

Workers Struggles: The Americas

DHL logistics workers vote overwhelmingly to strike if no contract by March 31

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

Buenos Aires police attack laid off tire factory workers

Police in the City of Buenos Aires, Argentina's capital, savagely assaulted a rally by industrial workers laid off by tire manufacturer and exporter FATE company. The workers had peacefully rallied at the Labor Secretariat in defense of their jobs. The workers were joined by other union members, educators and health workers, and retirees. Representatives of their union (SUTNA) were meeting inside with government officials. FATE laid off 920 workers.

Police on motorcycles charged the workers at the rally, firing rubber bullets and corralling them in at the Plaza San Martin Square, near the building. Workers and their family members trying to flee were attacked by water cannons.

National teachers' strike in Argentina

Educators across Argentina, members of the CTERA teachers' union went on strike on March 2, delaying the beginning of classes for 2026. At issue are budget cuts on public education and the anti-labor legislation recently approved by the national legislature and signed by President Milei, which seeks to impose contingent labor conditions on educators. Currently, 43 percent of Argentine workers labor under temp contracts.

Peruvian indigenous communities stage protest strike over illegal gold mining

On March 6, 39 indigenous peasant communities in the lower Tigre River, which feeds into the Amazon River, in northern Peru, declared a protest strike against government refusal to stop illegal

gold mining that is polluting the river and their drinking water. The strikers intend to block the river and roads in the vicinity of the city of Iquitos in northern Peru, near the border with Brazil.

The strikers charge the government with ignoring past commitments to protect the river. The indigenous communities united in the Federation of Native Communities for the Protection of the Lower Tigre River (FECONBAT) have obtained repeated government assurances, but nothing has been implemented. Furthermore, recently, government agents in the city of Nueva York Peru have been removed, halting any monitoring of illegal mining and making it easier for more miners to move into the region. There is widespread suspicion that government officials are being paid off by the mining cartels.

In addition, the protesters point out that the government has not carried out any investigation on the health effects of the chemicals used by the miners, and reneged on promises to establish schools in the region.

DHL logistics workers vote overwhelmingly to strike if no contract by March 31

Truck drivers and warehouse workers for the international logistics company DHL voted by a 96 percent margin to authorize a strike if their current contract expires March 31 without an acceptable offer. Reflecting workers' determination to secure their demands, Bill Hamilton, the Express Division director, stated, "Our members will not work a day past the expiration of our current agreement."

The 6,000 workers, represented by 26 Teamsters locals across 16 states, are seeking improvements in wages, benefits and working conditions. The union is also bargaining over DHL's use of subcontractors and job security. Negotiations between the two sides are ongoing.

DHL's headquarters is located in Bonn, Germany. The company's global workforce is over 580,000.

Primary care providers at Minnesota and Wisconsin clinics

authorize open-ended strike

Doctors and advanced practice providers at Allina Health clinics in Minnesota and Wisconsin voted by a 90 percent margin to grant authorization for an open-ended strike as contract talks have stalled. The 650 doctors, physician assistants (PA) and nurse practitioners (NP) first unionized in October of 2023 with the Doctors Council, an affiliate of the Service Employees International Union, but still do not have a contract.

At a March 6 press conference, Dr. Matt Hoffman, who has helped spearhead the organization drive and contract struggle, stated, “Allina has really not come to the table with proposals that would keep primary care and urgent care sustainable.”

Allina is seeking a contract that will reduce wages even further, making the struggle by providers to pay off medical school debt even more difficult. The company also refuses to incorporate its current healthcare benefits package into the contract as management wants to retain the right to reduce benefits at its own discretion.

Allina CEO Lisa Shannon, who makes at least \$4 million annually, has been deaf to insufficient staffing ratios that plague the workforce, creating burnout and endangering patient safety.

Alaska bus drivers strike over wages and vehicle maintenance safety

Some 200 school bus drivers in Alaska’s Matanuska-Susitna Valley commenced picketing March 2 as Teamsters Local 959 accused Durham School Services with delaying tactics after negotiations began in June of last year. The last bargaining session took place in January and the old contract agreement expired in early February.

While drivers are concerned about pay and benefits, safety issues focused on bus maintenance are of concern to both drivers and parents of students who rely on the bus service.

Union representative Kelsey Taylor told KTUU, “We’ve had a number of days since January where we haven’t had enough buses to run all the routes. We’ve got drivers ready to go. We don’t have the buses.”

Nova Scotia arts college workers strike

More than 100 teaching and research assistants and independent course appointees are in the first week of a strike at the Nova Scotia College of Arts and Design (NSCAD) in pursuit of a significant wage increase and more job security for these workers who are hired under onerous temporary “gig” compensation schemes. The workers, members of the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE), voted to unionize for the first time in 2023

and are fighting for a first collective agreement.

Education workers at the fine arts college earn about \$5,600 per course. However, the national average for similar work is \$9,200. Those at other unionized universities in the province make at least \$8,000. The striking NSCAD workers are hired on part-time contracts that cover one course for one semester, and they do not have a guarantee of continued employment. When the contract is over, workers must reapply in order to teach it again. Management insists on maintaining the poverty compensation rates and have stated there is a “vast difference” between the demands of the workers and what they are willing to offer.

Some classes have already been canceled. Most of the classes for the semester end in early April with an exam period ending on April 24. The strike at NSCAD follows strikes by CUPE education workers at three other universities in the province over the past six months. Education workers at Dalhousie, Mount Saint Vincent and Saint Mary’s universities struck during this past school year due to inflation, low wages and job security concerns.

The NSCAD strike comes on the heels of a new budget announced by the Conservative provincial government that seeks to slash hundreds of millions in expenditures across the entire public sector. Striking workers have joined protests alongside artists, art teachers and community workers who have found funding for their programs under particular threat.

The social unrest has been further fueled by a February ruling by the provincial Supreme Court that struck down wage restraint legislation passed by the previous Liberal government in 2015. The wage suppression program, dubbed the Public Services Sustainability Act, impacted over 75,000 workers. It imposed an initial two-year wage freeze followed by paltry annual increases of 1 percent, 1.5 percent and 0.5 percent. It also included the removal of the public service award, a lump-sum payment at retirement based on years served for qualifying workers. The ensuing Conservative governments of Premier Tim Houston refused to repeal the legislation.

Fully 11 years after the Act was passed, the court found that the legislation is unconstitutional, writing that the bill “substantially interfered” with the applicant unions’ charter right to a process of good faith collective bargaining. The court, however, granted the government’s request to suspend any declaration of invalidity for another 12 months. In the meantime, the current Conservative government has not ruled out launching an appeal of the court decision.



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