

STEALING AFRICA

HOW MUCH PROFIT IS FAIR? (58MINS)

Glencore's mines in Zambia don't generate much wealth for Zambians. But they do make some people in Switzerland very rich. How do multinationals work the tax system and operate in Africa?



ALL ABOUT STEALING AFRICA

You can watch the film above. Or [download it here](#). [Get in touch](#) if you'd like a DVD.

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ABOUT THE FILM

In Ruschlikon, a sleepy village in Switzerland, the wealthy residents are receiving more tax revenue than they can use since the arrival of Ivan Glasberg, CEO of commodity giant Glencore. Yet in Zambia, where Glencore owns a majority stake in the country's biggest copper mining operations, tax is an issue that's contributing to its poverty...

Glasberg netted \$9.6 billion when Glencore went public in 2011. The receipt of his taxes overwhelmed the public coffers of Ruschlikon so much that the mayor decided to lower the town's tax rate by 7%.

Not so fortunate for the residents of copper-rich Zambia - where Glencore owns a 73% stake in the Mopani Copper Mines (one of the biggest mining operations in the country).

Unfortunately, Zambia's copper resources have not made the country rich. Virtually all Zambia's copper mines are owned by corporations. In the last ten years, they've extracted copper worth \$29 billion but Zambia is still ranked one of the twenty poorest countries in the world.

So why hasn't copper wealth reduced poverty in Zambia yet made the residents of Ruschlikon better off? Once again it comes down to the issue of tax, or in Zambia's case, tax avoidance and the use of tax havens.

In figures...

- Tax avoidance by corporations costs poor countries and estimated \$160 billion a year, almost double what they receive in international aid.
- That's enough to save the lives of 350,000 children aged five or under every year.
- For every \$1 given in aid to a poor country, \$10 drains out. Vital money that could help a poor country pay for healthcare, schools, pensions and infrastructure.
- Money that would make them less reliant on aid.

EXTRA RESOURCES

Read or download a [full synopsis](#) of the film.

Read or download the [film transcript](#).

Find out more about [global trade & the developing world](#).

Use our [interactive dataviz](#) to see how your country compares on issues like health & wealth.

More about Director [Christoffer Gulbrandsen](#).

Alex Cobham is a development economist who appears in *Stealing Africa*. Read the two he wrote for Why Poverty?, [Part 1: the Tax Dodge](#), and [Part 2](#).

EDUCATORS' RESOURCES

We've put together a guide for Educators & Facilitators with ideas and suggestions on using the films as a teaching tool or starting point for discussions. You can:

- Read or download the section about [Stealing Africa](#)
- Read or download [the full guide](#)
- Look at [activities & discussions about natural resources](#)
- Browse [films/ resources by issue](#)

WHAT CAN I DO?

Please share this film and encourage people to start asking questions. It's an easy but effective way to keep the debate about poverty going.

If you'd like to arrange a screening of *Stealing Africa* or include it in a festival, please [contact us](#).

These organisations are committed to tackling corporate tax evasion. Find out more about them:

- [Tackle Tax Havens](#): what tax havens are, why they're so damaging and what you can do about them.
- [Global Financial Integrity](#): a research and advocacy organization working to curtail illicit financial flows out of developing countries.
- [Tax Justice Network](#): a coalition of researchers and activists focused on the harmful effects of tax havens, tax avoidance and tax competition. Their site is full of fascinating information and indepth resources.
- [Transparency International](#): an organisation that monitors and publicises corporate and political corruption around the world. It has bases in more than 100 countries - so there's probably a branch near you.
- [/The Rules](#): working to change the rules that create poverty and inequality.
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JB: Hold on a minute. What is the Trans Pacific Partnership and why is everyone getting so energized about it? And why haven't we heard about it if it's as bad as you seem to be saying?

PEN: We don't use hyperbole lightly. You are not SUPPOSED to have heard about it. It has been negotiated in such extreme secrecy, the documents around it are so classified, that Alan Grayson has complained [he would have to break the law to even tell us what is in it](#) from what he has himself seen. Journalists who have tried to attend the conclaves where this is being discussed have been systematically excluded. They tell us this is all necessary because if people knew what was in it, then people would object. Uh . . . duh!!

JB: Is this even legal? Aren't We the People supposed to know what our elected officials are negotiating on our supposed behalf?

PEN: Congress has a constitutional duty to regulate trade. *But they also, unfortunately, have the power to be derelict and shirk that duty by voting that they waive it, so instead of serious deliberation we have quick, fast track and a hurry.*

JB: Let's back up, PEN. Please tell us what the TPP is supposed to do and what it's really doing. I mean, how and why is it so terrible?

PEN: All we have to go on are leaked documents, but what we do know from them is this: [Only two of the 26 chapters](#) of the proposed "trade" agreement have anything to do with trade. *The rest is a full on assault on national sovereignty by corporate special interests.* The language they are pushing would give private business the right to de facto veto laws on pollution, labor rights, privacy, you name it, everything. If they wanted to come into your backyard and start fracking, there is nothing even your own government could do about it. If you had a labor union, they could in effect dismiss it.

JB: So, the legislation is all just a smokescreen in order to accomplish something else entirely?

PEN: Calling it legislation is to presume that *the role of government from now on is to rubber stamp whatever laws private corporations want to make to rule over us. Never did the worst fascists in history even dare to dream about such all supreme power.*

JB: Well, we know that various pieces of legislation have been written by corporate lobbyists, most notably the energy bill under Dick Cheney that was allegedly written by oil execs and the health care bill, that was allegedly written by health insurance lobbyists, for instance. How is this different?

PEN: You betcha. But what this represents is an attempt to do to INTERNATIONAL law what they have already done to the laws of our own country.

JB: So, I don't really get this, to tell you the truth, PEN. Are you saying that international and local businesses will have control over rules and regulations which our legislators have deliberated on and passed? How can that be? It sounds outrageous. Why would anyone ever agree to this?

PEN: All it takes is enough corrupt legislators to let mega-corporations write laws that serve only their interests, we're not talking about little mom and pop businesses, assuming there are any of them left. That, and enough passive people to just sit on their hands and watch all of this being done to them. That is what would be the most startling thing, if people DID get wind of this, which so many, not just us, are shouting about, and then did not even make the slightest effort to object.

JB: Where's the press, PEN? I know I keep asking but this is a BIG STORY, one of the biggest ever. It's a coup really. Or am I overstating?

PEN: The progressive blogs are all over this. Just do an online search for Trans Pacific Partnership and you'll find it all.

JB: You're right: According to Google, about 12,100,000 results.

PEN: Are the big CORPORATE media channel talking about this, some of the same ones that we are fighting in federal court right now for rejecting ads for our new full length feature film, [*The Last War Crime*](#) ? Of course not, they are some of the beneficiaries of this seizure of power. It is every bit a coup, if and only if they are allowed to get away with it.

JB: Okay, PEN. You've laid out the problem pretty clearly. Now, what have you got up your activist's sleeve in terms of action we can take to fight this?

PEN: With this new threat bearing down on us, we worked straight through the holiday to take our activism to a new level. We now have an upgraded and updated function on our action pages for sending letters to the editor of your nearest local newspaper, and here's why: Recently a former congressional aide wrote that NOTHING gets the attention of members of Congress more than when THEIR NAME appears in a letter to the editor.

JB: Good point.

PEN: It's called publicity, and the worst of them are petrified that people will realize the extent to which they are ignoring their little people constituents in favor of their biggest campaign contributors.

JB: I still don't get it. What do they think will happen if, God forbid, this is passed and people learn how they've screwed us over?

PEN: Oh, they've got lots of practice on covering their butts on bad policy. Anybody remember, "Nobody would have thought that terrorists would fly airplanes into buildings," or "How could we have known the intelligence was wrong?" The point is, we need to maximally get our protests in now, BEFORE the dirty deed is done, and really raise a ruckus about it.

JB: What's the timeline here, PEN?

PEN: The word is both the Senate Finance Committee and the House Ways and Means Committee will introduce fast track bills perhaps as soon as the first week of the new congressional session starting this coming week. But we are talking online here. We can move at lightning speed if people just get engaged.

JB : Give us the links, please, and we'll get on this. How long does it take to do what we need to do online? Half an hour? Twenty minutes? What are we talking about here?

PEN: One of the things we worked so hard on over the "holidays" was creating another brand new function. On the new action page for this there is a button you can click that instantly looks up your members of Congress and tells you who has signed one of the congressional letters protesting this (Yes, Virginia, we do have some members of congress that are capable of integrity), and who has not. And we are emphasizing how CRITICALLY important it is to use the letter to the editor function and call out your members of Congress BY NAME, for or against.

Stop TPP Fast Track Action

Page: <http://www.peaceteam.net/action/pnum1149.php>

JB: So, if each of us spends a few minutes on this, we have a chance of stopping this horrid proposal in its tracks?

PEN: Our whole mission in life, all the resources we have dedicated our lives to creating, is to make activism as easy and simple as possible. Click a mouse one time and your personal message goes to all your members of Congress, the newspaper of your choice, and in this case both the Senate Finance Committee and the House Ways And Means Committee too.

JB: You folks have made it so easy, it's hard to come up with an excuse not to take this action, right now! Thanks so much for giving up your holidays for this cause. I'm assuming that readers should also share this via the social media as well to spread the word, correct?

PEN: Please, please, please. We ourselves can do nothing alone. The power of the people derives only from many speaking out together, from everyone doing whatever they can. Write that one letter to an editor. Forward the action page links to everyone you know. It costs nothing but a minute to care about what is being done to YOU.

JB: And our children and their children". Thanks so much for talking with me, PEN.

PEN: And thank you, Joan, for doing what you can, using the power that you have as an individual to spread the word by allowing us the opportunity to speak here.

JB: Okay. I'm signing off so I can go use your new action page and get the ball rolling.

Get your bumper sticker [here](#). No donation required.

<http://www.opednews.com/articles/3/Use-This-Innovative-Action-by-Joan-Brunwasser-Action-Action-Pages-Activism-Agreement-140105-266.html>

[Also See Regarding Corporate Power - ALECEXPOSED.ORG](#)

[See WAmend.org](#)