Workers Struggles: The Americas

900 Toronto-area casino workers strike; Pennsylvania hospital workers launch 5-day strike in State College

3 August 2026

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Family members of victims of repression protest in Peru

On July 28, as President-elect Keiko Fujimori was about to officially take office, family members of the victims of waves of state repression during the administrations of Alberto Fujimori (Keiko's father), Dina Boluarte and José Jeri (1980, 1990 and 2000) assembled at the Justice Palace in Lima, repudiating the return of yet another fascistic regime.

Hundreds of demonstrators congregated in Lima's Heroes' Walk (Paseo de los Héroes), carrying photographs of the victims of past repressions, candles and signs questioning the legitimacy of the new administration. They reminded that the Alberto Fujimori administration and the military and police had been found guilty of disappearances, illegal executions, torture and forced sterilizations, which began with his administration in 1992, following the dissolution of Congress and the Courts and the establishment of a military dictatorship.

The demonstrators also demanded an end to legislation that immunized police and military for their participation in these crimes. They rejected a call by Fujimori for "reconciliation" until all the laws protecting the police and armed forces from prosecution and jail are abolished.

Raúl Samillán of the Association of Victims of the 2022-2023 massacres, one of the groups participating in the protest, denounced the new administration and declared that the victims' families, workers and peasants from southern Peru, where many of the killings took place, will not recognize Keiko Fujimori's administration.

Mexico City protest over the unresolved disappearances of 43 Ayotzinapa teaching college students

On July 26, scores of workers, students and family members marched and rallied in downtown Mexico City in honor of the 43 Ayotzinapa teaching college students, who disappeared from the city of Iguala nearly 12 years ago in September 2014. The Sheinbaum administration continues to insist that there are several parallel ongoing investigations. The demonstrators, however, denounced the lack of results. Many insist that the investigations are designed to cover up the role of the military in the kidnappings.

The demonstrators marched from the "Independence Angel" square toward the so-called Anti-monument for the kidnapped students, installed in Mexico City by previous protesters in April 2015. At the start of the march, they chanted the names of the 43 students and demanded that they be returned alive.

Pennsylvania hospital workers launch 5-day strike in State College

The 950 hospital workers at Mount Nittany Medical Center in State College, Pennsylvania, commenced a five-day strike on July 27 demanding across-the-board wage increases. Workers voted overwhelmingly to reject hospital management's offer of a one-year contract

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extension that contained a 3 percent wage increase and a $1,000 bonus.

In June, the hospital tried to ram through a three-year contract with no wage increase, claiming they needed to balance “long-term sustainability” for the healthcare system.

Josh Rosefsky, a maintenance worker who serves as the union vice president, told WPSU, “We want everyone in this hospital having a fair wage increase, and that’s everyone from EVS, the kitchen, respiratory, the whole way up to the nurses.”

Negotiations resumed on August 3.

North Dakota dairy workers authorize strike action as contract talks stall

Over 100 workers at the Cass-Clay Creamery in Fargo, North Dakota, voted overwhelmingly to grant strike authorization as contract talks between Teamsters Local 120 and management have stalled. Workers are demanding increased wages, improved healthcare, pensions and improved protections in contract language.

Brian Nowak, business agent for Local 120, said in a press release, “We’ve been in negotiations; we’ve met a total of five times over the past couple of weeks. Unfortunately, the last couple of days of negotiations kind of ground to a halt. We did not have a lot of movement from the company; there was not a lot of fruitful discussions between the parties, and that’s what we’re looking for.”

No strike date has been set by the Teamsters, and contract talks are ongoing.

The Cass-Clay Creamery is just one of many dairy operations run by Dairy Farmers of America (DFA), based in Kansas City, Missouri. DFA was first established in 1998 and merged a number of smaller cooperatives. Net sales in 2016 were $13.5 billion, representing about 22 percent of raw milk production in the United States. DFA, in turn, supplies various retailers with milk and other dairy products.

900 Toronto-area casino workers strike

About 900 cashiers, slot technicians, table games technicians and dealers, along with gaming hosts and player service representatives walked off the job Friday in pursuit of wage parity with other casino workers in the region. The workers are employed by Great Canadian Entertainment at two gaming operations located in the towns of Pickering and Ajax just east of Toronto. The strike action also includes housekeeping and food service staff at the Pickering site hotel.

The strikers, organized by Unifor, voted down a tentative contract with about 66 percent rejecting the deal that had been presented to them by union officials. Workers are demanding pay equity with other casino workers in the region who earn substantially more. Hourly wages at other casinos operating under the same management in the Greater Toronto Area range from $2 to $4 more than what workers make at the Ajax and Pickering casinos.

Strike continues at Salit Steel in Niagara Falls

Some 50 members of the United Steelworkers (USW) at Salit Steel are entering their fifth week on strike against management’s attempts to roll back contract provisions established over many decades. Workers walked off the job on June 29 after voting by 91 percent to reject the company’s contract proposal. The workers are fighting to protect wages, pensions, benefits and negotiated workplace rights, as management attempts to foist a concessions-laden deal on the workforce.

The strikers are fighting not only for themselves but also to protect the collective agreement standards for workers at the company’s other unionized locations in Welland and Burlington, Ontario.

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