

Mass protests in Lima against Dina Boluarte administration;
Province of Manitoba, Canada mobilizes scabs against liquor store
strikers

Workers Struggles: The Americas

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The World Socialist Web Site invites workers and other readers to contribute to this regular feature
Latin America

strike that resulted in wage rises that barely kept up with Argentina's 100 percent plus inflation.

Buenos Aires subway transit workers protest

On July 26 subway workers in Buenos Aires carried out a three-hour protest work stoppage. In addition to wage and extra time off demands, the workers are protesting the lack of asbestos removal from stations and tunnels. Exposure to asbestos dust is affecting the health of many workers. The strikers linked their demands for extra days off to the need to reduce their exposure to the dangerous mineral.

Wednesday's protest was the latest work stoppage over this issue. Strike leaders report that at least three workers have died from asbestos exposure and 100 are suffering from lung damage, six of them with cancer.

Argentine tire workers strike

On July 25 tire workers carried out a three-day strike against plants owned by Bridgestone, Fate and Pirelli in Buenos Aires. The protest strike is against the three companies' attempts at lock-outs to force workers to accept lower wages and deteriorating working conditions.

The strike lasted until last Thursday, when the Labor Ministry was to convene to impose mandatory arbitration.

The tire workers are members of SUTNA trade union, allegedly a militant union linked to the Argentine pseudo-left. Last year SUTNA workers participated in a five-month

Colombia Taxi drivers stage protest

Taxi drivers in the cities of Cali and Bucaramanga protested on July 24. At issue is the high price of gasoline and competition from private drivers. As part of the protests, in both cities the striking drivers blocked major downtown intersections.

Mass demonstrations on Peruvian Independence day

On July 28, Peru's Day of Independence from Spanish rule, mass protests took place in Lima. Thousands attempted to surround the national legislature demanding the resignation of President Dina Boluarte, the dissolution of Congress, and the convening of a National Assembly to change Peru's constitution and establish a new government.

Since protests began in December 2022, following the removal of President Castillo, Boluarte's police have killed 77 people in their attempts to criminalize protests and to block them from marching on Lima, the national capital.

In addition to tear gas, the police used armored trucks to close the streets near the legislature. As workers were clashing with police outside the legislature, President Boluarte denounced the demonstrators, accusing them of threatening democracy. She demanded greater power from the legislators to smash the protests.

United States

Minnesota foundry workers strike over excessive overtime and safety concerns

Eighty foundry workers at the Dotson Iron Castings facility in Mankato, Minnesota went on strike July 23 in opposition to excessive overtime, along with safety concerns as well as the demand for expanded training. According to United Steelworkers (USW) Local 142B, which represents the striking workers, the two sides are relatively close on wages, but a wide gulf exists on overtime.

“There’s really no limits on how many hours (of overtime) they can mandate,” Jay Chateain, president of USW Local 142B, told the Mankato Free Press. The last negotiation session was July 12 while a single session is scheduled for August 1.

The Mankato foundry was purchased by South Carolina-based MacLean Power Systems (MPS) back in May. MPS makes products for communications infrastructure and operates in the United States, Canada, South America, Asia and Europe.

Michigan hospital workers to carry out one-day strike August 4

Some 200 healthcare workers at Trinity Grand Haven Hospital in Grand Haven, Michigan, are prepared to carry out a one-day strike on August 4 to protest under-staffing and low wages. The workers, comprising medical technicians, housekeepers, dietitians, social workers and medics, are members of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) and have been without a contract since February 28.

“We were told for many years that we were helping to keep healthcare in Grand Haven by being lower paid and that Trinity was going to solve all our problems,” Beth Ruiter, a medical technologist, told Michigan Advance. “But Trinity continues to make wage proposals that are far lower than what our colleagues make down the road at the Trinity Muskegon Hospital. Low wages are resulting in recruiting and retention problems across our hospital, often forcing us to work short-staffed.”

Workers at the hospital joined the SEIU last December, after Trinity purchased the facility, originally known as North Ottawa Community Hospital. Trinity Health is a

Catholic health system that operates 92 hospitals in 22 states and is the 10th largest health system in the United States. CEO Richard Gilfillan received compensation of \$2,951,758 in 2021.

Canada

Manitoba Crown Corporation mobilizes scabs against liquor store workers strike

In the face of a rotating, intermittent strike by public sector workers at the Liquor Mart network of stores across the province, management of the Liquor and Lotteries Crown Corporation have brought in replacement workers at the key central liquor distribution facility for the Manitoba operation.

One thousand four hundred workers, members of the Manitoba Government Employees Union (MGEU), continued work stoppages that, for the first time, lasted throughout an entire weekend period in response to the provocation. Prior to this past weekend, union officials had limited the workers struggle for a new contract to an overtime ban and intermittent work stoppages since an initial province-wide walkout on July 19.

The liquor mart workers have been without a contract since March 2022. The Crown Corporation posted record profits of \$598 million in 2021-22, and is on pace to make even more in this current reporting year. Yet management has offered a derisory four-year contract with a two per cent wage increase in each year. Workers start at only \$14.91 per hour. The government’s wage proposal amounts to yet another real wage cut when inflation is factored in.

Already, in the previous contract, all wages had been frozen for two full years and then capped at 0.75 and 1 percent increases over the final two years of the deal. So miserly is the government’s current offer that it had to add provisions for special small “wage bump” for workers who would otherwise have made less than the legal minimum wage.

Workers are demanding that they receive at least the same percentage wage increase as right wing Conservative Premier Heather Stefanson and her cabinet, who will receive a 10.5 percent raise over three years.



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