala: Memoria del Silencio.)

Interests in the Region

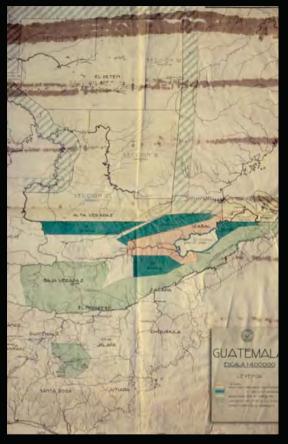
Since the 1920s, several companies wielding national and international capital have had an interest in the exploitation of natural resources in the northern-most area of the country, especially in the region where hydrocarbons are present. Names such as Nanne, Dorion, Asencio, Monzón, Novella, and Berger appear in the registers. To the east of this ecologically rich corridor, the Catholic Church has sponsored the colonizing projects of Ixcán Grande since 1966 and those in Santa María Tzejá since 1970. The Guatemalan government promoted the Franja Northern Transversal project between 1970 and 1979 and gave impulse to Project 520 between 1980 and 1982.

The emerging guerilla movement took its first military action with the taking of the Panzós on 17 October 1964.



The church at Lancetillo, Ixcan, constructed under the supervision of the priest Guillermo Woods, whose death occurred on 20 November 1976. He was suspected of conspiring with the Guatemalan army. Note the Raxché anchored in cement on the façade of the main entrance to the church.

Marlon García Arriaga 2000

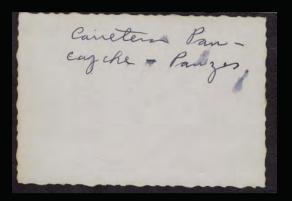


Map of concessions for subsoil explorations in 1938. The entire territory of the Petén was a single concession given to Shell Petroleum.

Map Library,
General Archive of Central America









Photographs:

Upper Left: Pancajche'-Panzós Road

Lower Left: Panzós Station, Northern Railroad

Photos from records surrounding the purchase of dynamite for mineral explorations in Sapacay, Alta Verapaz, 1937. Ministry of Development Collection, General Archive of Central America.

A New Foreign Investment

In 1963, from its office on 12th Street, Number 5-62, Zone 1, the Mining Exploration and Exploitation Venture of Izabal, known by its Spanish-language acronym, EXMIBAL—itself a concession of the International Mining Company of Canada, INCO—was sending an angry response to the memorandum prepared by the Department of Credits and Values of the Foreign Operations of the Bank of Guatemala on 16 July of that same year.

EXMIBAL's response deemed as biased and hostile the order that the Bank of Guatemala would make the contract to be signed between the corporation and the Guatemalan government. Valentín Solórzano, the economic advisor for the Bank of Guatemala, was the person responsible for the order, which he put together at the request of the person in charge of foreign affairs in Guatemala. Solórzano's stance on the situation derailed the Canadian company's intentions as had been put forth in the preceding couple of years by the very same Henry S. Wingate, Chairman of the Board of INCO, desirous of obtaining the benefits contained in the contract proposal. An audit of the company had revealed certain liberties taken--unauthorized and unnecessary—in the exoneration of taxes, despite the enormous profits that the company would rake in through mineral exploitation. Solórzano suggested, in fact, that all business by EXMIBAL be viewed under the decree known as Law No. 39, which referred to overly burdensome transactions that could be reconsidered by the government.

Valentín Solózano waged a lonely struggle on behalf of Guatemalan interests for a fair agreement, standing up to the mining company that would, between 1965 and 1981, act in scandalous association with one of the worst chains of military dictators in Latin America. The political and economic situation of officials of the Guatemalan army in the region east of Alta Verapaz and toward the interior of the state, in combination with the actions taken that drew from mineral knowledge gleaned from the Polytechnic School, allowed those officials to imagine the possibility of establishing themselves independently, outside the financial hegemony of the Guatemalan oligarchy.



"In 1967, Mr. Henry S. Wingate, president of the executive board of the International Nickel Company of Canada and head representative of its subsidiary EXMIBAL in Guatemala, visited El Estor...[and] during this opportunity, Mr. Wingate offered his greeting to the mayor of this area Mr. Rodolfo Matus..."

Explotación del subsuelo, by Colonel Manuel G. Samayoa O., Editorial del Ejército, 1968.

EXMIBAL and Military Governments

Already, during the government of Guillermo Flores Avendaño and that of Colonel Ydígoras Fuentes, EXMIBAL came to acquire important privileges, including: "the retention for exploitation of 30,000 hectares of the company's choice, at no cost for either the use or occupation of this national land, or for the felling of the forest, or costs associated with importing equipment." On top of this, EXMIBAL obtained a huge concession from the military government when the latter enacted the decree known as Law 342, or the Mining Code. Using said law, and in exchange for 1% of the royalties and other benefits, Colonel Enrique Peralta Azurdía conferred mining access to 410 km2 on the edges of Lake Izabal, the Santa Cruz Mountains, and the Polochic River Valley. It is important to remember that during this period the de facto government of **Colonel Peralta Azurdía** suspended the Constitution of 1965, dissolved Congress, and prohibited the right of free assembly.

It will not remain hidden

Four years following the delivery of concessions to EXMIBAL, the questionable legal activities of this corporation would remain in the shadows and might have stayed hidden there forever if not for a complaint brought forward 25 March 1969 by the lawyer Alfonso Bauer Paiz and the journalist Clemente Marroquín Rojas. That same year, the University of San Carlos (USAC) in Guatemala would commission four of its brightest intellectuals in the fields of law and economics across the nation to form the Commission for the Study of Foreign Investments in Guatemala, as a part of the Economics department of that university. Said commission, coordinated by the economist Rafael "Piedrita" Piedra Santa Arandi, included among its numbers Julio Camey Herrera, Adolfo "Fito" Mijangos, and Alfonso "Poncho" Bauer Paiz.



Colonel Carlos Manuel Arana Osorio in an official ceremony with the President of Nicaragua, Anastasio Somoza Debayle ca. 1970 Guatemalan Photo Archives, CIRMA

Coatemalari i noto / ticinives, cikivi/

After ascending to the presidency in 1970, Colonel Carlos Manuel Arana Osorio declared a state of siege and awarded himself absolute political and military power.



Approximation of the distribution, prepared by García-Drouin

Mining Concessions to the East of Guatemala 1965-2005

This map highlights the locations of the mining concessions granted by various military regimes to EXMIBAL (Compañía de Exploraciones y Explotaciones de Izabal), the Guatemalan subsidiary of the International Nickel Company (INCO) of Canada. These concessions changed hands in December of 2004 to become the property of Skye Resources, the headquarters of the "Guatemalan" nickel company. In 2008 Skye Resources and its concessions were acquired by HudBay Minerals of Canada.

The map also points out the mineral concessions relinquished sincethe year 2000 to the Canadian firm (based in Vancouver) once known as Chesbar Resources and now called Jaguar Nickel. The amount of land in the hands of the mining companies in the region has approximately doubled in size since 1965.

Governments during the operations of EXMIBAL 1960 -1981

Period	"President"	Type of
		Rule
1958–1963	General Miguel Idigoras Fuentes	Military
1963–1966	Colonel Enrique Peralta Azurdia	Military
1966–1970	Julio César Méndez Montenegro	Civilian
1970–1974	Colonel Carlos Manuel Arana	Military
	Osorio	
1974–1978	General Kjell Eugenio Laugerud	Military
	García	
1978–1982	General Romero Lucas García	Military

Friends and Colleagues of the Law

Julio Camey Herrera and Adolfo Mijangos López had become friends when Camey was professor of law at Mijangos in the 1950s. Friends as well as colleagues, the two walked the halls and frequented the fountain area as they shared opinions and aspirations about their field of study. Already, in their short careers, the experience and insight that Camey and Mijangos exhibited in their publications captured attention and opened a debate at the end of the 1960s concerning political and legal strategies regarding the future of Guatemala's natural resources.

In the 1970s, the Polochic River Valley region, its tributaries, and the rest of the communities around Lake Izabal, experienced a period of divisive agrarian conflict. Local communities that had taken root in the region in the past 300 years had established bonds of kinship and solidarity that went beyond the ethnic ties they already shared. The connections and solidarity within these communities were marshaled for the common defense of their rights. This region, then, resembled a distant setting for a matter that concerned contract exchange rates, discussions regarding the price of metals, past coup d'états, and an awareness that the lawyers and intellectuals of USAC would divulge information regarding these topics through the media. Using the contract that INCO defended, however, an escalation in land appropriation began with the aim of exploiting minerals in the territories of Alta Verapaz and Izabal.

After various attempts to alert the authorities and warn society about the negative economic and legal impact predicted by the research results at USAC, the Commission sought an interview with then President, Colonel Carlos Manuel Arana Osorio, in order to submit conciliatory proposals. Also present at this meeting were the Dean of the Economics Department, Rafael Piedra Santa Arandi, the President of the College of Economists, Bernardo Lémus, and the professors Saul Osorio Paz and Antonio Cerezo R.

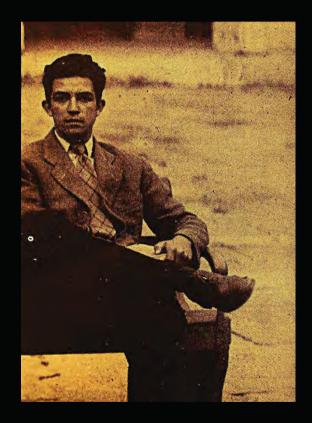


Fountain of the former Antigua Law School, now the University of San Carlos Museum, MUSAC. Guatemala City.

Marlon García Arriaga 2011



Lic. Julio Camey Herrera ca. 1960 Camey Family Collection



Adolfo "Fito" Mijangos López ca. 1945

The Internal Enemy

Throughout the history of Guatemala, the state has favored turning to violence as a means to "solve" the agrarian problem, but particularly when new social or guerrilla movements began to attract followers in the twentieth century. In concert with this position and following the Cuban Revolution, which came to power in 1959, the so-called National Security Doctrine was introduced to Guatemala. This doctrine, or the DSN as it was known locally with its Spanish acronym, was recognized as integral to U.S. geopolitical positioning for the management of Central America and the Caribbean. This doctrine took the form of a series of practices designed to confront the purported communist threat in the Americas. Among these practices we find the professionalization of the armed forces throughout the continent, utilizing the training facilities of the U.S. Army's School of the Americas, then located in Panama and subsequently at Fort Benning, Georgia (renamed in 2000 the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation).

With these practices in place it was believed that the threat of an extra-continental military invasion had been prevented and attention could turn to efforts to control an internal enemy, a concept whose application would have disastrous results for citizens' participation in the political process. The "subversive" label was applied indiscriminately to any opposition group and to all critics of the government—including the loyal democratic opposition, in other words, not just the insurgency—throughout the country.

(Commission for the Clarification of History, Guatemala: Memoria del Silencio, 1999)

Members of the Commission for the

Study of Foreign Investments in Guatemala



On 26 November 1970, Julio Camey Herrera, lawyer and democratic politician, fell at the hands of three assassins. That very same day, someone ransacked the headquarters of the Association of University Students in Zone 1 of the capital city.

On 30 November 1970, Alfonso Bauer Paiz, lawyer and university professor, was injured by an assault from several unknown individuals carrying firearms. He survived not only this initial barrage of bullets but also a second attempt on his life while he was recuperating in the Social Security hospital.





On 13 January 1971, Oscar Adolfo Mijangos López, an expert in international law, university professor, and congressional representative, was assassinated four blocks away from the Presidential Palace. His death provoked expressions of public consternation and protests against the government of Arana Osoric

On 12 February 1971, INCO, through its subsidiary EXMIBAL, signed a new contrac with the Guatemalan government, granting the military regime 30 percent of the stocks in its mining transactions in the Lake Izabal area.

On 8 May 1971, Rafael Pidra Santa Arandi, Dean of Economics at USAC, facing constant death threats, left Guatemala to live in exile for 15 years.



In July of 1974, General Kjell Laugerud García was elected President, and on 12 July 1977, he presided over the inauguration of the pyrometallurgical plant of EXMIBAL. In February 1978, the General proudly announced the first shipment of nickel to the United Kingdom.

DAY OF MOURNING AND OPPOSITION



Oscar Adolfo
"Fito" Mijangos
López, \Photo Library CIRN

At approximately seven at night 13 January 1971, at a time when the state of siege was still in force throughout the country, Oscar Adolfo Mijangos López left his private offices, located in the Horizontal building at the intersection of the 4th Avenue and 9th Street in Zone I of the capital. López was getting ready to enter his car from his wheelchair with the help of his driver Marco Vinicio Ramírez when three men dressed in leather jackets and woven reed hats, and carrying handguns, approached on foot and shot the professor in the back from point blank range, twelve times, resulting in his instantaneous death. Marco Vinicio Ramírez ended up only lightly wounded.

After the assassination, the professor's family members demanded an investigation while suggesting publically that President Arana Osorio was to blame for the act. They were forced to stop pursuing legal action in the face of threats. The courts only ever took symbolic measures.

Illustrative Case No. 100, Arbitrary execution of Oscar Adolfo Mijangos López, Deputy to the Congress of the Republic CEH, Guatemala: Memoria del Silencio



The Long Road to Lawful Tenancy

The lack of access to arable land, required to meet the basic needs of campesinos, has been a constant source of tension in the Panzós and El Estor regions. Throughout the 1970s, campesinos continually presented their petitions to the National Institute of Agricultural Transformation (INTA) about the need to normalize property ownership. In this quest they received advice from the Federation of Autonomous Unions of Guatemala, an organization that championed campesino causes using legal means. Not one campesino in Panzós, however, ever received clear title to a piece of property. Some received promises, while others obtained provisional titles. There were also a few who got simple permits to plant.





Q'eqchi' agricultural worker, Panzós. Marlon García Arriaga 1997

Women under the Sun Canguashá, Alta Verapaz Marlon García Arriaga 1999

EXMIBAL's Inauguration

On 12 July 1977 General/President Kjell Laugerud, in military regalia and with a weapon at his side, presided over the inauguration ceremony of EXMIBAL's Niquegua Plant.

Nearly a month before the ceremony, on 8 June 1977, Mario López Larrave, union lawyer and the one-time Dean of USAC's law school, was assassinated. Citing the 26 May1978 CEH Casol 1149 report regarding the La Cabaña estate in El Estor, department of Izabal, local and civil landowners/farmers who had gathered in private cars and an EXMIBAL truck, fired on locals in the Chichipate subdivision in El Estor, wounding Miguel Sub and José Ché Pop.

In August of 1977 Amnesty International denounced the killings of more than 60 campesinos and union members in Guatemala. As part of the repression against union formation, EXMIBAL's work application asked all applicants to list past union involvement.



General Kjell Laugerud García, President of Guatemala and Joseph James Borgatti, EXMIBAL's President, during the inauguration, 1978, CIRMA Mario Adler



Conmemorative mural in honor of Mario López Larrave. Marlon García Arriaga, 2005



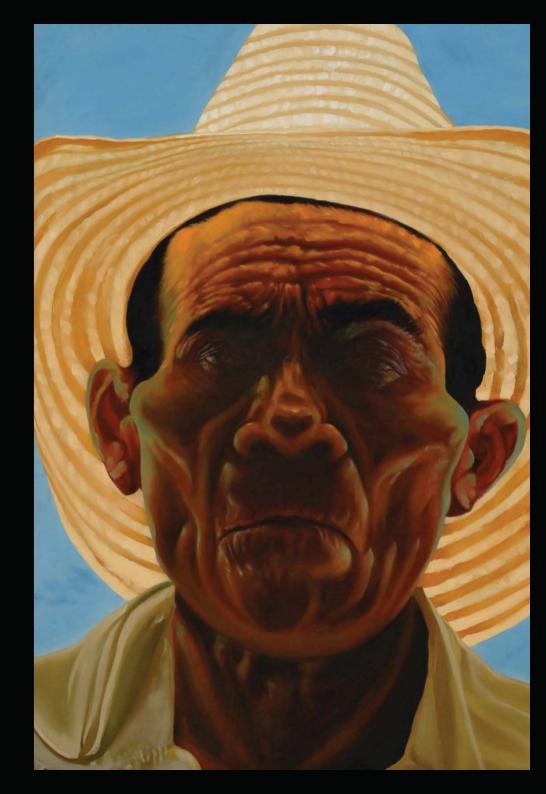
Pyrometalurgical plant of EXMIBAL El Estor, Izabal, April 1979 El Imparcial Collection, Guatemalan Photo Archives, CIRMA Mario Adler

The Military Presence

"In May of 1978, four or five days before the massacre, a military contingent of some 30 soldiers moved from Quinich to the Panzós town hall. When the press questioned the mayor about the timing of the army presence in the town center, he responded: "It is due to many people (finca owners) personally requesting that the army come and assure the peacefulness of the area, as they have taken note that 400 campesinos are rioting here... Campesinos from La Soledad neighborhood and the village of Cahaboncito submitted a document prepared by FASGUA directed to the mayor with the objective that he read it to the public. The FASGUA communiqué called on the mayor Walter Overdick García to intercede on behalf of the campesinos and attempt to fix the problems raised by them." (CEH, Guatemala: Memoria del Silencio, 1999)



The Sun Oil on cloth 1.5 m. x 2 m.



Campesino Protest

On **29 May 1978** soldiers occupied the streets and the roofs of Panzós homes. Despite the military presence, the campesinos began to meet in the town plaza demanding the intervention of the authorities to resolve the land ownership problems. Around 800 people arrived that morning while yet others traveled on foot from nearby villages to join with the protest.

Many of the individuals who took part in the **29 May 1978** protest in the Panzós plaza hailed from a 10 km circle of villages that are visible on the map of mining concessions 1965-2005 (above), including Cahaboncito, Semococh, Rubeltzul, Canguachá, Sepacay, Lote 8, Soledad, and Mayagua Plantation as well as others in El Estor. In this list we should include other communities that shared historical, administrative, and organizational and kinship ties, such as Chichipate, La Unión, La Pista and the recent Barrio Revolución—all of whom had also been affected by the mining concessions. Eyewitnesses recounted that approximately at nine in the morning, the campesinos asked for a meeting with the mayor to address their land concerns. The mayor consented to speaking, but only with four representatives of the group. Due to the turmoil, the meeting did not take place. In accordance with an internal dispatch from the U.S. embassy, mentioned by the Commission for Historical Clarification (CEH), an army lieutenant had order his troops to open fire on the indigenous people gathered.

In their frenzied escape from the plaza, many Q'eqchi's drowned as their canoes overturned in the mighty Polochic River. Others scattered out along the adjacent streets. The CEH estimates that 53 individuals died in the Panzós Massacre and another 47 were gravely injured.



Detailed aerial photo of the town of Panzós, in the Polochic River Valley.

R-8.L-20-1.13 Feb. 1991, .DMA/SNA.

Instituto Geográfico Nacional, no.1574.

- 1. Panzós town square
- 2. Cemetery
- 3. Path toward Polochic River
- 4. Route toward El Estor
- 5. Path to Senahú, Alta Verapaz



Anonymous El Imparcial, June, 1978.

Government truck with bodies of victims of the massacre of 29 May 1978.

"After the massacre, the military prohibited access to the plaza. In the afternoon, municipal authorities ordered the removal of the cadavers. Members of the army members placed them in a blue, municipal, dump truck and transported them to a location near the public cemetery, and with a tractor. With a tractor, they dug a pit, where they placed the bodies."

(Commission for the Clarification of History, Guatemala: Memoria del Silencio, 1999)

The military repression subsequent to the massacre was such that the Q'eqchi' campesinos refrained from organizing any public demonstration in the succeeding years.





CLIMA DE TEMOR EN PANZOS

LA PRESENCIA DEL DESTACAMENTO DEL **EJERCITO NACIONAL, MANTIENE ATEMORIZADOS** A LOS POBLADORES DE LA REGION DE PANZOS, ALDEAS Y CASERIOS ALEDAÑOS A LA CABECERA MUNICIPAL

的學問的是自然的意識對於

DE NUESTRO ENVIADO ELMER LEMUS

Campesinos informaron a la Comisión de Solidaridad a Panzós lo anterior, a la vez, que muchos de el los se mantienen deambulando en las montañas, por temor a los "ejércitos", dejando abandonadas sus casas y sus sembrados, tal el caso de la aldea "La Soledad" en donde los ranchos permaneçen cerados. En otros caserfos han reportado la desparición de familiares que suponen andan huvendo por de Ciencias Jurdicas y otras.

suponen andan huyendo por de Ciencias Jurídicas y otras, temor a represalias del ejército. celebraron una entrevista con el Los terratenientes de la región han jefe del destacamento militar de





comunidades libremente y puedan realizar sus trabajos en el campo de descombro y limpieza en los sembrados de milpa, porque desde los sucesos sangrientos ocurridos el 29 de mayo, los campesnos han abandonado totalmente sus

encargados del destacamento aseguraron la buena voluntadite

comunidades libremente y puedan realizar sus trabajos en el campo de descombro y limpieza en los sembrados de milpa, porque desde flos sucesos sangrientos ocurridos el 29 de mayo, los campesinos ana abandonado totalmente sus siembras del presente año.

A la vez la comisión presentó tarias denuncias de los campesinos han vivido de generación en generación en las tierras que hoy habitan, "los campesinos han vivido de generación en generación en las tierras que hoy habitan, "los campesinos han vivido de terratenientes de amencionados diejeron que por manzana pagan 05.00 haciendo sos campesinos han vivido de generación en generación en las tierras que hoy habitan, "los campesinos su terratenientes toman las tierras que han sido descombradas por terratenientes de las mencionados diejeron que por manzana pagan 05.00 haciendo sos de la tierra únicamente para terratenientes toman las tierras que han sido descombradas por terratenientes de amencionados diejeron que por manzana pagan 05.00 haciendo sos de la tierra únicamente para cue han sido descombradas por terratenientes de las polición, al Chichipate y otros caseríos mostraron varios recibos de pago dos terratenientes de las roctivados tomas cititudes hostiles, indicando que la tierra únicamente para cue han sido descombradas por terratenientes toman las tierras que hoy habitan, "los campesinos se vais de la tierra únicamente para cue la mila de descombrada por la companidad de descombrada por campes de la companidad de descombrada pagan 05.00 haciendo so de la tierra únicamente para cue la companidad de descombrada por campes de la companidad de la

Chichipate y otros caseríos mostraron varios recibos de pago por alquiler de tierra.

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The official account of events, as published in the Diario de Centro América two days after the massacre, attributes responsibility to the Q'eqchi' campesinos. According to the official count, 2,000 campesinos attacked the army, and the soldiers were forced to defend themselves. General Otto Spiegler, then Minister of National Defense, publically held the Catholic Church culpable for the Panzós massacre as, according to his reasoning, they had incited the campesinos to protest. Later, Sister Raimunda Alonso was expelled from the country, accused of involvement in political activities.

La Tarde newspaper July 17 1978



El Imparcial Collection Guatemalan Photo Archives, CIRMA Mario Adler 1978

As a way to denounce the Panzós Massacre, the Association of University Students (AEU) from the University of San Carlos called for a protest through the streets of Guatemala City on 1 June 1978. Several thousand people answered the call, demanding that a university commission, the Red Cross, and independent journalists be allowed to visit Panzós.

The Exhumation

On 29 May 1997, nineteen years after the massacre, the Panzós Widows' Committee, in conjunction with the Association of Detained and Disappeared Relatives in Guatemala (FAMDEGUA), condemned the existence of a hidden cemetery in their town to the Guatemalan authorities. In September of 1997, the unearthing of the victims was authorized. The Guatemalan Foundation for Forensic Anthropology (FAFG) performed the exhumation of the remains of 35 people, who were buried in two mass graves after having died as a result of the events of 29 May 29 1978



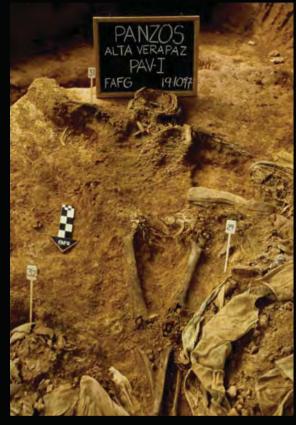


Exhumation of the Panzós victims 1997 Marlon García Arriaga

The reuniting: The deceased and their surviving loved ones finally reunited during the exhumation process that took place between September and October of 1997.

The clandestine grave: according to witnesses, the protestors who were assassinated during the massacre at the plaza had come to "reclaim their land...and to try to find an answer. They never thought they would come here to die."





The comment of one survivor about the contents of the grave: "Bottles, flashlights, shoes, shirts, pants, indigenous women's blouses, hats, staffs, backpacks, water bottles...and people."

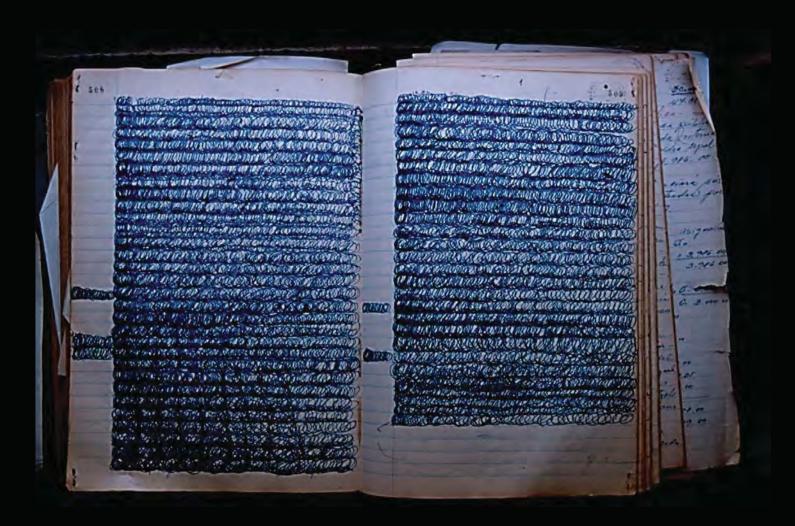
A survivor narrates: "I saw the people die, falling one on top of another. I listened to the shots flying above by my head. I threw myself on the road, feigning death and keeping my head down. I stayed there alongside people who were still moving."

Evidence and Testimony



The majority of the remains analyzed by FAFG belonged to men between the ages of 19 and 29. A child of 7 years of age was found among the adults. X-ray analysis of the remains showed that more than half of the bodies the presence of metal residue consistent with wounds inflicted by firearms.







A wounded woman is interviewed El Imparcial Collection Guatemalan Photo Archives, CIRMA Jorge Morles 1978

Municipal records of Panzós between the days leading up to and following the May 29th, 1978 massacre.

Marlon García Arriaga 1997

In an underfunded health center in Panzós, a medical student who was taking part in an internship program from the University of San Carlos, Guatemala, assisted by a clinic staff member and a local merchant, showed great human solidarity and somehow managed to attend the injured who had been unable to escape the plaza during the massacre. Still today, few at the University are aware of these heroic efforts. Some of the survivors and soldiers who ended up wounded during the events at Panzós were transported to the Cobán Military Hospital. It was more than a week before the media's interviews with the wounded revealed the presence of a military official among them.



Victims Identified by the CEH:

Adelina Caal (Mama Maquín), Abelardo Ac Caal, Alfredo Choca, Andrés Chub, Andrés Rax, Antonio Sub, Apolonio Tux, Bartolomé Chun Chub, Bartolomé Chub Chun, Bartolomeo Sacul Chun, Domingo Cac, Domingo Coc Pérez, Domingo Cuc, Félix Caal Seb, Félix Caal Xo, Francisco Choc, Francisco Coc, Francisco Seb Ché, Francisco Tzalam, Hilario Choc Pop, José Chen Ac, José Coc Pop, José Maquín, José Xol Coc, José Yat Chun, Juan Ché, Juan Cuz, Juan Meza, Lorenzo Choc Cuz, Manuel Cabral Tzi, Marcelino Cuz Choc, Maria Luisa Cabnal, Marcos Choc, Mena Chun, Miguel Cahuec, Miguel Quib, Norberto Chub Choc, Pablo Call Chun, Pablo Cuz Mo, Pablo Rax, Paulino Cuz Mo, Pedro Caal, Pedro Maqui, Ricardo Bac Chub, Roberto Ical Choc, Sabina Tuc Xo, Sabino Cuz Coc, Santiago Choc, Santiago Ché, Santiago Seb Caal, Santiago Seb Ché, Tomás Chen Quib, Tomás Coc.





Reactions to the Massacres



A girl who refused to be quiet and refused to dance:

Fidelina Tuch Chuc, a candidate for the Indigenous Queen of the San Pedro Carchá Fair, was disqualified after asking for a minute of silence in remembrance of the victims of Panzós, "concluding that her message in Spanish asking the organizers of the folkloric ballet not to treat the indigenous people like strange animals but rather as humans was something that the judges did not appreciate; but the those assembled at the folkloric event lavished their applause upon her. Her disqualification was all the more apparent when she refused to participate in the folk dance, as a sign of mourning, and the judges took advantage of the situation by shifting their attention to only the other four contestants who did dance." (News article, June, 1978) Despite this type of bravery shown by local citizens, the wave of repression only worsened.



Guerrilla Action "Panzós Heroico"

COMIL, the Military Commission of the Guatemalan Workers' Party—itself known as the PGT—staged an ambush against an army transport truck carrying members of the Mobile Military Police in Zone 11 of the capital on 14 June 1978. This act, in which 20 police officers died, was called Panzós Heroico. The political arm of the PGT, in a public communiqué, denied responsibility for the action and expelled COMIL from among the party's ranks. COMIL, in turn, and "now independent of the PGT, organized itself into 'urban units' and continued carrying out isolated operations in the southern region of the country." The workers' party then allied itself with another dissident offshoot, the Nucleus for Leadership and National Direction (Núcleo de Dirección y Conducción Nacional), which was annihilated some time later. (CEH, Guatemala: Memoria del Silencio, 1999)

The Violence Escalates



In wake of the massacre, some survivors succeeded in reaching the capital city. There, they were aided by members of the Association of University Students (AEU), who recorded their testimonials. Oliverio Castañeda de León, who had recently assumed the position of Secretary General of the AEU, demanded that the government take responsibility for the massacre. In that same year (1978), the capital found itself in a social crisis as a consequence of rising costs of urban transport. On 20 October Oliverio gave a speech to those gathered in front of the Acoustic Shell at the Parque Centenario and again recited the facts of what had happened at Panzós. Minutes later, this important student leader was brought down in a passage way, Pasaje Rubio, felled by the bullets of unknown assailants who had descended from two cars, one of which had official plates. Hermán Chupina Barahona, who had recently been named the Director of the National Police, referred to the insurgents when he declared, "We will treat them roughly, as they deserve, because it's past time that we lived in peace with the rule of law and not in an atmosphere of fear" (Prensa Libre, June 1978).

Left: Profile of blood from the assassination of the university student Oliverio Castañeda de León at the entrance of the **Pasaje Rubio** on 6th Avenue in Guatemala City. El Imparcial Collection Guatemalan Photo Archives, CIRMA

Mario Adler October 1978



Hermán Chupina Barahona makes declarations before the press (Prensa Libre, June 1978)

The Pueblo Viejo-Quixal Hydroelectric Plant

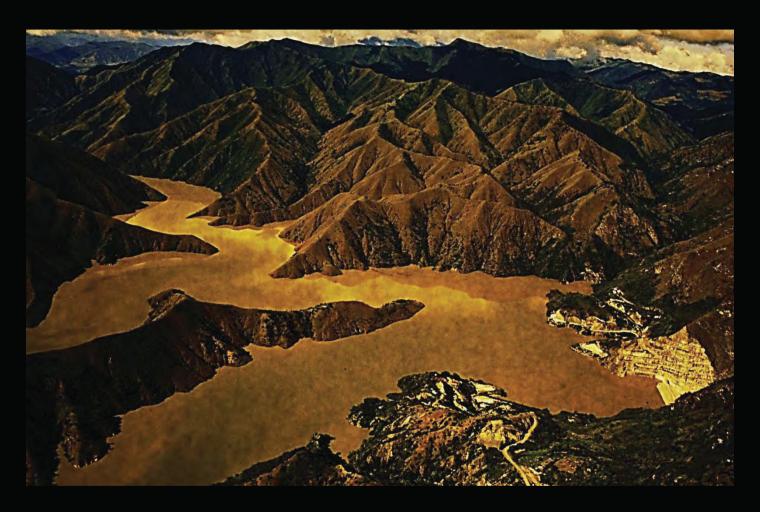


President Kjell Laugerud García visits the new installations at Pueblo Viejo-Quixal. El Imparcial Collection Guatemalan Photo Archives, CIRMA 1977

The Guatemalan State's strategy of silencing any form of opposition, applying the framework of the National Security Doctrine, had tragic consequences for the lives of individuals and entire communities that might question development projects launched without local input. Many of these were located in the region known as the Franja Transversal del Norte. Such was the case with the hydroelectric plant project in the Pueblo Viejo-Quixal on the Chixoy River (also known as the Río Negro), in Baja Verapaz. The labor for this project was inaugurated by ex-president Kjell Laugerud García in 1977.



Prior to the flooding of sacred Maya sites and the arable land of the Río Negro as part of the hydroelectric project, a scientific French mission led archeological rescue efforts as part of an arrangement between the National Institute of Electrification and the Institute of Anthropology and History (IDAEH). In the mission's final report, it references how the campesino population in this area was being subjected to repression. Inhabitants of the Río Negro area who opposed the dam faced severe violations: the flooding of 43 archaeological sites, the "disappearance" of 23 villages, and horrendous massacres, such as the slaying that took place at the summit of Mount Pacoxom on 13 March 1982, in which 177 people were assassinated -- 70 women and 107 children.



Not only are the agricultural fields of the Río Negro communties in accessible underneath the waters of the hydroelectric dam...

"There still are (at the bottom of the river and lake) some mass graves with cadavers that will never be possible to exhume," pointed out a survivor.

Aerial photo of the Chixoy dam Marlon García Arriaga 1999

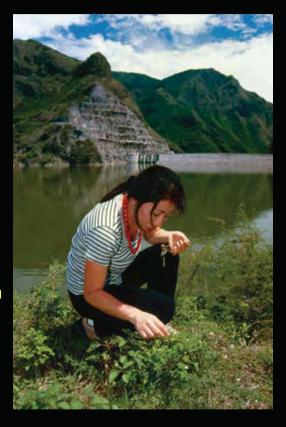


Dominga Sic Ruiz was eight years old when the paramilitary civil patrol assassinated her mother in Pacoxom in 1982. She fled with her younger brother, a one-year-old infant, who starved to death in her arms two days later. She was forced to bury the baby at the foot of a tree, whose location remains undiscovered to date, as she continued to seek refuge. Fortunately, when Dominga became lost in the mountains, a family friend recognized her and took her to a convent in Rabinal, a small town in the department of Baja Verapaz. Shortly afterwards, that very same friend succumbed to the violence that is so marked in the region.

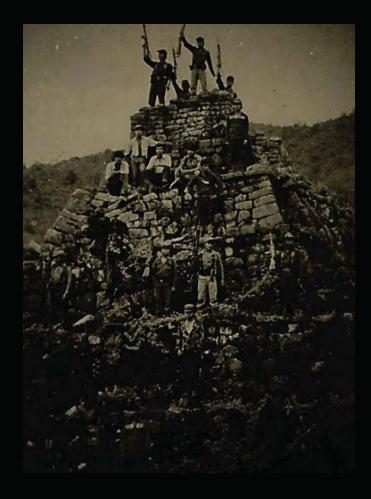
As a result of steps taken by the nuns of the convent in Rabinal, Dominga left that same year for the United States, where she has lived for the past 28 years. Although she had surviving family members in Pacoxom, her departure established a pattern for later adoptions that the Guatemalan government would encourage involving children separated from their families on account of the war. The family that took in Dominga changed her name to Denise Becker, and she was educated in American culture. In the process, she not only lost contact with family members in Guatemala, but all contact with her culture, which she now is trying to recover.

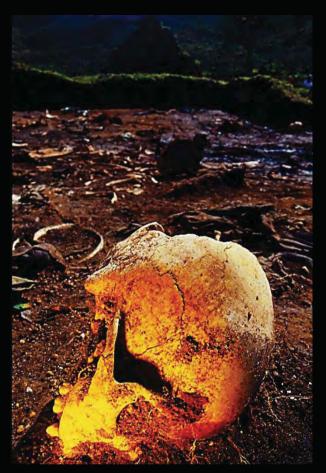
Eighteen years after the events of Pacoxom, Dominga Sic for the first time places an offering at the burial of those who fell in the massacre.

Marlon García Arriaga 2000



Dominga Sic, upon her first return to Guatemala, visited the Chixoy dam





Far left: Guerilla activity in San Francisco Nentón, Huehuetenango

Anonymous ca. 1982

Near left: The exhumation of the victims of San Francisco Nentón, Huehuetenango. In the background, you can still see the prehispanic pyramid that was located in the center of town.

Marlon García Arriaga 2000

The intensification of violence that got started with the Panzós massacre resulted in the persecution and annihilation of various civilian communities across Guatemala.

One scorched earth operation was conceived with the eradication of civilian settlements that might provide support for guerrilla groups operating in the area around Huehuetenango.

This culminated in the wholesale annihilation of the community of San Francisco Nentón by Guatemalan army troops on 17 July 1982. This operation was marked by acts of particular cruelty. Women, children, and the elderly suffered rape, inhumane treatment, and threats. On top of that, the settlement was burned to the ground.



Ceremony at the end of the exhumation, performed by two survivors of the massacre at San Francisco Nentón, Huehuetenango.



The Alligators

Oil on cloth 1.5 m. x 2 m.





A Nighttime Walk (in the Panzós Cemetery) Oil on cloth 2 m. x 1.5 m. Marlon García Arriaga 2008

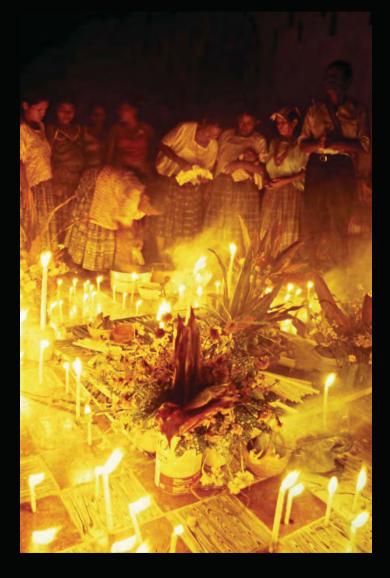
Please answer the following questions:

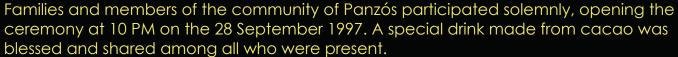
- 1. What was my life like during the armed conflict?
- 2. Were there cases of violence in my community?
- 3. What do I remember from that period?
- 4. Might some kind of consultation with local communities about the industrial projects just described have prevented the violence?

The Survivors



Widows of Fire Panzós, Alta Verapaz Marlon García Arriaga 2000 On 29 September 1997, the community of Panzós, headed by their Widows Committee, celebrated their first Mayejac, a Maya Q'eqchi' ceremony, in public. It was dedicated to the victims of the massacre -- nineteen years after the tragedy. In the intervening two decades, this kind of ceremony had been carried out only in secret, owing to the fear that whatever activity in solidarity with, or recognizing a familiarity with, the victims would spark brutal repression.









Mayejak in the Cemetery







The next day, on 29 September 1997, the ceremony took on an especially deep significance with the inclusion of the remains of the massacre victims, uncovered in the exhumation process. On this date in the Maya calendar the Day of the Dead was traditionally celebrated. It was a day for asking permission from the deity Tzultaq'a that the body and the *muhel*, or spirit, of the dead could rest at his side with dignity.





Just as the relatives of the victims had requested, the remains of those massacred were returned to their community on the afternoon of 28 May 1998: "We do not want our relatives to have spent twenty years buried like animals." The remains were finally given a decent funeral according to the community traditions and customs. The next day, the burial group traced the same route between the communities south of El Estor and the town square at Panzós that the victims had followed at the same hour, on the same day and month, but exactly twenty years earlier. During the march, the multitude that accompanied the coffins chanted, "Panzós: Justice, land, and liberty!"





"...but they couldn't pull out our roots."



Meeting between Dominga Sic and her aunt. Rabinal, Baja Verapaz 2000

Dominga Sac was reunited with her family members in the year 2000 in Rabinal, Baja Verapaz. They were part of the community that had been forced to abandon their land: "we still suffer the consequences of our community's eviction, which forced us to live in Pacux." Despite their tragedy, their determination to remember is represented in the painting they gave to Dominga. The painting bears the title: "They may have cut our branches, but they couldn't pull out our roots." (See the photo of the painting on the following page.)





Ironically, solar cells have been given to some of the indigenous people of the Río Negro area. Despite living across from the hydroelectric plant that produces 40% of Guatemala's electricity to date, this community has yet to receive electric power generated by the dam.

Royalties, Participation, and Consultation

After four years of nickel extraction, EXMIBAL closed its operations in 1981 without paying the 1% in royalties on the 16.5 million kilograms of partially refined product it had removed and sent to Wales. Despite this cessation of mining activity, the corporation would retain its hold on the land for the remainder of the 40-year concession. Meanwhile, its promises of development and jobs in the region were not fulfilled.

One year after the signing of the peace agreements (1996) that ended the 36-year internal war, mining reforms were initiated. These were attributed to EXMIBAL's having been "able to secure forbidden opportunities during the period of the military regimes." It was the retired colonel Arturo de la Cruz -- a congressional representative from the department of Alta Verapaz and the person the AEU held responsible for military actions, considering that he had been the commander of the military base in Cobán in 1978 -- who presented to Congress the new initiative for mining reforms. But the reforms sought to attract more foreign investment in mining.

In December of 2004, INCO sold EXMIBAL to Skye Resources of Vancouver, which became the "headquarters," of the Guatemalan Nickel Company (CGN). According to this company, during the administration of Oscar Berger (2002–2007), several appeals were made to the Guatemalan government for capital that, going unanswered, caused the loss of Guatemala's mining shares.

In these appeals, and the decision to release the Guatemalan government's stake in them, the Guatemalan people were never consulted. Since 2008 HudBay Minerals has possessed

these concessions.



Monument to Mining Heritage Sudbury, Ontario 2007

For the critics of this industry, this monument represents a romanticized vision of mining. The sculpture provides a gentle approach to the land when, in many Third World countries, mining has implied violence, displacement of entire communities, contracts injurious to governments, and the contamination of water sources.



Colonel Romeo Lucas García, Commander of the Mariscal Zavala Brigade; General Otto Spiegeler, Commander of the Honor Guard Brigade; Colonel Federico Fuentes Corado, Commander of the Guatemalan Air Force; General Efraín Ríos Montt, Chief of the Defense Department; General Fausto David Rubio, Minister of Defense; General Carlos Arana Osorio, President of the Republic; General Leonel Vassaux, spokesperson for the President; General Juventino Gómez, commander of the headquarters of the Guatemalan Army; Lieutenant Colonel Guillermo de la Cruz, Sub-Director of the Polytechnic School.





Proud Woman

Oil on cloth 1.5 m. x 2 m.



Nickel is in Your Life

A Canadian human rights activist holds aloft the portrait of Mamá Maquín in front of Big Nickel in Sudbury, Ontario. The latter represents a five-cent Canadian coin, which stretches 9.1 meters high, or approximately 30 feet, and is made of stainless steel. The monument was designed to inform new generations about the important investments the North American economy has made in the mining industry. In the background of the photo, the massive INCO smokestack is discernible at the Copper Cliff Smelter. This "Super Stack" has a height of 1,247 feet, built to that height intentionally to avoid environmental regulation. The sulfuric gas pollution it launches into the atmosphere has contributed to the destruction of forests in Sudbury and even contaminates places as far away as Russia, China, and very possibly Guatemala...the host country of the nickel deposits that have, at a great social, cultural, and ecological cost, brought it only 1% of the royalties for this business deal after 24 years.

Sudbury, Ontario

Evictions in el Estor, 2007

Late in 2006 and early in 2007 multiple communities, including La Pista, La Unión, and Barrio Revolución (also known as Chichipate) all of El Estor, Izabal, as well as La Paz and Lote 8 of Panzós, Alta Verapaz, were subject to evictions as part of a mining renewal project being promoted by the Guatemalan Nickel Company (CGN).

To stave off any opposition, Rafael Andrade Escobar, the legal representative entrusted with directing the evictions, had at his disposal a massive armed front of about 800 members of the National Civil Police (PNC) and the Guatemalan army. According to those evicted, members of the neighboring community of Mariscos were also contracted by the mining company at a rate of about \$8 U.S. a day to tear down and burn homes as people were dislodged.

These evictions led to a revolt by the population of El Estor. The consequences included the partial destruction of hospital built by the RAXE Foundation, a non-governmentalorganization created by the Guatemalan Nickel Company.

On Monday, 21 March 2011, 11 women from the community of Lote 8 made public their lawsuit against the Canadian mining company HMI Nickel and its corporate owner, HudBay Minerals, claiming that they had been victims of rape in the area of El Estor. On January 17th, 2007, during the forced expulsion of 100 Maya Q'eqchi' families from their humble dwellings in the Lote 8 community, 11 women asserted that they had been gang raped by mining security personnel and members of the police and military.

These armed and violent evictions were carried out at the request of HMI Nickel, as a part of the Phoenix Mining Project. This project is located on the banks of Lake Izabal and directed through the affiliate Guatemalan Nickel Company (CGN).



James A. Rodríguez, The El Estor Evictions , 2007



Approximately 800 members of the National Civil Police and Guatemalan army were deployed during evictions in the La Unión community, in the area of El Estor, on 8 January 2007.

Following page:

The Q'eqchi' campesino Francisco Tiul Tut weeps at his own impotence during the razing of the La Revolución neighborhood. "I am sad because my little house is gone."

James A. Rodríguez, The El Estor Evictions, 2007.



An obvious intimidation tactic: "...CGN employees, from the neighboring town of Mariscos, had painted their faces black while they set fire to the shacks."

James A. Rodríguez,

The El Estor Evictions, 2007



Compromising Statements from the Canadian Ambassador

In 2007, the Canadian ambassador to Guatemala asserted to a human rights activist in his country that a video made by Steven Schnoor about the events in El Estor had involved contracting a professional actress. He also proclaimed the photos taken by James A. Rodríguez were not from 2007 but from the internal armed conflict, years earlier. But these statements were vehemently refuted by the two authors and by eyewitness testimonies. The now former Canadian diplomat has not apologized for his groundless claims, although it bears mentioning that the images clearly sustain the reality whereby violence is used as a way of "solving" land disputes, just as it was thirty years ago. (Link below to video.)





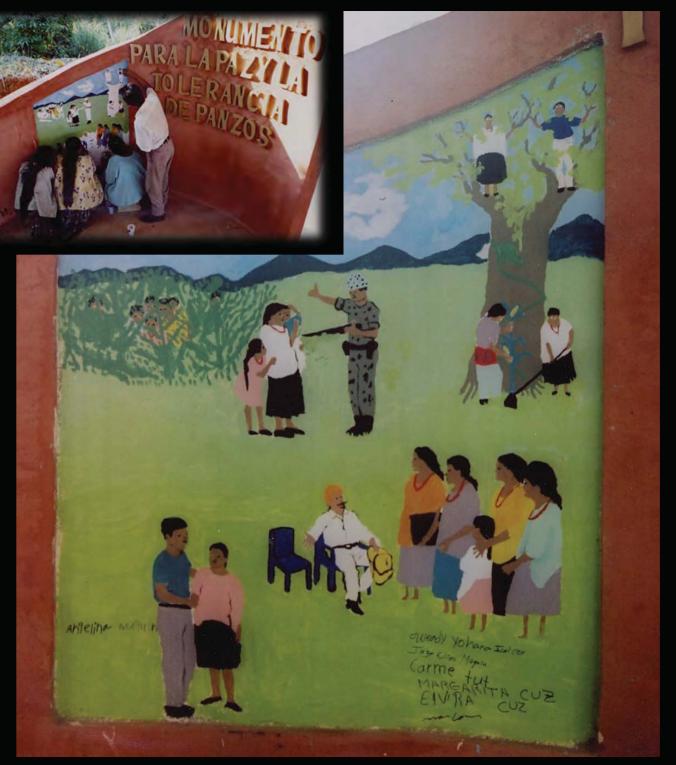
Demands for Justice

In Toronto, Ontario, Canada on 16 June 2010, a judge determined that Kenneth Cook, the one-time Canadian ambassador in Guatemala, defamed the doctoral student and filmmaker Steven Schnoor when the Cook made false statements regarding the documentary Schnoor made, criticizing the practices of HudBay Minerals, the Canadian mining company. The young attorney Cory Wanless won the case in the Canadian Court.

On 1 December 2010, Wanless, representing the Choc family, also presented charges against the Hudbay Minerals and its affiliate, the Guatemalan Nickel Company (CGN), for its indirect responsibility in the assassination of Angélica Choc's husband on September 27th, 2009. Her husband, Adolfo Ich Chamán, was an active member of his community in its stance against mining operations. Likewise, charges have been filed against HMI Nickel Inc., an affiliate of HudBay and majority shareholder of CGN. This case names CGN's head of security, Mynor Padilla, as the individual responsible for the crime. Despite these serious charges, and an arrest order from 2010, as of January 2011 Padilla still remained free.



Press conference in which serious accusations were leveled against CGN Hotel Panamerican, December 1st, 2010. Marlon García Arriaga



Can there be Peace... without Remembrance?

In the monument constructed over the tomb of the Panzós victims, one can appreciate today a small mural that was constructed under the guidance and leadership of the family members who survived the massacre of 1978. This mural, made by local boys, girls, and widows, attempts to synthesize their vision for a future with peace that allows the community:

"to be able to remember the injustices that we suffered when we were in hiding; to be able to eat from our work and from the land; for the men of the community to be able love and take care of the women; and, for the plantation owners to let us sit at their side and dialogue as equals."

The drawing of a seated plantation owner (wearing white), with his hand outstretched in a gesture for the Q'eqchi' women to sit down, symbolizes the desire for equality and dialogue that the creators of this monument share.

Given that we do not have space to review the many political crimes suffered by Guatemalans as a result of the mining business, that we cannot remember them in detail here, reflect on them, and draw lessons from them all, this drawing for peace will only continue to serve as an aspiration.

The Girl of Panzós (Margarita Cuz)

> Oil on cloth 1.5 m. x 2 m.

