

Workers Struggles: The Americas

Argentina government employees protest cuts to research staff;
SEIU scraps planned rally by 1,500 Syracuse, New York senior care workers

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

Protest at National Atomic Energy Commission headquarters opposes layoffs of government research institutions

On July 7, hundreds of government workers marched and rallied at the National Atomic Energy Commission headquarters in Greater Buenos Aires, and other cities in Argentina protesting the layoffs of hundreds of workers, part of an attacks on research institutions by the Milei administration.

The official government workers unions applauded the spontaneous protests as a supposed demonstration of patriotic nationalism (Argentina, along with Brazil in South America established an Atomic Energy commission to develop atomic technology independently of the US and other technologically advanced nations.)

Hundreds of research, administrative and technical workers have been laid off as a consequence of a 45 percent budget cut affecting government research commissions, the latest being the Atomic Energy Commission, which has gone from 645 to 272 employees, while real wages dropped 32 percent since 2023, with little or no response from the unions.

President Kast in Chile sends police against protesting public health workers

On July 8 hundreds of chanting health workers rallied at the La Moneda presidential palace in downtown Santiago to denounce the brutal budget cuts to public health agency APS (Primary Health Attention). The demonstrators intended to present President Kast an open letter calling for dialogue in defense of APS. The proposed cuts of US\$ 2.8 billion threaten to destroy APS, which for most Chileans is their primary access to healthcare.

No dialogue took place. Instead, government gendarmes used water cannons and fired tear gas cannisters to criminalize the protest rally and chase and arrest demonstrators.

Dominican Republic sees massive protests against new Penal Code

A mass protest rally took place on Friday July 10 against a new penal code to take effect next month in this island nation that borders Haiti. The protesters included hundreds of working class and student youth, members of left-wing organizations, as well as workers that arrived on their own.

The rally, at the Constitutional Court building in Santo Domingo, concluded a series of evening protests marked by banging pots and pans. These also included artistic expressions, such as chants and murals, and dancing on photos of the president, the police chief and other political leaders.

The new penal code, allegedly designed to modernize the existing statutes so as to “respond to new forms of crime,” includes a gag law designed to severely limit public criticism. It includes prison time for “crimes of opinion,” effectively legitimizing dictatorship and unconstitutional under the current penal code.

Contributing to the social anger was the murder by a police officer on July 3 of an unarmed 19-year-old youth, Darlin Mercado, for the “crime” of not having tags on his motorcycle, a motorcycle that he was not even driving at the time. Videos of the incident went viral across the island, including the police preventing anyone from coming to his aid. In the Dominican Republic “the police do not inspire respect, it inspires fear,” commented one of the demonstrators.

Service Employees International Union scraps planned rally by 1,500 Syracuse, New York senior care workers

Less than 24 hours ahead of a planned July 10 rally Local 1199SEIU in Syracuse, New York cancelled a planned rally outside Loretto Sedgwick Heights senior living community and instead announced the reaching of a tentative contract. Union officials said no details of the agreement would be made public ahead of a ratification vote.

The contract for the 1,500 healthcare staff expired June 30, but no strike deadline was set as negotiations continued. The union had indicated that wages, hire and experience pay and pension concessions had been the main outstanding issues.

American Crystal Sugar workers in Moorhead, Minnesota demonstrate over failed negotiations as contract deadline nears

Workers at the American Crystal Sugar plant in Moorhead, Minnesota, held a demonstration July 9 to protest the slow pace of negotiations and lack of progress as the July 31 expiration of the old agreement approaches.

John Risky, president of the Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers Local 167-G, told KVRr the demonstration was “to show the company that we at the table are talking for our members... Negotiations are productive... we will come to a fair agreement that’s good for our members and for the shareholders of Crystal Sugar.”

However, a worker told KVRr, “The offer that they came with was very disappointing to us as employees. None of us are alright with the current offer.”

Another worker told Valley News Live, “The negotiations end next week. We’re supposed to have a completed contract by August 1 and right now, they’re so far apart it doesn’t look good for us employees.”

Milwaukee coffee shop workers strike against private equity owner

Workers for Anodyne Coffee in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, went on strike June 27 at four coffee shop locations over management efforts to drag out negotiations and frustrate workers’ demands. Anodyne Coffee was acquired in 2023 by FairWave, a company based in Kansas City, Missouri. FairWave, in turn, is owned by Great Range Capital, a private equity firm that carries out leveraged and management buyouts across a range of companies involved with healthcare, building materials and construction.

Anodyne workers unionized in June 2025 under the Milwaukee Area Service & Hospitality Workers Union with all workers voting for representation. But since negotiations commenced for a contract, FairWave unilaterally made a number of changes, including altering job duties, working conditions and compensation, all unlawful measures.

The strike affected four locations and resulted in the complete

shutdown of three coffee shops. FairWave CEO Justin Seamonds complained that workers only gave his company “one minute’s notice” before walking out.

Back at the beginning of January of this year, FairWave acquired Fiddleheads coffee shops, bringing the total number of coffee shops in Milwaukee under its ownership to twelve.

Oxfam workers entering fifth week of strike

About 50 Oxfam Canada workers are on strike in pursuit of a wage increase, cost-of-living adjustments, domestic violence protections and gender-affirming care leave. The workers, members of the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) are based in Toronto and Ottawa and have been negotiating for a new agreement for over a year.

They have rejected management’s 6.5 percent wage increase which amounts to a paltry 0.5 percent raise after the effects of inflation are factored in. The employer has also refused to include former cost-of-living increases into its new, proposed contract language. The job action is the first ever strike by Oxfam workers.

Striking Bank of Canada security staff oppose deployment of scab labour

Some 60 security guards employed at the Bank of Canada have been on strike since June 23. Members of the Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC), the workers are fighting for wage and benefit increases and to retain shift scheduling rights to ensure a more equitable work-life balance. They are also resisting Bank management attempts to cut their parental leave top-ups.

Most of the workers are based in Ottawa. A smaller contingent of workers employed at the Bank’s smaller Montreal operation were locked out after the Ottawa workers walked off the job.

Management had been illegally employing scab labour to perform security functions at the outset of the walkout in contravention of recently enacted federal anti-scab legislation. Last week they were ordered by the Canadian Industrial Relations Board to cease the deployment of scab labour. Bank management responded that they would do so only “as soon as it can put in place the necessary measures.”



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