

Resolution on Future Work on the Cananea Copper Strike by U.A.L.E.

At its annual meeting in San Diego in 2010, the United Association for Labor Education heard about the fierce repression of labor rights in Mexico from union leaders and educators who were guests at the conference. U.A.L.E. resolved to inform its members about the struggles of the copper miners against Grupo Mexico and the electrical workers fired from the Central Power and Light Company and called for support activities such as an observer delegation to Cananea to be organized through the Immigration and Globalization Working Group of UALE.

In May 2010 a UALE delegation of labor educators, activists, and students and environmental and health and safety experts visited Cananea, hosted by the Women's Front in Struggle for Worker Dignity in Mexico and the World. They interviewed and videotaped striking workers and their families and union and community leaders. The leaders of Section 65 of the National Union of Mine and Metalworkers of Mexico (Los Mineros) took them on a tour of the mine, which is the largest copper mine in Mexico.

Less than a month later, about 3,000 federal and state police sent in by the President of Mexico and Governor of the State of Sonora occupied the town, attacked workers and their families, and busted the strike. Today the town of Cananea is an occupied camp. The mine is being operated by imported temporary contract workers subject to severe health and safety risks. Meanwhile the working people of Cananea were illegally fired and their union contract was abrogated. Still the miners remain strong and united and enjoy continued national and international support.

The U.A.L.E delegation presented its report and video at the 2011 annual meeting in New Orleans and made draft copies of the report available to attendees. The report provides the history of the struggle and the scope of the adversary, Grupo Mexico, an analysis of what's at stake, an exploration of the vast health and safety and environmental issues for the town and region, a provocative discussion about the role and importance of international solidarity and a curriculum for labor educators to use.

Whereas the struggle of the Mineros is a high stakes contest between the forces that would eliminate independent democratic unions from Mexico and a powerful and united union whose resistance and undaunted spirit are an inspiration to all working people,

Whereas the story of this struggle presents North American workers with an important example for education on workers' role and strategies in a global economy and strategies for international solidarity,

and Whereas UALE's initiative in investigating, reporting and developing teaching materials is an important new direction,

Therefore, be it resolved

1. That U.A.L.E promote and distribute the report and video called Crossing the Border to Cananea: High Stakes and Teachable Moments for North American Workers and help with the cost of printing and dissemination;
2. Encourage labor education programs to raise awareness, incorporating in their courses information on workers' stake in building global solidarity and in particular the importance of supporting the miners of Cananea;
3. Provide support for another UALE delegation to update and expand our relationship of solidarity with the working families of Cananea.