

# Workers Struggles: The Americas

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*The World Socialist Web Site invites workers and other readers to contribute to this regular feature.*

Peru reported profits of 417 million soles (US\$145 million), a 50 percent increase over the previous year.

## Honduran teachers strike to support Zelaya

The Federation of Honduran Teachers' Unions (FOMH) will strike on Monday and Tuesday this week in support of President Manuel Zelaya, the country's constitutionally elected president who was deposed by the military on June 28. Currently he resides in the Brazilian Embassy in Tegucigalpa, surrounded by government security forces. The teachers plan to be back on the job on Wednesday.

An FOMH press release says that the unions continue to demand Zelaya's restitution. The teachers struck for two months immediately after the coup. Since then the teachers have been mostly striking on Mondays and Tuesdays.

## Peruvian iron miners threaten strike

Iron miners employed by the Shougang Corporation at the Marcona mine, the country's largest, announced last week that they will walk out this week to press for a wage increase and better working conditions. In July the miners went on strike and obtained a wage increase of 5.50 soles (US\$1.90) per day. Two months later, the promised wage increase still has not materialized.

In addition, the strikers are demanding better health benefits and improved safety and hygiene in the mine. Despite the global recession, last year Shougang Iron of

## Bank employees strike in Brazil

Nearly half a million bank tellers and clerks from across Brazil walked off their jobs last Thursday. A union spokesperson declared that the main issue of the strike is wages. The workers are demanding a 10 percent wage increase, far more than the 4.5 percent offered by the banks. In addition, the strikers are demanding an improved profit sharing plan, greater job security, and that more clerks and tellers be hired by the banks.

The strike affects most of Brazil's major cities, including Rio de Janeiro, Sao Paulo, Belo Horizonte, Curitiba and Brasilia. The bank workers union FENABAN is demanding improvements in profit sharing and in other benefits for bank workers.

The bank employees join ongoing strikes by postal employees and auto workers in what is fast becoming a major strike wave.

## California city workers take self-imposed "furlough"

Palo Alto city workers stayed off the job September 24 to protest stalled contract talks, calling it a self-imposed "furlough." Some 305 of the city's 526 members of the Service Employees International Union Local 521 took part in a march and demonstration outside City Hall combined with other volunteer

activities such as picking up trash in the parks and reading to children outside libraries shuttered by the walkout. The city responded charging the action was an illegal strike and is considering disciplinary measures.

Palo Alto negotiators have rejected some \$7 million in concessions that the union has offered the financially beleaguered city, demanding permanent cuts from workers, such as 5 percent of salaries paid towards retirement benefits. The two sides have been negotiation since last May. The old contract agreement expired June 30 and negotiations broke off on September 22.

### **National Basketball Association locks out referees**

The NBA (National Basketball Association) locked out its referees September 25 as management and the union failed to come to terms over retirement benefits. The NBA, breaking with tradition, disclosed it wants to gradually eliminate pension benefits and a severance package that can potentially pay referees a bonus upon retirement of up to \$575,000.

The NBA also disclosed referees salaries. However, the union has charged the figures are inflated and aimed at “spin control.” The lockout followed a unanimous rejection by referees of NBA management’s final offer that included flat salaries for the current year and minimal increases in 2010-11. It also would have cut benefits and travel compensation.

The NBA has opened a training camp this week to recruit replacement referees that could be officiating on the court when the preseason opens October 1. Most of the referees are expected to come from the Women’s National Basketball Association.



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