



The Power of Unity

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The Constitutional Convention of the United Steelworkers (USW) union was held during the second week of April 2017. Attended by more than 4,000 delegates, it addressed very timely topics and issues for debate in today's world, not only for workers, but for society as a whole. This important conference and its conclusions and resolutions are particularly significant in the context of aggressive politics and uncertainty about future peace and the global economy, in light of decisions and threats made by Donald Trump's administration.

The conference's central topic, the power of unity, is very fitting given what's going on right now, and the main idea of the USW's distinguished leader Leo Gerard, along with his council of directors, was to create a space for priorities and aims to be articulated, and for future strategies to be devised. Above all, the aim was to bolster the confidence felt by every attendee about the will and desire to carry out the changes needed to fight for a better future for all.

Based on the lessons of our history and our broad experiences, as well of all those leaders who have gone before us, democratic people have always fought for economic and social justice and to strengthen unity to get the best results for the world and future generations. Rather than simply aiming for salaries and benefits that can support a family now, it's about adequate and accessible health services, and fair and decent pension and retirement plans.

A very important issue that Mexico, the USA and Canada could resolve together would be to find legal routes to protect the jobs market from the effects of illegal imports of foreign products at subsidised prices, which reduce investment and activity in our country. We must demand that civil society leaders take part in debates and in the passing of legislation to defend the population's general interests and our nation's trade sovereignty.

This is why we need legislators, politicians and a government that work for all, not only for businesses and the wealthiest. We have to protect our country in the most free and democratic way and eliminate all the obstacles and forces that hinder the right to vote and representation amongst minority groups such as indigenous people, women, young people and senior citizens. In the struggle for equality we need inclusive politics, and this must be the priority for all civil society leaders,



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intellectuals and academics, as well as for anyone who wants to bring about a society with greater safety, justice, freedom and democracy.

Disputes and positive lessons from the past should inform new assets, techniques and strategies for building a brighter future, with better education and the least corruption possible. We can achieve all of this if we work hard, with organisation and solidarity, with commitment, intelligence and real courage. Over the course of world history, this is how fundamental changes and transformations have come about.

Over recent decades, inequality across the world has reached worrying and indeed shocking levels. The neoliberal agenda, supported by unjustified and troubling deregulation, a reduction in the rates of trade union membership and open, flexible and unfettered globalisation, has altered the balance of power, income and wealth distribution for the working classes, to the absolute benefit of corporations, and with serious consequences: social and economic destabilisation and an ever-widening gulf between the most powerful – regardless of the cost – and the great majority of the population.

The political system in place is one that provides big multinationals and the wealthiest individuals with whatever they need to prop up the candidates and politicians that suit them, essentially to buy election results and impose their priorities over and above those of workers and society. This destructive neoliberalist strategy has not only led to worse exploitation and poverty, but has also intensified the state of insecurity that is on the rise in every region and community.

At the same time, the most privileged, companies and individuals, are using increasingly sophisticated mechanisms to avoid paying the taxes they should, and some are even compensated with tax rebates, reducing the amount available in the national coffers to fund and sustain educational and cultural programmes, environmental damage regulation and essentially to drive economic development.

In these circumstances, we all have a social and moral duty to disrupt the continuation of a model that was forced upon us, and which does nothing to contribute to Mexicans realising their hopes and dreams. It also has no place in our history as a free and democratic nation. This is why now, more than ever, we need to get out of our current state of passive acceptance and start to take a more active role in society, in terms of solidarity and defending and protecting the future of our children and grandchildren, and of all generations to come. We have to honour our past and our history, with greater activism, so we can devise a new model and build a fairer, more equal society.

By constantly participating and becoming personally involved in society, we will gather the resources we need to displace those who are in the wrong, the people who gain economic or political



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power simply to serve themselves, not to serve. Let's not forget that alliances, solidarity and unity are the best way to strengthen our crucial objectives with the intention of bringing about happiness and satisfaction. We always need to be mindful that unity gives power, and power gives us the strength to change society, both intellectually and materially.