

CBN Acts in Solidarity in Historic SME Strike



progressive unions.

On the night of October 10, President Calderón ordered 6,000 federal police to seize the power plants operated by the SME, while simultaneously liquidating the second largest state-owned Light and Power Company (Luz y Fuerza del Centro), and firing the entire workforce of approximately 44,000 employees. Some 22,000 retirees and 1,500 union technical school trainees were also affected. Five days earlier, the government refused to accord legal recognition to the democratically elected president of the Mexican Electrical Workers' Union, Martín Esparza, although this should have been a routine matter.

The Cross Border Network met with the Mexican Consul in Kansas City, Jacob Prado, on January 21, 2010. Prado supported the Mexican government's actions. He did provide briefing papers on their position that are being used in the international solidarity effort.

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Marchers tell Mexican President Calderon: "Don't Turn Off the Lights!"

The Mexican Electrical Workers Union (SME), or at least the 20,000 or so workers who continue to struggle for recovery of their jobs after the Calderon administration closed Central Light and Power (LFC) last October, took the unprecedented measure of declaring a strike this month. Union leaders hope the hanging of traditional black and red strike banners in front of 400 former LFC work centers, now under the control of the Federal Electric Commission (CFE), will deter current employees from entering the buildings. Thousands of SME members are expected to participate, supported by other

Cross Border Struggle at Historic Copper Mine

The 1906 Cananea strike made history. It gets the credit for starting the Mexican Revolution of 1910 and as David Bacon writes, it "was the first strike organized on both sides of the border, by the first real cross-border activists." After the strike, the organizers spent years on the run, not only from *federales*, but also from U.S. authorities.

The mine was owned for years by U.S. based Anaconda; then it was nationalized in 1971. Under the neoliberal "reforms" of 1991, it was

privatized again. The new owners began massive outsourcing and downsizing, provoking several strikes. Grupo Mexico has mining interests across North and South America.

Today the miners at Cananea are on strike again. Again there's violence, and again leaders are being hunted down by the authorities. The strike began in 2006 after President Fox removed the head of the mineworkers union Napoleon Gomez Urrutia who is in exile in Canada.

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Striking workers in Cananea confront U.S. soldiers protecting the company store in 1906

Cowboy in Caracas brings Chavez Revolution to Kansas City



Charlie Hardy reveals what the US media is not telling us about Venezuela.

"In 1998, Hugo Chavez was elected president with almost 60 percent of the votes, incredibly overthrowing the entrenched and well-financed elite that had controlled the country for decades. That elite has never forgiven him and today is doing everything possible to tumble him. Sadly, the U.S. government and mass media have joined in this very undemocratic effort."

– Author Charles Hardy



CBN supports Immigration Reform that empowers students and workers.

The Cross Border Network hosted author and political activist, Charles Hardy, to discuss his book *Cowboy in Caracas: A North American Memoir of Venezuela's Democratic Revolution*. A former Catholic priest, Hardy has lived in Venezuela for more than 20 years. He spent eight of those years in a shack made of cardboard and tin in one of Caracas' barrios.

In *Cowboy in Caracas*, Hardy offers a rarely heard perspective on the revolution and the rise of Hugo Chavez from the viewpoint of his many supporters. Elected in a landslide in 1998, Chavez promised a peaceful revolution.

Hardy says that peaceful dream was lost when Chavez's government was overthrown in 2002. Chavez returned to power and has remained there since because his supporters see themselves as active participants in a democratic revolution. His book includes Hardy's eyewitness account of the street battles that took place during the attempted coup against Chavez.

Several co-sponsors assisted with the event, including Holy Family Faith Community, American Friends Service Committee, Colombia Support Network, Peaceworks, and The Loretto Community of Kansas City.

Save the date:

Next Cross Border Network meeting will be on Monday, April 5th at 7pm.

Are you a member of CBN?

Want to receive our newsletter in the mail? Become a member of Cross Border Network for only \$35 a year!

Membership form is on our website at www.crossbournetwork.org.

DREAMers March for Immigration Reform

Students and immigration activist plan to converge on Washington, DC this weekend to demand immigration reform. Many are "dreamies", or undocumented students who came to the US with their parents when they were very young. They have attended US schools and now feel more at home here than in their home countries. Unfortunately, they are stuck without many options to obtain legal status in the US. The DREAM Act would offer a path to legalization for those students who have been here for at least five years and graduate high school or obtain a G.E.D. They would have the option to attend college or enter the military to finalize their legal status. The bill is currently in committee in Congress and it needs your support! Go to www.dreamactivist.org to learn more about the national effort.

Locally, students are holding an event Saturday March 21st at 6pm in Loose Park in solidarity with the national event. The event will include personal stories of "dreamies", music, and more. Stay tuned for a "DREAM camp" coming later this Spring to mobilize student activists across Kansas and Missouri in support of the DREAM Act. Check out the KS/MO DREAM Alliance page on Facebook for updates on local DREAM Act events and news.

CBN meets with Mexican Consul regarding Mexican Electrical Workers Union (SME), *cont. from Page 1*

Since October 11 there have been continuous marches and demonstrations, many legal actions, and legislative discussions and proposals. Current situation: □□ January, 2010 Two members of SME's leadership visit Washington DC where they meet with the AFL-CIO, SEIU, US Representative Eliot Engle, chair of the House Western Hemisphere Sub-committee. They also filed a complaint under the Labor Side Agreement of NAFTA with the US Department of Labor. □ Jan. 21 2010 – Cross Border Network meets with Kansas City Mexican Consul, Jacob Prado. □ February 8, 2010 – Meeting of some 100 Mexican organizations from 25 states resolves to seek agreements necessary to carry out a general strike. □ March 2010 – SME strike begins. □

Legal appeals are pending, demonstrations including a permanent protest encampment continue, and blackouts continue to affect business and residential consumers. □□

The Cross Border Network delegation expressed outrage about the Mexican government's actions in issuing a decree liquidating Luz y Fuerza del Centro, sending

federal police to occupy its facilities, dismissing some 44,000 unionized workers, as well as refusing to recognize the elected leader of the Sindicato Mexicano de Electricistas (SME) and freezing the union's assets. □□ These actions violate both Mexican law and the commitments assumed by Mexico before the international community, specifically conventions 87 (freedom of association) and 98 (collective bargaining) of the International Labor Organization, as well as the North American Agreement on Labor Cooperation (NAALC), also known as the labor side agreement to NAFTA. □□ We continue to strongly urge that the Mexican government immediately take the following steps: □ • Revoke the decree liquidating Luz y Fuerza del Centro; □ • Respect the workers' employment and labor rights; □ • Respect the Mexican Electrical Workers' Union's collective agreement; □ • Unconditionally recognize the SME's democratically elected union leadership and negotiate in good faith with them for a just resolution to this dispute; □ • Unfreeze the union assets.



Hundreds of thousands protested in Mexico City in support of the SME workers

Mexican Government Threatens to Open Mine by Force *Continued from page 1.*

He had made the mistake of protesting mine safety because of a disaster which killed 65 miners at a coal mine. The strikers have occupied the mine since July, 2007 protesting primarily the deadly conditions.

The repression and hardship in Cananea has been severe. Workers who were some of the highest paid in Mexico, are now living on handouts, and GM and the authorities have shut down the hospital and other social services. Again there is strong international solidarity, primarily from the United Steelworkers Union, but also from a global campaign for justice.

Recently, a Mexican court declared the strike illegal and gave Grupo Mexico the right to fire all the workers, essentially busting the union. The miners dug in and are defending the entrance. Juan

Alvidrez, who has worked there for twenty years told Reuters, "We are prepared to give our lives [for this struggle]."

The Cross Border Network is in touch with Maria Rosa Guayante, wife of a miner and head of the Cananea Women's Committee. She wrote last week to say that they hear the army is coming to open the mine and that the wives and children are at the mine entrance with their husbands.

She asked people to write letters to President Felipe Calderon. She said what they are doing is against the constitution. Send letters to Felipe Calderón Hinojosa, President of Mexico felipe.calderon@presidencia.gob.mx Send copies to: Maria Rosa Guyante mrosa_gg@hotmail.com



Mine workers stand their ground in Cananea

www.crossbordernetwork.org

See us at:

We're on the Web!

Who we are...

The Cross Border Network for Justice and Solidarity is a grassroots organization based in Kansas City which recognizes the common interests of working people in North America and builds ties for common action among them. We seek to overcome the phony competition of the global economy that pits workers and communities against each other in a no-win race to the bottom.

Instead we work toward cooperation which enhances both Mexicans' and Americans' ability to

win economic and social justice.

Through education, tours, and cooperative work, we are building ties of solidarity involving workers, unions, churches, community organizations, environmentalists and peace and justice advocates. We believe that grassroots solidarity will eventually sift upwards to shape the agendas of larger social change institutions and eventually impact the institutions of power.

Why We Got Started...

Economic globalization, driven by unaccountable transnational corporations and an ethic of competition, is driving down living standards of workers around the world, despoiling communities, and weakening institutions which foster democracy and protect human rights.

The Cross-Border Network for Justice and Solidarity believes that an alternative to this type of

globalization must be created by building international bridges of solidarity and mutual aid between workers and communities of working people.

In order to educate and organize for social and economic justice, we will develop ties with workers and communities across borders, with a particular focus on maquiladora workers in Mexico. -May 5, 1997

Please renew your Cross Border Network membership! Our members are the lifeblood of CBN and your dues make you a participant in the many good things the Cross Border Network does. Through your membership you educate, you advocate, you strategize and you participate! We can't "*due*" without you!!

Dues are \$35, if you are able, and \$15 if you are low income or a student. Send your payment to Cross Border Network, P. O. Box 45753, Kansas City, MO 64171. (If you'd like to use it, you can find a handy new or renewal form on the CBN website: www.CrossBorderNetwork.org. Click on "support", print off the form and mail it with your check.) THANKS!