

“All our support and solidarity with our fellow workers”: Mexican autoworkers denounce sabotage by Unifor and UAW, call for North American-wide fight

Andrea Lobo
21 September 2023

Autoworkers in Mexico have reacted with anger over the efforts by the Unifor union in Canada and the United Auto Workers in the United States to sabotage the growing movement for a united struggle by workers across North America.

After extending the contract with Ford Canada, Unifor announced an agreement to prevent a strike by 5,600 workers and is trying to ram through a contract Saturday. The union has refused to release any details of its sellout agreement with Ford. The Unifor bureaucracy has also announced that the “ratification meetings” will be held online so that union officials do not have to confront the opposition of rank-and-file workers during mass membership meetings.

In the US, UAW President Shawn Fain, working closely with the Biden administration, has only called workers out at a few plants and forced 90 percent of the membership to continue working under the union bureaucracy’s bogus “stand up strike” strategy. Workers in the US are demanding this phony strike be transformed into a genuine, all-out strike.

Over the past several years autoworkers in Mexico have repeatedly demonstrated their solidarity with US and Canadian workers despite the retaliation from management and the gangster threats from the union bureaucracy. In 2019, thousands of striking workers at the Maquiladora auto parts factories in Matamoros marched to the border with Brownsville, Texas, to call on their counterparts in the US to join their fight against the corporations and pro-company unions.

Later in 2019, workers at GM’s assembly plant in Silao refused to work mandatory overtime during the

strike by 48,000 GM workers in the US. Many of the courageous workers were fired by GM and blacklisted from working in the industry again.

Once again, rank-and-file workers at the GM Silao plant are organizing to oppose the company’s efforts to shift production to Mexico if workers strike the GM plants in the US.

“It is terrible the way the UAW and Unifor are handling the strike,” Fernando, a fired GM Silao worker, told the WSWS. “The governments in Canada and the US are also interfering and it is wrong that in the face of the support of the majority of the working class, unions consent in this way. Rank-and-file workers are right in expressing their anger. All our support and solidarity with our fellow workers.”

Referring to the treachery of both the UAW and Unifor bureaucracies, Paula, a veteran autoworker who recently left GM Silao, said, “An effective alternative must be found for workers. We recently heard from an autoworker from Chicago who said that managers and union officials tell you, ‘If you don’t like it here, then leave.’ They take you to HR and kick you out by force.

“Workers with the courage to stand up need something that provides them with strong backing. If the union only takes your dues and doesn’t give you support, it’s very difficult. There must be an organization where there is some way to come to an agreement on how to support each other, not only in your plant or country, but also at the international level, to send support of whatever kind is needed to strengthen the struggle because otherwise it is going to be very difficult.”

Another wrote, “Down with the opportunist bureaucrats and violators of workers’ rights. We need true workers’ organizations and unity for the defense against the abuses of unions and bosses.”

A worker at the Schumex Schumacher auto parts plant in Matamoros responded to the news about the Unifor union trying to sell out the Ford workers in Canada. “The truth is that it was to be expected. Employers always seek to increase their coffers at the expense of the workers, everything in order not to pay what is fair. They are capable of even doing tricks like giving a deceitful extension to the collective agreement, hoping to discourage workers and avoid the strike. But today, more than ever, we must continue fighting to get a better contract and improve our working conditions.”

Another worker wrote:

We are standing with you and send all our support to the workers of any part of the world, and no one will be able to silence us in the face of any injustice.

I invite the bosses to live or rather SURVIVE with low wages, to pay all their expenses with the salary of the proletariat and above all to endure the long hours and the pace of work they impose on us. I would like to see them in our shoes.

Believe me that the day that there is EQUALITY in general within the companies and when our importance in the production chain is recognized, above all that we are treated as human beings, that would be the HIGHEST ACHIEVEMENT OF THE PROLETARIAN CLASS.

Finally, a worker at the GM Silao plant wrote:

As we can see the unions seem to be conducting this struggle as they like and excluding the rank-and-file workers. This is totally arbitrary and not only that they are trying to divide us.

We must be more audacious and intelligent than them. We must remain united and join

those who are fighting against these union officials who are conforming to the demands of management of the auto companies. To those whose hands they are trying to tie, let’s not allow it, fellow autoworkers, let us march together and fight these corporations.

Let’s not forget that teamwork and united work overcomes the selfish individualities and what concerns and affects each fellow comrade in the US and Canada. We don’t have any doubt that it also affects us, your comrades in struggle.

We Mexicans, fellow workers of the Silao plant, express our solidarity and support for a true democracy. Long live the rights and justice for the rank and file and down with the corruption and corporate barriers! We have endured this for too long. It is time to wake up and move forward, not one step backwards!

The International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees is coordinating the fight to unite workers across borders to fight the transnational companies and the nationalist union bureaucracies, which pit workers against each other in a race to the bottom. Sign up below to discuss getting involved in a rank-and-file committee.



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:
wsws.org/contact