Global Asbestos Struggle

photographs
Stephen Harper’s killer legacy
RELANCE DE LA MINE JEFFREY À ASBESTOS

The Lancet exhorte Québec à ne pas soutenir la mine d’amiante

ISABELLE RACHET

La revue médicale britannique The Lancet exhorte le gouvernement du Québec à céder à des milliers de manifestants qui soutiennent la relance d’une exploitation de l’améthyste à la mine Jeffrey à Asbestos, pour laquelle

«The Lancet apporte sa voix à celle de nombreux acteurs qui insistent pour que le gouvernement du Québec adopte une position plus ferme vis-à-vis de l’extraction d’amiante. En effet, la relance d’une exploitation de l’améthyste à la mine Jeffrey à Asbestos, qui précède la décision de la commission de l’environnement en chef de la revue, le Dr Richard Suraweera,

«Nous demandons au gouvernement du Québec de ne pas céder à l’extraction d’amiante, qui pourrait entraver l’avenir de l’exploitation d’amiante en tant que l’amiante est considérée comme un danger pour la santé humaine.»

Les manifestants, qui demandent la relance d’une exploitation de l’améthyste à la mine Jeffrey à Asbestos, pour laquelle le gouvernement qui a accepté de céder à laquelle de l’améthyste est un danger pour la santé humaine.»

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What WHO Can Do

• Implement ILO/WHO national action plans for eliminating asbestos disease
• Ask the activists what they think you can do
• Promote life-cycle economic analyses of asbestos vs. substitutes
• Survey national tariffs on asbestos v. substitutes
• Analyze how health/envir. ministries overcame commerce/trade ministries in countries that have moved to ban asbestos (e.g., Thailand)
• Disseminate information on substitutes for asbestos products – one way is to maintain a directory of asbestos substitute manufacturing companies
• Sponsor conferences on asbestos substitutes
• Support unions and NGOs in raising asbestos awareness
• Get World Bank funding to help rid the world of asbestos product use
• Assist countries to develop rules for asbestos abatement and demolition -- before and after banning asbestos product use
• Support investigations and policies to deal with contaminant-asbestos and other fibrous minerals in stone, talc, vermiculite, taconite, etc.
• Help diagnose mesotheliomas and asbestosis to make danger visible in each country
• Declare the asbestos industry persona non grata at WHO, like the tobacco industry

The Global Asbestos Struggle

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Sawing Asbestos-Cement Roofing Sheet
Consensus: Ban Manufacture and Use of Asbestos Products

- BWI 1989
- WHO 2006
- ILO 2006
- World Bank 2007 and 2009
- Over 50 Country Bans (latest Mozambique, Turkey)
- No global asbestos corporations (since 1999)
- Some global firms have global “no-asbestos” policies (ICI, Dow, Unilever) including rules for renovation of structures with in-place asbestos – WHO can help make these available publicly for comparison and analysis
The Battle in a Most Important Country, Canada

- CBC Documentary: Canada’s Ugly Secret (June 2009)
- Raging Grannies commit Liberal leader, scaring Chinese investors
- Que Premier trade trip to India focus of protests and Canadian media
- Can Cancer Soc, Can Med Assoc, CPHA call for ban in Canada
- Only one mine operating, 340 workers at start of 2010
- Que. Premier floats $58 million “loan guarantee” to reopen J-M mine - June 2010
- Protest demonstrations in DC, NY, Hong Kong, Seoul, Brussels, London, Paris
- Env Health Perspec “Asbestos” issue July 1, 2010
- Int Consortium of Investigative Journalists barrage of reports from journos in Mexico, Russia, India, Brazil, China
- Que. Premier: conditions for mine financing include assurance of safeguards in India
- Unnamed Indian investors offer $15 mil to own Que-financed J-M mine
- Local health officers all over Quebec oppose public loan to re-open J-M mine
- Canadian gov’t discontinues funding the Chrysotile Institute - 2011
- Que. Director of Occ. Safety urged not to certify “safe asbestos use” plan for India
- CSN confederation of 300,000 Quebec unionists, opposes loan to re-open J-M mine, “No worker’s life, whether Indian or Quebecois, should be sacrificed for a job”
Asbestos Activism Spreads

- 2000 – Osasco, Brazil activists conference
- International Ban Asbestos Secretariat links us and holds conferences in Athens, Tokyo, Seoul, Hong Kong
- Indonesian group formed with help of other Asian activists following Korean company to Indonesia, providing exposure monitoring, medical, strategic and organizational support
- ADAO links activists using social networking media
- Activists in Russia challenging the asbestos industry

The Industry Fights Back

- No more global asbestos corporations – only national chapters of Asbestos Mafia -- profits from savings on prevention, compensation
- “Chrysotile Institute” uses Canada embassies and tax dollars to promote “controlled use” of asbestos w/Pr. Min. Harper’s support
- Industry groups led by Canada in India, Mexico, Brazil, Colombia, Russia work to oppose critics in Peru, India...
- Advertorials in Times of India, doctors threatened, politicians and media financial conflicts-of-interest, gov study co-opted by industry
- Product defense articles on biopersistence used to argue that WHO, IARC, ILO, NIOSH, EPA, OSHA are wrong about the carcinogenicity of chrysotile asbestos -- aided by US auto and brake defendants (BC disclosure: in whose cases I testify)
- Raising fears that (non-repairable) asbestos substitutes are dangerous, unstudied (Better-the-Devil-you-know argument)
- Accusing asbestos critics of working for competitive industries
- Asbestos Industry conference in Havana - October 2010
- Criminal and civil court actions against Fernanda Giannasi in Brazil, 1998-2011
- Death threats to Fernanda Giannasi
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