

Workers Struggles: The Americas

Public transit maintenance workers conduct one-week strike in Montreal

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

Protesting teachers take over Chichén Itzá and other archaeological sites in Mexico

Hundreds of teachers from the National Education Workers Union (CNTE) occupied the Chichén Itzá archaeological Pyramid and the Ek Balam and Uxmal archeological sites in the Yucatan Peninsula, Wednesday June 11. Some 300 educators took over ticket booths and set up tents at the sites allowing tourists to enter for free.

On June 7, the CNTE cancelled a 23-day protest strike and occupation in Mexico City's Zocalo square.

The educators are demanding a 100 percent raise, a 90 bonus and the repeal of a 2007 law that privatized social security pensions for public employees. CNTE members have been striking, marching and rallying since May 15, including sit-ins at toll booths, embassies, and at the Mexico City airport.

The Claudia Sheinbaum administration has refused to discuss the educators' demands. The president has proposed a 10 percent salary increase that the teachers rejected out of hand.

On June 12, the strikers held a protest rally at the Maya Train station in Valladolid. Teachers are also occupying parts of that city. Earlier in the week, high school students and administrators at Metropolitan Technological University marched on the Government Palace in Mérida. Both cities are in Yucatan.

National protests in Argentina against Milei's economic policies

On Wednesday June 11, workers, students and retirees protested in Buenos Aires and in 17 provinces across Argentina. Demonstrators demanded an end to the Milei administration's attacks on jobs, wages and pensions.

As has become the norm, government made use of police and

gendarmes, armed with tear gas and police night-sticks, to repress the marches and rallies.

Joining the protests were health workers from Garrahan pediatric hospital, who have been in struggle for several weeks against low wages, overwork, and the lack of medical equipment and medications as a result of the Milei administration's austerity policies.

Santa Caterina Island, Brazil transit workers strike

On Wednesday, June 11 an assembly of the Union of Urban Transport Workers of Greater Florianópolis (*Sintraturb*), on Santa Caterina Island off the south coast of Brazil, brought together more than 500 workers who voted to strike for better wages and working conditions.

Their main demands include: a salary adjustment above current inflation (5.5 percent), a 10 percent increase in food vouchers, an 8 percent bonus for drivers who perform dual functions (as drivers and ticket collectors), an end to the "dual contract" that splits the workday and disrupts workers' lives as well as adequate provision of uniforms, payment of vouchers at the beginning of the month and coverage in case of robberies.

Following that vote, Florianópolis transit workers went on strike, affecting more than 89 lines on Santa Caterina Island.

In addition to the wage demand, transit workers emphasize the precariousness of their work, exhausting work shifts, split shifts and lack of coverage in cases of assault.

Florianópolis authorities responded with strike-breaking measures, including the use of vans and app-based drivers, while ignoring the precarious conditions faced by workers.

Teamsters picketing Mauser Packaging Solutions plants in four states

Some 120 members of Teamsters Local 705 at Mauser Packaging Solutions in Chicago, Illinois walked out on strike June

9 over their demands for wages and benefits. The Chicago strike follows an April 14 lockout of 20 members of Teamsters Local 117 by the Mauser subsidiary Industrial Container Services.

The same week that Chicago workers went on strike, workers at Mauser facilities in Minnesota and Los Angeles walked out on sympathy strikes. The Teamsters have not provided exact details concerning contract negotiations.

Mauser packaging solutions came together in 2018 as a result of mergers. Today it has more than 170 facilities across the globe.

Teamsters report contract deal in strike by postal contract drivers

The Teamsters bureaucracy has announced that a strike settlement has been reached for over 500 postal contract drivers at 10 Roads Express. A statement posted on the Teamsters website Monday claimed, “The new agreement delivers improvements for workers, including comprehensive Teamsters’ health care.”

Workers struck the company back on February 18 over wages, healthcare and working conditions after the Teamsters began organizing the workforce in 2023.

10 Roads has an active driver workforce of 2,404 workers across the United States. The current walkout involves drivers in eight states. But the Teamsters have intimated that a conclusion to the strike will not result in a master agreement.

According to the Teamsters, “10 Roads Express is one of the largest contractors for the USPS, receiving hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars to transport US mail.”

California cement workers strike over company proposal offering poor pay and pensions

Workers at the CalPortland Cement Plant in Mojave, California went on strike June 8 after the company’s offer failed to provide sufficient pay and benefits. The strike by the 107 members of the International Union of Operating Engineers Local 12 is the first walkout since 1981.

Management claims its offer includes a 3.5 percent wage increase in year one of their contract proposal. But Local 12 counters that CalPortland has only offered workers a 2 percent wage increase with no improvements in pension and retirement benefits.

In 2022, CalPortland/Glacier workers in Seattle, Washington, along with workers at five other companies engaged in a months-long joint strike action.

CalPortland claims to be the largest producer of cement and other building materials in the western United States. In 1990, the company was purchased by the Japanese conglomerate Taiheiyo Cement. CalPortland is just one of several subsidiaries throughout the world owned by Taiheiyo Cement.

Public transit maintenance workers conduct one-week strike in Montreal

About 2,400 maintenance workers servicing equipment on the Montreal subway and bus system withdrew their labour for 7-days through June 17, conducting their first strike mandate on the city’s public transit system. Members of the *Syndicat du transport de Montréal-CS*, the workers were ordered by the Administrative Labour Tribunal to ensure that their strike did not interfere with morning and afternoon rush hour bus and subway routes and late-night service.

During non-peak hours, the doors to subway stations were locked and buses did not make any stops after beginning their routes.

The workers were also ordered to keep the system open throughout this past weekend’s Canadian Grand Prix automobile race. The job action was the second attempt at a strike. The workers first attempt at a full one-day work stoppage was entirely overruled by the Labour Tribunal.

The union has stated that it may soon organize another strike vote to renew a limited strike mandate. That strike could coincide with a threatened walkout by Montreal bus and subway drivers should new contracts not soon be reached with transit management. A mediator has now been assigned to oversee both contract negotiations.

The maintenance workers are resisting management’s attempt to remove contractual language that bans contracting out the work of unionized members. Even with the current job security protections from previous collective agreements, management has used pools of low-wage, non-union workers for some “outsourced” jobs. The transit system now employs about 900 third party workers. The fabrication of parts for buses and subways, transmission repairs, and the inspection and repair of vehicles are some of the jobs that are increasingly being contracted out.

The right-wing government of Quebec premier Francois Legault continues to slash budgets for public transit systems and has issued a report stating that current collective agreements “prevent the complete or partial outsourcing” of many services.



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