

Workers Struggles: The Americas

Tyson meatpacking workers overwhelmingly vote to strike Amarillo, Texas plant; Workers, educators and students rally in defense of Argentine universities

30 June 2025

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

Workers, educators and students rally in defense of Argentine universities

On Thursday, June 26, University workers, educators and students marched in Argentine university cities including, Buenos Aires, Córdoba, Rosario, Tucumán, Mendoza, La Plata, and Mar del Plata. The protests were triggered by President Javier Milei's veto of education funding that had been approved by the legislature. The protests took place in the context of a 48-hour protest strike by university professors.

University workers and educators also demanded the restoration of real wages, student scholarships, and an increase in science and technology budgets. "Light your torch in defense of public universities," was one of the slogans at the marches.

Because of the Milei administration's brutal austerity policies, university budgets have been slashed 22.5 percent and educators' wages by 28.1 percent. The legislation vetoed by Milei would have tied university budgets to the rate of inflation (currently 45 percent annually).

Paraguay nurses demand higher wages

Last Wednesday, June 25, over 4,000 health workers from across Paraguay marched in Paraguay's capital, Asunción, and rallied across from the Health Ministry. The main issue is wages. The nurses at some hospitals are getting less than minimum wage. Nurses point out that they are overworked and are demanding the training and hiring of thousands of new nurses.

In addition to a substantial wage increase, the demonstrators also called for a health budget that would lead to improvement in health conditions across the country. Specifically, they are demanding that hospitals be properly supplied with medications and equipment and that decaying hospitals be rebuilt.

Mexico City welfare workers demand an end to contingent work

Temp workers employed by the Mexico City Family Rights Organization (DIF-CDMX) rallied on Wednesday June 25 at City Hall demanding an end to their contingent working conditions. The demonstrators presented Mexico City's Mayor Clara Brugada with a petition demanding that their labor rights be recognized after 15 years of contingent work. DIF-CDMX workers have no rights to vacations, or to form or join trade unions.

The demonstrators marched behind a banner demanding decent work. One of the protesters indicated, "We have been working 15 years under contract wages, under the minimum wage, with no social security rights, no seniority right; we have not had a raise in all that time."

Ironically, DIF-CDMX workers are charged with providing public assistance to people in need—children, people with chronic health conditions, and the elderly—working under miserable and contingent conditions. Some have been fired arbitrarily for attempting to organize.

Protests against central Ecuador mining project

On June 22, hundreds of peasants, small farmers, and residents of the Las Naves, Ventanas and Echeandia townships in Bolivar Province (central Ecuador), marched against the El Domo-Curinamba mining project which threatens their water supplies and way of life.

The demonstrators reject as "fraudulent, corrupt, and illegal" a government environmental impact study that did not include the 17 communities affected and demand protection of their sources of water, which are of life and death importance for thousands of families.

The project—overseen by the local mining firm Curimining, Inc.—seeks to extract copper, gold, nickel and silver from the El Domo Mountain, which could contaminate local rivers that are essential for agriculture and human consumption. Opposition to the proposal has been building up since 2006, when it was first proposed.

Meatpacking workers overwhelmingly vote to strike Tyson Amarillo, Texas plant

Teamsters Local 577 announced June 27 that the 3,200 workers at the Tyson beef processing plant in Amarillo, Texas, had overwhelmingly authorized strike action. Workers are demanding higher wages, improved benefits and better working conditions. Al Brito, president of Local 577,

said that Tyson's CEO makes 525 times the median wage of a Tyson worker and this has become a major sore point among workers.

The Amarillo plant is one of the largest beef processing plants in the United States. The union filed unfair labor practices against the company, charging Tyson "has harassed union stewards, coerced injured employees into dropping claims, illegally interrogated union members, and falsely told workers at the facility that if they engaged in a ULP strike they would lose their jobs."

Tyson was the object of wrath of meatpackers when the company compelled workers to work under life-threatening conditions through the COVID-19 pandemic. At its Waterloo, Iowa, plant, managers cynically placed bets on how many workers would contract the virus. Six workers died.

Providence, Rhode Island health care workers vote for open-ended strike

The 2,500 nurses and other healthcare personnel at the Rhode Island and Hasbro Children's Hospitals in Providence voted to strike June 24 over benefits, working conditions and patient care standards. The contract expired March 31 and management presented United Nurses & Allied Professionals (UNAP) Local 5098 with its "last, best and final offer" on June 6.

UNAP reported the company's proposal would shift some \$1,000 in higher healthcare costs unto the backs of workers. It would also permit management to impose mandatory overtime for technical staff, case managers and other health care support staff, but not for nurses.

In 2018 UNAP workers carried out a three-day strike. The current proposed strike would be open-ended, although the required 10-day strike notice has not been filed by the union.

Washington state emergency service workers to strike for first contract

Medical workers at MultiCare Emergency-Parkland near Tacoma, Washington, were slated to begin a five-day strike June 30 as the workers seek their first union contract. Emergency-Parkland first opened in 2019 and the emergency service workers unionized in May 2024 with the International Association of Machinists (IAM) District 160.

The staffing at Emergency-Parkland has dropped from 120, when workers voted to unionize, to a mere 75 today. IAM lead negotiator Brandon Hemming said the company has "a real aversion for reaching a fair agreement."

The union charges, "MultiCare has committed at least 14 Unfair Labor Practices. These violations include withholding standard status quo raises given at other OCED (off-campus emergency department) facilities, denying union representatives workplace access, illegally interrogating workers, and bargaining in bad faith by refusing to negotiate multiple critical contract articles."

The IAM does not have a strike fund for the Emergency-Parkland workers.

Ontario workers' compensation civil servants now in 5th week of strike

About 4,000 public sector workers employed by the Ontario Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) began the first strike in the history of the organization five weeks ago in pursuit of relief from excess workloads, adequate wage increases and changes to an intimidating and stressful workplace culture. Since the beginning of the strike, management has refused to return to the bargaining table with a revised offer.

Workers had earlier been offered a meager three-year wage increase of only 2 percent in the first year, 1.5 percent in the second year and 1 percent in the final year. During the inflationary spike over the course of their last contract, workers' real wages had already fallen by 5.25 percent.

Ninety-six percent of the workforce, members of the Canadian Union of Public Employees, voted for strike action. Although the vast majority of the workers struck across the entire province during the first 2 days of the action, rotating strikes were then set to begin.

However, management quickly shut down the entire WSIB system, putting an end to any attempt at rotating strike action. Since then, management has advised those injured workers using WSIB services to access information only via the internet and have stated that there will be delays in processing claims and inquiries.

According to its website, the WSIB provides wage-loss benefits, medical coverage and support to help people get back to work after a work-related injury or illness. It is funded by premiums paid by Ontario businesses and covers over 5.3 million workers in the province in more than 300,000 workplaces.

As it stands, injured workers across Ontario looking for workers compensation payments face a system that intentionally throws up serious roadblocks.

For instance, other than certain post-traumatic stress illnesses, the WSIB does not generally support mental health claims. In addition, civil society organizations as well as lawyers representing injured workers have found that management can ignore sound medical advice regarding readiness to return to work, reduce or deny claims by blaming "pre-existing conditions" for injuries clearly suffered at work, rely on untested "expected recovery times" to declare a worker healed, and purchase reports from private medical consultants who never meet the worker and have been found to ignore available medical evidence.



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact