



The 20 Steelworkers from Districts 7 and 12 assemble for the rally at the mine.



Gate no. 1 at the mine. The black and white flags on the gate indicate that the mine is on strike - the Mexican equivalent of a picket line.

Report on Steelworker Attendance at the Minero's National Forum for Respect of the Right to Strike in Cananea

On February 19 and 20, 2010, the Mineros held a National Forum for respect for the Right to Strike in Cananea, Sonora, Mexico.

The Mineros have been on strike against Grupo Mexico in Cananea for more than two and one-half years, and in the last few weeks the Supreme Court of Mexico has ruled that the strike is “inexistent” or, in U.S. terms, not protected. This leaves Grupo Mexico free to fire all the employees and break the bargaining relationship with the union, and hire new employees and sign a contract with the company union that they have established at some of their other properties.

The only hope for the Mineros now is to build enough political pressure to keep the government from using force to break the strike. The Forum was a part of this effort.

The Forum began on Friday at the Union Hall in Cananea. A crowd of 1,500 to 2,000 heard messages

The Forum at the union hall on Friday with Napoleon speaking to the crowd (on the screen at the top) by videoconference.



of support from members of the Electricians and Telephone workers, as well as other no-governmental organizations. Manny Armenta, D12 Sub Director, spoke for the Steelworkers.

On Saturday the Forum moved outside to the plant gate. The entire Congressional delegation from Cananea (all from the PRI, or party of the institutional revolution) spoke in support of the Mineros and promised to work in the Congress to force a withdrawal of Grupo Mexico's concession to operate the mine.

Jim Robinson spoke on behalf of the Steelworkers. During the rally the Mineros operated the mine equipment, giving the lie to the basis for the court ruling, which was based on the argument that the strikers had left the plant unable to operate through lack of maintenance and vandalism.

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On Saturday the Forum moved outside to the plant gate, where the crowd of 1,500 braved the cold for over three hours.



THEN

Cananea and its mine played a very important role in the history of Mexico - a history that has important parallels to the struggle of the Mineros today.

In 1906 the mine was operated by an American company and run by a Colonel Green. The Mexican miners were paid less than their American counterparts, and worked long days.

In 1906 the Mexican miners (who



NOW

In 1906 a Mexican President:

- approved the use of Mexican troops against Mexican workers in Cananea . . .
- to break a strike against an American company . . .
- for equal pay with American miners . . .
- and 19 Mexican strikers were killed.

In 1910 the Mexican Revolution broke out against the same President of

The Historic Importance of Cananea and the Parallels to Today

were assisted in organizing by Arizona members of the Western Federation of Miners, a predecessor union to the Mine Mill and Smelter Workers, which merged with the Steelworkers in the mid-1960's) went on strike for an eight-hour day and equal pay with the American miners. In response, the Arizona Rangers and local Sonoran troops, with the support of Porfirio Diaz government, moved to end the strike. In the ensuing battle 19 miners were killed.

While the strike was broken, the strike helped galvanize sentiment in the country against the Diaz government. For this reason, Cananea is known as the Cradle of the Revolution. Much like Lexington and Concord and the Boston Tea party in the U.S., Mexican schoolchildren learn about the strike in Cananea in grade school as they learn about the Mexican Revolution.

The banners for the Forum emphasized the historic importance of Cananea and the similarities between then and now.



Mexico.

In 2010 (the 100th anniversary of the Revolution) will another President of Mexico again approve the use of Mexican troops against Mexican strikers?

The strategy of the Mineros is to put as much political pressure on the Mexican government as possible. The Forum was, in part, designed to accomplish this. Aside from the presence of representatives of the IMF, the Mexican Electricians the Mexican Telephone Workers, other Mexican non-governmental organizations, and the Steelworkers, the Sonoran Congressional delegation attended.

The Sonoran legislature has voted to call for the revocation of Grupo Mexico's mining concession in Cananea, as has the Federal Senate.

The Sonoran Congressmen have vowed to push for that result in the House of Delegates.

The union hall in Cananea, constructed in the mid-1940's, flying the flag of Mexico and the black and red strike flag.



**Remarks by Jim Robinson at Cananea Forum
Saturday, February 20, 2010**

Hermanos y Hermanas Mineros, y otros compañeros. En nombre de los veinte Steelworkers aqui en Cananea hoy, y de los mas de ocho cientos Steelworkers en Los Estados Unidos, Canada, y el Caribe, queremos darles un mensaje: ¡USTEDES NO ESTAN SOLOS!

Nuestros sindicatos son muy similar. Como en Mexico, Los Steelworkers son mineros cobre, oro, plato, y fierro. Como en Mexico, Los Steelworkers son trabajadores en plantas de acero y fundadoras. Y como en Mexico, Los Steelworkers sabemos que la lucha en Mexico no es solo sobre los trabajadores de Mexico sino es una lucha de todos los trabajadores del mundo.

Sabemos que si las condiciones de trabajo y de vivir de un grupo de trabajadores afectan las condiciones do otros. La luch de Los Mineros contra Grupo Mexico en Cananea afecta la lucha de Los Steelworkers contra Grupo Mexico en Arizona. Y las cosas estan equal por trabajadores de ASF en Sahagun, Mexico, y Granite City, EEUU; de ArcelorMittal en Lazaro Cardenas, Mexico, y Indiana Harbor, EEUU; y de Dana en Mexico y en EEUU.

Los Mineros y Los Steelworkers sabemos equalmente qu el daño a uno es un daño a todos. Tienen nuestra appoy total, compañeros!

¡Solidaridad Siempre!
¡Viva Los Mineros!
¡Viva Cananea!
¡Viva Los Steelworkers y Los Mineros!

Brothers and Sisters Mineros, and other comrades. In the name of the 20 Steelworkers here in Cananea today, and of the more than eight hundred thousand Steelworkers in the United States, Canada, and the Caribbean, we wish to give you a message: YOU ARE NOT ALONE! [NOTE: No Estan (or Estamos) Solos - You (or We) Are Not Alone - is a major chant in use at Minero rallies.]

Our unions are very similar. As in Mexico, the Steelworkers are miners of copper, gold, silver, and iron. As in Mexico, the Steelworkers are workers in steel plants and foundries. And as in Mexico, the Steelworkers know that the struggle in Mexico is not only about the workers of Mexico but it is a struggle of all the workers of the world.

We know that the working and living conditions of one group of workers affects the conditions of others. The struggle of the Mineros against Grupo Mexico in Cananea affects the struggle of Steelworkers against Grupo Mexico in Arizona. And things are the same for workers at American Steel Foundries in Sahagun, Mexico, and Granite City, U.S.; at ArcelorMittal in Lazaro Cardenas, Mexico, and Indiana Harbor, U.S.; and at Dana in Mexico and the U.S.

The Mineros and the Steelworkers know equally well that the injury to one is an injury to all. You have our total support, comrades.

Solidarity Forever!
Long Live the Mineros!
Long Live Cananea!
Long Live the Steelworkers and the Mineros!