

GM fires another Mexican worker for aiding strike in the US

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At its Silao Complex in Mexico, General Motors has continued firing and harassing workers who have called for supporting the strike of GM workers in the United States by rejecting speed-ups and forced overtime. On Wednesday morning, the company fired Javier Martínez Mosqueda, who has worked at the Silao Complex for 24 years in the assembly area of final processing and heavy repairs. He was offered no explanation from management for the decision.

Martínez Mosqueda had participated in a September 15 assembly of a group of Silao GM workers known as “Generating Movement.” There, the group voted in favor of taking steps to leave the company union of the Confederation of Mexican Workers (CTM) and to organize resistance to speed-up in support of a potential strike in the US, which began the following day. Through the *WSWS Autoworker Newsletter*, they had been closely following the news about the run-up to the contract expiration in the US.

The fired worker supported the appeals for a joint struggle with his brothers and sisters in the US. Israel Cervantes, who was also fired recently for helping organize workers against the existing union, told the *Autoworker Newsletter*, “That is why he was fired. Right now, they [management] are hunting after our comrades.”

The independent group of workers sent recorded statements to a meeting of hundreds of striking autoworkers and workers internationally on Thursday, September 19. Workers voiced their support for the US strike and appealed to strikers to include in their demands the reinstallation of victimized workers and an end to corporate harassment in the Mexican plants, as well as the organization of a joint struggle. Five of the workers, including two whose names were mentioned in the audio files, were summarily fired the following

day.

Martínez Mosqueda was already being targeted by the company. On September 10, he filed a complaint with the labor department at the plant. The document, which was shared with the *WSWS Autoworker Newsletter*, describes how a supervisor, “engineer Víctor Lozano,” has been harassing Martínez Mosqueda around the plant “with a high-handed and aggressive attitude” since September 6.

After the appeals to US workers, the mistreatment reportedly escalated, and on Tuesday, September 24, management called Martínez Mosqueda, held him in an office where they threatened and demoted him without explanation from team leader to normal operator. He was fired the following day.

This increases to eight the number of workers in the group fired recently: **Israel Cervantes**, who worked 13 years at the plant; **Pedro Masías**, 15 years; **Carlos Marquez**, eight-and-a-half years; **Fernando Moreno Moya**, 23 years; **Arturo Martínez Fernández**, 23 years; **Juan Carlos Mendoza**, 25 years; **Ramón Rodríguez**, 23 years; and **Javier Martínez Mosqueda**, 24 years.

Workers at Silao report that speed-up continues in the truck assembly lines, while the areas that produce the 10-speed transmissions and engines were shut down from parts shortages due to the US strike. A worker at the engine plant said management gave the date of October 7 for when it expects the suspension to end.

Last week, a Lear plant in the city of Ramos Arizpe, Coahuila, which produces seats for GM, temporarily laid off 150 workers due to the strike, while a worker at the auto parts Inteva *maquiladorain* Matamoros noted Tuesday to the *WSWS* that workers at Plant 1, which produces dashboards for GM, were either sent to Plant 2 or suspended indefinitely at 60 percent pay.

There has been a total black-out by the corporate media in Mexico about any shutdowns taking place since those at Ramos Arizpe. Terrified by the brave response of Silao workers, the ruling class fears that these shutdowns will lead autoworkers in Mexico, who constitute a massive contingent of 767,000 natural allies of US workers, to see in the awakening of the powerful American working class as an opportunity to unite their demands against decades of super-exploitation and oppression by the same transnational corporations and their corporate and trade-union stooges in Mexico.

Essentially, what the ruling elite in Mexico and their patrons in the United States fear is that workers will reciprocate the call made by Israel Cervantes to the September 19 meeting: “I call on workers across Mexico and the world to join this struggle. Let’s unite to change these dues-collecting unions that only enrich themselves, a handful of people, and forget about the needs of workers.”

The defense of victimized workers in Mexico cannot be advanced through the United Auto Workers or the AFL-CIO, which have turned their backs for more than four decades on victimizations and hundreds of thousands of layoffs of autoworkers across the United States. While scapegoating Mexican and Chinese workers for taking away “American jobs,” the UAW has isolated American workers and not saved a single job. In Mexico, the American trade union bureaucracy has been promoting “independent” unions to keep workers chained to these pro-capitalist and nationalist organizations.

In an operation analyzed in the WSWs’s Lessons of the Matamoros Rebellion, the Bill Clinton administration first organized in January 1998 a trip for AFL-CIO president, John Sweeney, to meet with the Mexican government and the leadership of the so-called “independent” National Workers Union (UNT), which had split from the traditional CTM seven weeks earlier, to preempt a rebellion against the CTM while assuring that Mexico remained a cheap labor platform for foreign capital.

The real allies of workers in both countries are not to be found within the nationalist union bureaucracies, but in one another. Yesterday, US autoworkers across the US demanded the immediate re-hiring of all fired Mexican workers and appealed for a united, cross-

national fight.

A striking GM worker from the Lansing Delta Assembly plant in Michigan told the WSWs: “The workers from Silao, Mexico were on our phone call advocating joint action against General Motors. There is always the attempt to pit us against each other, but we have to stand together regardless of the country.”

A Ford worker at Dearborn Truck Plant in Michigan said, “Many workers think they are an individual in this. But really they are not. The workers in Mexico are sacrificing for us and they are sacrificing for the working class as a whole. They are facing retribution for standing up for auto workers in the US, and we need to stand up for them.”

“We need to stand together to defend ourselves from being victimized,” the worker added. “The companies stand together against us. They have common global supply chains. The banks have given General Motors unlimited credit to beat us down. We need to stand together to get our demands met, instead of waiting for them to take more from us. We are in a world struggle. Workers all over are beginning to fight for better working and living conditions.”

Another Dearborn Truck worker said, “My husband is from Oaxaca, Mexico. He was deported in 2011, and we have never been able to see him since. We need to visit our family members who are across the border. There are a lot of families like mine that are broken and torn apart right now. ...We have to defend the workers in Silao, Mexico because they did not do anything wrong. They are just trying to make a living like everybody else. Their demands are the same as ours. A lot of people are tired. They want change. We need it now.”



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