
[Aotearoa/New Zealand: Carter Holt Harvey the worst transnational corporation](#)

In April, the fifth edition of the Roger Award took place. This prize is given to the worst transnational corporation operating in Aotearoa/New Zealand and is organized by the Campaign Against Foreign Control of Aotearoa (CAFCA) and GATT Watchdog, two local activist/campaign organizations.

Although run on a tiny budget, the award has attracted overseas attention from organisers in other countries who are confronting corporate power and control. It is a very concrete way of raising awareness about a global problem by concentrating on the impacts TNC's activities have on local communities and the environment.

The award is given to the transnational corporation operating in New Zealand judged to have the most negative impact in each or all of the following: unemployment, monopoly, profiteering, abuse of workers/conditions, political interference, environmental damage, cultural imperialism, impact on Maori indigenous peoples, running an ideological crusade, health and safety of workers and the public, and impact on women.

This year's winner was: Carter Holt Harvey (CHH). It was once one of New Zealand's 'own' transnational corporations, but some years ago the US-based timber titan International Paper took over it and now has a 50.1% share. As well as in New Zealand, CHH has operations in Australia and Fiji. It is one of the southern hemisphere's largest producers of wood and paper products. Like its parent company, it is virulently anti-worker, anti union, and, in spite of its attempts at greenwashing its image it is a menace to the environment. It owns approximately 330,000 hectares of predominantly plantation radiata pine in New Zealand.

There are too many reasons of why this prize was given to this company. CHH history regarding workers rights and working conditions leaves a lot to be said. On the one hand, it has tried to casualise workers, it has also been fined for not providing safety equipment to workers. On the other hand, the Roger Award judges have found that in New Zealand the only pulp and paper mills that still use dioxin-producing chlorine bleaching processes --proved to be carcinogenic-- were those owned by CHH.

During its existence as a New Zealand-owned company, Carter Holt Harvey had invested in Pinochet's Chile and, before the radical labour market deregulation that took place in 1991, its chairman, Richard Carter, argued for Chilean-style labour laws in New Zealand. Since its takeover by International Paper, the operations of CHH's Chilean subsidiary, Bosques Arauco rode roughshod over Mapuche peoples' rights.

The Roger Award report also highlighted CHH's role in a joint venture to grow genetically modified pine trees in secret locations, which it dubbed "Frankenpine".

Additionally, along with other big players in the forestry sector, CHH has been pressuring the New Zealand government not to ratify the Kyoto Protocol. In a press release of November 5 2001, its chief

operating officer Jay Goodenbour claimed that recent "independent assessments" suggest that implementing the Kyoto Protocol "will hurt our ability to export, will increase costs and cost jobs."

"The only responsibility that Carter Holt Harvey has shown has been to generate, or more accurately, attempt to generate, profit for its shareholders", wrote the judges in their statement.