

# General Motors workers defeat CTM in Guanajuato

Via [Insisto y Resisto](#)

Mexican union “charrismo” – one of the most powerful mafias in the world and the basis of the old PRI regime for more than 70 years – still survives. But now a blow has been struck that could be the beginning of its death agony.

On August 17 and 18, at the General Motors (GM) plant in the city of Silao, Guanajuato State, a second vote was held for workers to ratify the legitimacy of their Collective Bargaining Agreement (CCT) – controlled by an employer-protection union from the Confederation of Mexican Workers (CTM), the most powerful bureaucratic central – which rejected it with 54% of the vote and 45% in favor. Of the 6,400 workers, 5,876 participated in the vote, the Ministry of Labor and Social Security (STPS) reported that there were 3,214 votes in favor of not legitimizing it, 2,623 in favor, and 39 null votes.

A first vote in April had to be suspended due to several acts of intimidation and violence exercised by the Cetemists against the workers. They threatened that if they lost the vote, the workers would “lose all their benefits,” intimidate voters at the polls, and eventually burn the ballot boxes. The Mexican government’s Ministry of Labor rejected the serious violations and resolved to reinstate the process.

These methods of coercion, and more serious methods including layoffs, beatings, and assassinations against their opponents, have been common practice of union charrismo to win elections or recounts. The problem is that now, under the labor chapter of the new North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the May 1, 2019 reforms to the Federal Labor Act on freedom of

association, there are new mechanisms that limit fraudulent elections. The participation of trade union organizations and the U.S. and Canadian governments is now allowed by observing and issuing recommendations on union elections in Mexican unions. The recount at GM was observed by Canada's leading private sector union (UNIFORM, which has 350,000 workers), the IndustriALL Global Union, the U.S. AFL-CIO, the International Labour Organization (ILO), and even the National Election Institute (INE).

### **A new global scenario for the working class**

The participation of labor authorities and unions in the U.S. and Canada is seen by some observers and union charlatans as a ceding of sovereignty, but they fail to take into account that we are facing a globalized economy and labor conflicts are taking on a dimension that goes far beyond national borders. Fighting a multinational company, like General Motors and many others, from a purely "national" angle is like thinking that the sardine can beat a shark by fighting each one for itself.

Nor should we think that the American and Canadian governments' rejection of CTM's gangster practices means that they are now good people; their motives have nothing to do with democracy or the welfare of Mexican workers. It is clear that important sectors of the US ruling class have realized that they have "overreached" in transferring some of their industrial production to the peripheral countries in order to reduce production costs and hit local unionism. This resulted in: the conversion of China into an industrial powerhouse; large trade deficits; weakening of domestic industrial capacity; increased impact of unemployment during cyclical crises; and strong discontent among the working class in Canada and the US.

In the face of this new bargaining structure, the CTM hypocritically pretends to take a "nationalist" position on the observation of American and Canadian unions in the

recount, but they forget the open support given to them by these same organizations for decades.

From the working class point of view, this new scenario forces us to think of a new kind of internationalism where it is vital to have close ties between organizations of the same multinational company, to fight for better working conditions and wages on a global scale (International Framework Agreements); to guarantee freedom of association in all the countries where these companies are located; to strengthen the construction of international unions and make them really effective.

### **What follows**

By losing the consultation, CTM is no longer the holder of the CCT, but the workers will not lose any acquired rights. The door is now open to define, in new elections, which union will revise it. CTM maintains the right to participate in such a dispute, but has three factors against it: The workers are losing their fear of its dominance; they are dragging the shame of having the worst contract and wage in the auto industry; and the emergence of a new alternative of class-conscious workers grouped in the "Generator Movement" organization, which has the advice of the Center for Labor Research and Union Advice (CILAS), and the support of the Federation of Independent Unions of the Automotive, Auto Parts, Aerospace and Tire Industries of Mexico (FESIIAAN) and the New Central Workers' Union (NCT).

On Monday, August 30, the workers of Generando Movimiento held a press conference where they reported that they have formed the National Union of Automotive Industry Workers (SINTTIA), whose general secretary is María Alejandra Morales Reynoso, and which is already duly registered. In addition, they reported that the company has ceased its threats, layoffs and its blatant support of the Cetemista union. After organizing clandestinely, SINTTIA will now begin to work openly with the

workers to affiliate them and dispute ownership of the contract.

The enormous power accumulated by the union mafias of the CTM (the same as the CROC, the CROM or the CATEM), does not foresee a simple and peaceful dispute to recover the union organizations and to guarantee their independence and democracy. They still have the support of traditional right-wing parties like the PAN (National Action Party), PRI (Institutional Revolutionary Party) and PRD (Party of the Democratic Revolution) and even sectors of the current government. It will be necessary to develop an intelligent and militant strategy to overcome the resistance of the union mafias and the enormous power that sponsors them.

While for the business class, the recent labor reforms and the GM recount result have opened a "Pandora's box," for the working class they have opened a window of opportunity to build real unions; to destroy the union mafias; to build a new and powerful workers' central; to end the protection unions of the bosses; to promote the unionization of unorganized workers (about 85% of the working class); to recover the real wages, working conditions and pensions that existed before the neoliberal period and to become an organized and conscious social class.

This is the only formula to achieve our goals and really destroy the old neoliberal and corrupt regime.