

“We will not accept an increase in production”

## GM workers in Mexico hold assembly to discuss strike in the United States

Our reporters  
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On Monday, about 35 autoworkers at the General Motors (GM) Silao Complex in central Mexico held an assembly to discuss steps to leave the pro-company union and how to respond to the national strike by 49,000 GM workers in the United States that began at midnight Sunday.

One of the workers leading the meeting explained to the *World Socialist Web Site Autoworker Newsletter*, “We informed workers about the situation in the United States and agreed we will not accept an increase in production. In fact, our lawyer commented that we are not obligated to work overtime and, if anything happens [a reprisal], we shouldn't sign any papers.”

He then appealed to American workers: “Keep us informed and we'll inform people here to decide what we'll do. There are people supporting us and we just have to keep fighting. If more people support us, we'll move forward.”

General Motors, which is the largest US-based auto company and the top assembler of cars in Mexico, has been harassing and intimidating workers at Silao for weeks to speed up production ahead of the potential strike in the United States.

Silao workers denounced the company for carrying out drug tests, ostensibly to measure lead levels, then used these to justify firings of militant workers without showing the results. It has also assigned overtime with lower pay and, “under grueling conditions,” ordered workers to arrive earlier and banned them from taking backpacks into the shop floor.

The workers' assembly Monday also presented several challenges, the worker said, but indicated that workers' confidence is higher because of the strike in the US. “Someone made a Facebook statement claiming that the event was cancelled,” he explained, while some workers

“didn't arrive because of fear of losing their jobs.” There were also suspicions of a possible “hawk” or spy at the meeting.

“But we are still fighting. We will not accept any manipulations by the plant and the existing union. We have about 200 to 300 people in all our groups, and if we reach 500 or 1,000 we could shut down the plant. For now, we agreed to demand that the plant will not deduct union dues from our pay and that we'll ask for an account balance from the union since 2009, when they took control. They must explain to us where they've spent the money in 9 years.”

These brave acts, just like the strike in the United States, the recent strike by 10,000 GM workers in South Korea, the mass rebellions in Hong Kong, Puerto Rico, France, and the overall resurgence of the class struggle globally, are an objective expression of the international character of the working class, which faces a common fight against globalized capital.

As in the United States, where the Trump administration is directly intervening in the talks to shut down the strike, the ruling class in Mexico is extremely fearful that the strike could prolong and expand. This was reflected by the corporate journal “of record,” *El Universal*, which warned Tuesday that the strike reached auto parts distribution centers in the US “that could impact production plants in Canada and Mexico.”

“So far,” *El Universal* writes nervously, “the plants at Ramos Arizpe, San Luis Potosí, Silao and Toluca of General Motors Mexico are operating normally and have enough components in stock to keep producing vehicles.” *El Financiero* carried a similar report Tuesday.

The strike in the United States is being followed closely by thousands of autoworkers in Mexico, Brazil and internationally, with hundreds sharing the reports and

expressing support. One worker from Silao, for instance, commented on a WSWS report, “Finally something will be done against the injustice of poorly paid companies.”

On Tuesday, Raziel, a Silao worker, immediately responded to a company “troll” on Facebook who insulted American workers and claimed that GM will open new plants in Mexico, “What good does it do to have more assembly plants if those are poorly paid jobs with such heavy working days? This is the fault of the corrupt unions.”

Several workers have requested more information about the strike from the *WSWS Autoworker Newsletter*. A worker from the GM assembly plant at San Luis Potosí, Mexico, asked: "How long do you think it will last? \$250 per week [of strike pay] is not a lot for them."

The Silao Complex employs over 6,000 workers who assemble the Chevrolet Silverado and GMC Sierra. These pick-up trucks are also produced at Fort Wayne, Indiana, and Flint, Michigan, where workers have expressed to WSWS reporters their respect for the brave solidarity shown by Mexican autoworkers.

These channels of communication need to be consolidated and expanded for workers to respond quickly to events at plants internationally, as indicated by the Silao workers. However, this can only be done outside of the control of the trade unions and the entire political establishment, which are doing everything possible to prevent an authentic international struggle.

The US United Auto Workers only called the strike after acknowledging it was in no position to prevent one from erupting. Workers need new organizations that are not nationally-based and do not subordinate workers’ social rights to the profit interests of capital.

This means building a network of democratically elected rank-and-file committees to unite the emerging struggles—against concessions, plant closures, austerity and attacks against democratic rights—across borders, companies and every major sector of the working class.



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