

Workers Struggles: The Americas

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Jamaica West Indies University Strike

On Friday January 5, 900 educators and administrators employed by the Mona Campus of the University of the West Indies in Jamaica went on strike. At issue are wages. The workers are demanding a 25 percent raise in salaries, beginning on February 29. Government authorities have so far ignored the demand.

The strike includes the stoppage, until January 22, of lessons, the delivery of academic material, meetings with tutors and remediation to students.

“Our main paymaster, the government of Jamaica, is our target. Unfortunately, protest action is the only way to get their attention,” declared the union that represents the Mona Campus workers.

West Indies University has campuses in Trinidad, Barbados and Jamaica (Mona)

Protests continue in Argentina against President Milei’s administration

Chanting “Until he falls” and banging empty pots and pans, workers in the Hurlingham working class district of Metropolitan Buenos Aires carried out a mass rally on January 5 against the policy measures of Argentina’s new president Milei.

The workers defied the government’s new policy requiring permission for protests of more than three people and banning the blocking of streets and

sidewalks. In addition to the empty pots and pans, as more people joined the rally, demonstrators also carried drums and horns.

As the night set in, university students, retirees, teachers, health workers and unemployed (some of whom had participated in the historic mass rallies of 2001) gave testimonials about the conditions that they face. There was wide agreement that these protests would continue.

The Hurlingham protest was one of a series of pots and pan protests across Metropolitan Buenos Aires and in the center of that city. There were also protests in La Plata, capital of Buenos Aires Province, and in the northern provinces of Misiones and Santiago del Estero.

Brazilian gig workers protest

Casual workers employed by Petrobras in Guanabara Bay (Rio de Janeiro) transport terminal carried out a protest slowdown and blocked the port on January 3 for two hours to protest contractors that delay wages and benefits and even try to halve the amount of agreed-upon food vouchers.

This was the latest of several protests by permanent and temporary workers at the transportation and shipping terminal.

Las Vegas culinary union in contract talks ahead of Super Bowl

Culinary Workers Union Local 226 is continuing talks with 21 resort casinos in Las Vegas as the date of

the 2024 Super Bowl approaches. Secretary-Treasurer Ted Pappageorge told the *Las Vegas Review-Journal* that the “talks focus on wages and benefits but also address daily room cleanings, protections against job-replacing technology, and reductions in workloads.”

The union has yet to sign a deal with 21 Las Vegas casino resorts the operate in the city. Pay for the hospitality workers can be as low as \$12 an hour for tipped employees.

Local 226 has not set a strike deadline, but only stated that one is coming soon for 8,000 workers on the strip. US Vice President Kamala Harris and acting Labor Secretary Julie Su held a rally with Local 226 officials, claiming the Biden administration is backing the casino workers. The involvement of the Biden administration is a clear sign that the union is planning to block a struggle, which could potentially disrupt the Super Bowl, and impose a sellout agreement that keeps workers locked in poverty pay.

The Culinary union called off a planned strike and signed a deal with MGM Resorts International and Wynn Resorts in Las Vegas last November that has been widely denounced by the rank-and-file as a sellout

instead of an all-out strike. Last month workers had voted by 100 percent for strike action.

The workers are employed by the Coast Mountain Bus Company (CMBC). The company is a subsidiary of Translink, the transit authority for Metro Vancouver. Workers have been without a new contract since October 2022. Union officials claim that due to the overtime ban some buses will be late on their routes.

Workers are demanding that should the dispute not be settled promptly a full-on strike must be organized. Their contract demands involve a significant wage increase and the ending of onerous workloads that can result in workers labouring for 70 hours per week or more, due to extremely low staffing levels.



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Workers strike City World Ford in New York City

Workers at City World Ford are on strike in the Bronx, New York after voting last summer to join the United Auto Workers. The UAW says management has refused to bargain over a first contract with the auto dealership workers, who include technicians and mechanics

Job action begins on Vancouver Transit

Despite entering into a legal strike position this past weekend, Canadian Union of Public Employees officials organizing 180 bus transit supervisors, engineers and maintenance workers in British Columbia's Lower Mainland initiated an overtime ban