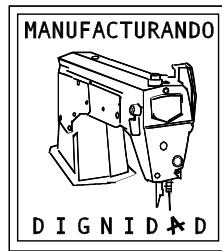


Sindicato Diecinueve de Septiembre



Tehuacan, Puebla, October 15, 2007¹

Señores y señoras of the Brands:

We want to communicate the following to you:

Once again, we, the workers of Vaqueros Navarra and members of the September 19 Union, are writing to you to request your immediate intervention in the current conflict that we are living through.

As you have already been informed by our friends at the Maquila Solidarity Network, the current conflict has intensified because of our determination to belong to the *September 19 Union* and the determination of the management of the company to use other unions in this inter-union dispute despite the fact that they have no base of support and are unfamiliar to us. After 30 years of the company's existence, in which there has never been a demand for title to the collective agreement, these unions suddenly appeared, at the requests of the employer, only to prolong our judicial process -- as has been demonstrated and verified to you.

We have witnessed an extreme level of interference by the employer up to the level of the very owner of the company, Sr. Alfonso Fernandez, who is intimidating us and threatening us with dismissals, telling us that if *September 19* wins the title to the collective agreement, he will close the factory without providing any severance pay to anyone.

As well, the company has been saying that the Brands will leave the factory because of our decision to affiliate with the *September 19 Union*, and it will be our fault. Last week, when we showed them a copy of the letter that Gap sent to the company in which there were recommendations on how to resolve the conflict, the manager Jose Luis Balanza insulted us and grabbed the letter, saying it was a fake.

¹ Unofficial translation from the Maquila Solidarity Network (MSN).

Last Friday and Saturday, October 13, the company fired approximately 40 workers, actually saying it was because they were members of September 19 and threatening that they would fire everyone. They told some of the dismissed workers that the union of the factory was the CROM and that if it didn't win, the factory would close. The firings were carried out by Martin Urrutia, Jose Luis Balanza, Martin Mendoza Cancino and Alfonso Fernandez.

That same Saturday, outside the factory, the *señores* of the CROM were mocking the fired workers, celebrating and applauding when the manager Jose Luis Balanza "gave the finger" to the dismissed women workers. Some of the women asked the CROM organizers why they weren't acting like a union and defending them, but they replied to the women, "We don't defend assholes [pendejas]. That same day, Sr. Juan Flores [leader of the CROM] tried to physically assault Martín Barrios who is an advisor to the September 19 Union.

As you read these lines, the situation is becoming very grave for us, but before we request your intervention in the conflict, we men and women workers – heads of our families, and single mothers – want to make something clear: **THAT WE WANT YOU TO BRING MORE WORK TO THE TEHUACAN REGION AND ESPECIALLY TO GRUPO NAVARRA.** Our only goal is to sew your products under good working conditions, to produce the best quality possible, under decent and respectful conditions, in order to obtain mutual benefits for the company and the workers, and as a consequence for the community as well.

We know that you have already received information on this situation from the Human and Labour Rights Commission of the Tehuacan Valley and the Maquila Solidarity Network, but wanted to personally amplify what they have provided in order that you have sufficient information necessary to allow you to apply and monitor your Codes of Conduct. For that reason, we are making an urgent request, in the face of possible massive dismissals and the closure of the factory, that you do the following:

1. Send in your compliance staff in order to talk with us to corroborate our allegations.
2. Communicate to the supplier what your Codes of Conduct and that you stand by them.
3. Make public the Verite report of the investigation that was recently carried out. This is important because the company has launched a campaign to discredit us, the 450 workers out of 500 who have decided to affiliate with September 19. We know this will confirm what we have been saying and denouncing.
4. Communicate to the company and to the public that you have received our communications and petitions, emphasizing that we have always requested that you bring more work to the region and to Grupo Navarra. This last point is important because as part of the campaign to discredit us, public statements

are being made that we workers who are seeking respect for our rights are “those responsible for driving away the brands.”

5. Call upon the labour authorities and the Governor of the State of Puebla to set a date for the *recuento*, the soonest date possible, and give a guarantee that the *recuento* will be under conditions that are neutral, impartial, with a secret ballot vote and with a reliable voters list. As well, we ask you to call on the authorities to refrain from accepting more petitions (*demandas*) for title to the collective agreement from organizations that do not have sufficient representation in the factory. We put forward the last points because we are all humble and dignified workers who are fighting for union democracy, and we are also forgotten by the authorities and governments. We are nothing to them; we are not taken into account, but we believe that they will listen to you because Brands represent benefits for the region and the state.

We hope that to receive prompt and positive news from you, in the name of the men and women workers of Vaqueros Navarra.

“WORK WITH JUSTICE AND DIGNITY”
“UNION DEMOCRACY”

The Women and Men Workers of September 19th

c.c.

Lynda Yanz, Maquila Solidarity Network (MSN)

Human and Labour Rights Commission of the Tehuacan Valley (CDHLVT)

Benedicto Martinez, Authentic Workers Front (FAT)