

## The Enemy Within

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Miners in Mexico and around the world always remember and honour the heritage and camaraderie of workers, their families and communities of all nations, not only through the brotherhood that unites us, but also through the history and pride we have in being part of this fundamental sector of society's industrial activity.

On Saturday 9 July we witnessed a clear example of this in the city of Durham, England, where I was invited to speak during the important events commemorating the 132nd anniversary of the British Miners Gala. Each year more than 200,000 people gather in the largest union and social event in Europe, attended by the most important leaders of Britain, such as the leaders of the Labour Party, members of parliament, politicians and the general public.

It was impressive to see the happiness and solidarity of all mining regions who have not forgotten their history. The Conservative government of Margaret Thatcher and those who followed her closed mines across Britain, but could not stamp out their honour and pride in being miners. One clear conclusion from the event in Durham is that just as pollution and toxic substances penetrate the blood and irreversibly harm the health of miners, pride and dignity will always remain in their minds and hearts, far more than the greed and corruption between companies and complicit politicians who immorally exploit our countries' natural resources and workers.

It is important to remember that during the conflict and the miners' strike in Britain during 1984-1985, the government of Margaret Thatcher called the more than 300,000 miners and their national leader, Arthur Scargill, "the enemy within". With that she demonised this important industrial sector which caused serious trouble for the British nation in defending the labour and human rights of the members of this great organization, the National Union of Mineworkers, and initiated a war of extermination to end the protests, strikes and demonstrations that cost the country more than 30 billion pounds.

The anti-union government of Margaret Thatcher decided to close Britain's mines, particularly coal mines, eliminate the union and its leaders because of their huge national and international political influence, and renew energy sources at any cost, initiating a long process substitution of power generation, including nuclear, simply to put and end to the miners' union.

This is why today, with the pride of being miners and to preserve their traditions, the former workers, their families, communities and members of trade unions and the Labour Party, continue with this historic demonstration of solidarity and dignity that is a model for the working class around the world. For miners in Mexico, the struggle of British workers has been an inspiration in the internal war started 10 years ago against Mexican miners by the governments of Vicente Fox



and Felipe Calderon, along with their business accomplices.

This has been an absurd conflict and a dirty and cowardly attack that has left a series of social scars as shown in many parts of the country with the destruction of industry, the closure of mines and plants, insecurity, unemployment and the rising drug trafficking and addiction that have taken root in different areas.

In Mexico estimates of the economic cost of this vicious campaign against the miners, including strikes, closure of activities, corruption of politicians, lawyers, judges and magistrates, media and journalists, as well as traitors to the organization, is around 10 billion dollars thrown away and dumped in the sea of corruption. In 2010 the chief executive of Grupo Mexico, Xavier Garcia de Quevedo, publicly acknowledged that the cost so far for this criminal enterprise was more than 4 billion dollars, i.e. approximately one billion dollars per year, which by 2016 amounts to an immoral expenditure of 10 billion dollars.

This is absurd and totally irrational, the kind of thing only a company like Grupo Mexico would ever do, supported by governments and administrations from Vicente Fox to the present. The error and shame of wanting to turn to Mexican miners into “the enemy within” has continued to date, as happened in Britain.

There is a strong parallel in the common history of both historical struggles. In our case, we learned from the experience of our predecessors and of British miners and decided from the beginning of this cowardly attack to rise, resist and fight with dignity, without fatigue or despair, with strength, energy, perseverance, courage and confidence to win based on our strategies, principles and values. We have never lost faith because we know what we stand for and that we have the loyal support and solidarity of our members. We in the miners' union are aware that we represent one of the few alternatives that workers and free and democratic unions in Mexico have to make their voices heard and defend their rights.

Our enemies do not overcome us, we overcome them morally, socially and politically. We have learned a lot and our number of registered members has grown in spite of all obstacles, but more importantly, with a huge ethical stature based on honesty, intelligence, maturity, principles, values and dignity that our enemies and those corrupt people who attack us do not have, and never will.