

## Protests against passage of anti-working class budget in Haiti

# Workers Struggles: The Americas

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The *World Socialist Web Site* invites workers and other readers to contribute to this regular feature by writing to [comments@wsws.org](mailto:comments@wsws.org).

Avianca refused to discuss Adac's proposals.

### Protests against passage of anti-working class budget in Haiti

Protesters in Haiti reacted to the new budget promoted by president Jovenel Moises and passed by the parliament with protests across the country. In Port-au-Prince and other cities, police attacking protesters with water cannon and tear gas were met with barrages of stones. Roads were blocked with bricks, cars and tires were set on fire and windows smashed.

As the *Miami Herald* reported, "At the root of the anger are several new revenue schemes — fee hikes for property ownership, passports and traffic infractions — that were put in the budget and adopted by parliament just hours before Hurricane Irma skirted Haiti's northern coast, flooding farms and damaging more than 8,000 homes throughout the northern region."

The budget also includes taxes on Haitians using government services, as well as on those living abroad. To add insult to injury, members of parliament gave themselves a 74 percent increase in salaries, cars, staff and per diem travel pay.

### Colombian airline pilots resolve to strike over pay, conditions

Colombia's Civil Aviators Association (Adac) announced last week that 702 of the 1,232 pilots who fly for Avianca, a Colombia-based international airline, will go on strike in the coming weeks. The company and the union failed to reach agreement on salaries and working conditions during negotiations. Adac said that it would decide on the date of the strike before September 20.

One of the main demands of Adac is security at airports in Colombia. Others are salary parity and work schedules that conform to international norms. An Avianca press release claimed that the firm had been generous in its contract proposals, and declared that the strike, based on the essential nature of airplane travel was illegal and said that "the airline will take the corresponding disciplinary measures." The union claims that

### Brazilian workers protest, petition against labor law changes

Workers in a number of Brazilian cities held protests September 14 against changes to the labor law proposed by president Michel Temer due to be enacted in November. The CUT (Unified Workers Central), along with social and religious organizations, organized the protests, which were smaller than previous protests.

The Consolidation of Labor Laws (CLT) was approved by both houses of the Chamber of Deputies in July. Under the guise of reactivating Brazil's sluggish economy, its more than 100 changes will give employers more flexibility in hiring, firing, pay, contract negotiations and labor rights, to the detriment of workers.

The CUT is carrying out a campaign to gather 1.3 million anti-CLT million signatures, which it plans to present to the Chamber of Deputies.

### Chilean medical professionals strike over pay dispute, labor conditions

Some 300 medical personnel for Chile's Legal Medical Service (SML), a legal advisory board, went on indefinite strike September 11 to demand better salaries and working conditions. This is the third mobilization—following 48-hour walkouts in May and June—by the professionals this year. According to a communiqué, despite the short strikes, "in practice we have achieved nothing more than promises and good intentions."

Medical personnel in other public sector entities, such as the Health Service, earn much more than SML workers, due to a different system of assignments and promotions. Although negotiations have reached some agreements on workplace risks, assignments and other issues, the salary issue remains unresolved.

Services like blood alcohol tests and clinical appointments have been paralyzed, but autopsies continue.

## **School food handlers in Chile strike to protest firings**

Food handlers in the town of Penco, in Chile's Biobio region, walked off the job September 12, at 37 schools at which their employer, Alimab, has contracts with the National School Aid and Scholarship Board (Junaeb). The workers struck to protest eight firings following a Junaeb investigation, which resulted in warnings and fines against Alimab.

The investigation's report claimed that "portions were in a bad state," but the workers claim that they are often not given the necessary amounts of provisions to prepare the food according to Junaeb standards. One worker provided an example to reporters: instead of receiving 78 kilograms of potatoes for making mashed potatoes, the food handlers received approximately half that amount.

The food handlers' union gave an ultimatum to the authorities, threatening to start a strike of the 1,400 food handlers if the eight fired workers were not reinstated.

## **Negotiations held in Pennsylvania teachers strike**

Representatives from the Abington Heights school district in Lackawanna County, Pennsylvania and the teachers union met for talks for the first time September 15 since the educators walked out on strike; teachers, counselors and nurses walked out on strike three days earlier. The two sides have been unable to come to agreement on wages and health care.

The Abington Heights Education Association has called for annual 2.5 percent pay increases and for maintaining the health care coverage under the previous contract where teachers do not pay health care premiums. School board representatives have countered with annual two percent pay increases and the demand that teachers pay \$80 per month in premium contributions for both single and family plans.

District superintendent Michael Mahon told the *Scranton Times-Tribune*, "the union has been artificially insulated from...these global challenges of health care." In recent times a scattering of school districts have pushed through the demand that teachers pay premiums.

At the same time, the Pennsylvania Education Association in Lackawanna County has agreed to contract negotiations that divide teachers. This year, two districts are in negotiations. Nine school districts, divided into three groups have contract expiration in 2018, 2019 and 2020, followed by a single district in 2021.

## **Three-week strike at Pennsylvania manufacturing plant comes to an end**

Some 165 workers at the Johnson Controls facility in Spring

Garden Township, Pennsylvania, voted to end their three-week strike, ratifying a new agreement September 16 by a two-thirds margin. One day earlier, management revealed that workers had defeated a proposal by the company.

Both the United Auto Workers (UAW) and Johnson Controls have kept negotiation details secret throughout the strike. What is known is that the new agreement splits the workforce with a four-year agreement for manufacturing workers and a three-year contract for workers in the company's testing facility. Manufacturing workers will receive a 12 percent raise over the course of the four-year agreement, while workers in the testing facility will only see 9 percent over their three-year contract.

Johnson Controls International is a Fortune 500 company and employs 170,000 people in more than 1,300 locations across six continents.

## **University of British Columbia maintenance staff threaten strike**

Operating and maintenance engineers at the University of British Columbia are threatening to strike if a new contract deal is not reached. Management ended talks earlier this summer and since that time has showed no interest in further negotiations.

The workers have been without a new contract for three years and management is demanding concessions. The university is threatening that workers will lose retroactive pay totaling some \$2,500 unless they accept cuts.

Union officials have pledged that any strike will have minimal impact and will not disrupt classes. The union says it will accept a 5.5 percent wage increase over five years, but has so far resisted changes in work scheduling demanded by management.



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