



Nothing Can Stop Us

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The 40th Annual General Conference of the National Miners Union of Mexico took place from the 3rd to 6th May. This meeting embodies everything this great trade union organisation has been through, much to the pride and dignity of its thousands of members. At conference, which acts as the highest authority within the organisation, the spirit of mining workers was more alive and present than ever before.

Throughout its eight decades of existence, our union has always fought tooth and nail and without limits, in defence of the principles of Mexico's working class and of its own members, making it the most robust Mexican trade union, one which in the midst of – and in spite of – persecution, achieves the highest wage increases for its members.

If this weren't the case, we wouldn't continue to maintain our annual pay rises, companies from the mining and steelwork sector would have turned their backs on us and the Miners Union would cease to exist. Our 40th Annual General Conference is the strongest response we can give to the slanderous fabrications of our enemies: our organisation is stronger and more robust than ever before.

The real prestige enjoyed by the Miners Union on both a national and international level is down to this unique quality, whereby our trade ever more vehemently takes on the precepts of progressive global solidarity and overcomes the backward-looking tendencies that have sadly been holding Mexico's trade union movement back. In other words, we are leaving behind for good the practices that prevailed in previous decades across broad stretches of the world, as a result of Cold War aggression against trade unionism and the imposition of the neoliberal economic consensus, the natural enemy of workers' organisations. This explains the support that we miners receive internationally from the 200 million members of fellow workers organisations.

This is why some Mexican business owners and politicians are turning against the upstanding image and the democratic conduct of the Miners Union, which I am proud to lead as president and general secretary, with such deep-seated discomfort and enmity. It explains too they mount such aggressive campaigns against Mexican miners, their struggles and their leaders, driven on by corporate bosses like Germán Feliciano Larrea Mota Velasco, Alberto Baillères, Alonso Ancira Elizondo and Julio Villarreal Guajardo, using unspeakable tactics to subdue their corrupt puppet unions, journalists and a not significant section of social media. This is apparent in the current



swathe of attacks motivated by my candidacy to the Senate of the Republic for the Morena party, whose presidential candidate Andrés Manuel López Obrador is firmly leading opinion polls against all odds.

For the above reasons, these same corporate bosses and others have in the past few days sought to convey, in communications to their employees, their fear and cowardice about everything that threatens to remove them from the comfort they are used to, i.e. the changes that are on the horizon for Mexico. But it wouldn't be at all surprising if their employees refuse to be cowed and in fact choose to vote with their conscience, given that they are tired and fed up with the tyrannical attitudes of their bosses and the inequalities they are living with.

For our benefit, the solidity of the structure of the Miners Union is also being reaffirmed by the opening up of its ranks to female miners, formally announced at our 40th Conference, whom we have baptised the 'Women of Steel', since they don't only occupy administrative or secondary roles, but also take part in frontline production, working inside mines and plants in the same hard conditions as their male counterparts, their equals. This is a genuine revolution within the miners' union, which strengthens and energises us.

As well as strengthening our resolve, this important introduction of women helps us to get further away from the persecution that business owners and political enemies of democracy have waged in such a stubborn, pernicious and idiotic way against our group and against me personally as its ultimate leader over the last 12 years. The miners of Mexico, in their view, are a bad example for all the workers of this country, who are so hated and despised by many corporate bosses. They will be able to do even less now that we have women miners standing shoulder to shoulder with us.

Many international leaders attended the 40th Conference, and they observed that the diatribes of the other presidential candidates opposed to the Morena party are incapable of buckling the iron will of our members about reforming Mexico's economic strategy from the bottom up.

From this same conference resounded the unequivocal view of the participating miners, trade unionists, socialists and academics, from Mexico and the wider world alike, that our country is getting closer to elections that will be crucial for the nation's destiny. This is the same image that we Mexicans should convey with our votes in order to change the economic narrative, to transform the roots of the situation that means that only a privileged few are in charge of the economy to the detriment of the people, and to install a new regime which favours the majority of Mexicans, thus turning national politics on its head.

These were the significant messages to come out of the 40th Annual General Conference of the Miners Union, for the good of Mexico and the Mexican people. The point is that they will never



La Jornada

be able to hold back our ever-present dignity and our forward march. In this sense, the conference served as a springboard for the new social and economic political narrative of our nation.