

State and corporate attacks escalate against workers in Matamoros, Mexico

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Amid the ongoing rebellion against the unions and companies by auto-parts workers in Matamoros, Mexico, the ruling class is escalating its efforts to crack down on the workers.

The autoworkers at Fisher Dynamics who had sent a video the previous week to the WSWWS in support of the February 9 demonstration were recently assaulted by union thugs.

In addition, on Monday morning, dozens of riot police violently broke up a picket line of striking workers at Bright Finishing in Matamoros, injuring a worker and arresting a young person who was present.

Over 50 “maquiladora” plants in Matamoros have agreed to the raise and bonus demanded by striking workers, while 20 companies are still on strike in the city, according to the Labor Secretariat. The maquiladora associations, which largely represent US companies, are threatening a massive counter-attack involving tens of thousands of layoffs. On February 14, business groups called for the “immediate intervention” of both the government of Andrés Manuel López Obrador (AMLO) and the trade-union bureaucracy to suppress resistance by workers.

The recent attacks against workers in Mexico must be taken as a serious warning of the repression being prepared by the ruling class against the growing militancy and radicalization of workers and youth internationally.

On Thursday, the Mexican Association of Car Distributors warned that the strikes are crippling business. “That is the case with the steering-wheel plant KSS [Joyson], the largest maker in the world, and it’s installed here in Matamoros, supplying virtually all brands. The disturbance in that plant risks the entire North American auto industry.”

Last Sunday, the US Commerce Department

indicated in a report to Trump that imports of cars constitute a threat to “national security.” While this report is aimed at underpinning threats of a trade war against the European Union and Japan, the conclusions are an indication that strikes and unrest in crucial industries across the country and hemisphere can cut across US geopolitical interests and will be considered a question of “national security” by the American state.

Seeing the hemisphere as a platform for waging economic and military confrontations against its rivals, US imperialism is ramping up its efforts to consolidate semi-colonial control over the region’s governments, workforces, markets and resources. This includes the present regime-change operation against the Venezuelan government, chiefly aimed at challenging the presence of Russia and China.

After declaring a state of emergency for the military to build a wall across the US-Mexico border, Trump declared in a speech last Monday that “the twilight hour of socialism has arrived in our hemisphere,” complaining that “socialism by its very nature does not respect borders.”

In Mexico, in response to denunciations by the Mexican Business Council (CMN) against the “illegal” strikes in Matamoros and blockades of crucial railways by protesting teachers in Michoacán, López Obrador declared Monday night: “We will all accept the maximum criteria that no one stands outside of or above the law. Let’s all behave well.” He added, “The business sector has a fundamental social role of investing, generating jobs and strengthening the public treasury and you are doing great and we will continue doing this together.”

On Tuesday, during a ceremony marking the 106 Anniversary of the Army, López Obrador told a military audience that, with the new National Guard,

the existing military units and the federal police, “will work in a coordinated fashion and with perseverance to pacify the country.”

In 2017, nearly 60 percent of all foreign direct investment into Mexico came from the US and Canada, concentrated mostly in manufacturing and finance. The richest 10 percent of Mexicans control eighty percent of financial assets in the country, receive two-thirds of yearly income and possess 64 percent of all wealth. Since 2008, more than four million people have fallen under the official poverty line, adding up to 54 million people or nearly half of the population.

Such levels of economic inequality and the dependence of the Mexican ruling elites on US and Canadian imperialism are incompatible with democratic forms of rule.

The ruling class is basing its response to the growing resistance on the playbook of the 1970s and 1980s. At the time, Stalinist, Guevaraist, Pabloite and other petty-bourgeois nationalist movements, including the trade unions, politically disarmed radicalized workers, peasants, and youth by subordinating them to one or another section of the bourgeoisie. Washington and the local oligarchies then installed far-right regimes and backed terrorist military and paramilitary forces to kill, torture and “disappear” tens of thousands.

As millions of workers enter the class struggle and increasingly look across borders to link their fights, the crucial historical lesson of the bloody defeats throughout the twentieth century comes to bear: the growing movement of the working class needs to be armed with an independent and revolutionary program to overthrow capitalism across the world and establish socialism.



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