Workers Struggles: The Americas

24 November 2026

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

Venezuela education and health workers stage nationwide protest over pay and bonuses

On Monday, November 16 education workers carried out a 12-hour protest-strike in 22 Venezuelan provinces. The strike issues are hunger wages and miserable bonuses. In the Venezuelan capital, Caracas, strikers blocked roads and rallied at the Finance Ministry and other locations.

While the protest was triggered when workers received a $75 US dollar bonus, half of a promised $150 bonus or 135 thousand Bolivares--a sum that is insufficient relative to the needs of workers in public education and government clinics and hospitals--the main issues in the protest are hunger wages that, for years, have not kept up with inflation, collapsing health and retirement benefits, the government's policies of granting periodic bonuses instead of wage increases, and regional income inequalities.

Silver and gold miners vote to continue strike in Mexico's Durango state

Silver and gold miners at the First Majestic mine in Tayoilita, Durango State, on strike since October 8, voted on November 20 to remain on strike.

The Canadian-owned mine had demanded that the Mexican government mandate this second vote. Seven hundred-forty-four miners voted to continue their strike, 3 voted against, and 18 votes were annulled.

Among the issues in the on-going struggle are unsafe conditions and management's repeated violation of the existing contract, including not paying a special bonus linked to the company's profits.

Food workers strike milk products company PIL Andina in Bolivia

Workers at food and milk products company PIL Andina struck November 15 at the company's plants in Santa Cruz, Cochabamba and La Paz and at several distribution warehouses.

While initially the strike was to last indefinitely, the trade union apparatus cancelled it on its third day, claiming to be protecting workers against company lawsuits and to avoid harm to milk producers that provide their product to PIL.

The strike was in response to the closure of one of the firm's maintenance shops, and the sacking of 14 workers.

Colombian workers and students protest regressive tax bill and police repression

Thousands of workers and students marched in protest on November 19 in the main cities of Cali and Medellin, and the capital Bogota, against reactionary tax and police legislation proposed by the right-wing Abelardo de la Espriella administration.

The so-called Fiscal Rescue Law would favor the oligarchy and impose regressive taxes on the working class and middle class, while a recent presidential decree gives police more repressive powers over worker and student protests.

True to form, Colombian police repressed demonstrators with tear gas water-cannons, physically attacking and injuring individual demonstrators.

Pennsylvania HVAC workers strike enters third month over wages, healthcare and working conditions

Workers at Lloyd Industries in Montgomeryville, Pennsylvania, concluded their third month on strike over wages, healthcare and working conditions. Originally, 47 members of Sheet Metal Workers Local 19 walked out, but due

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to the isolation of the strike and financial hardships, only 22 workers remain on the picket line.

Lloyd Industries manufactures HVAC components and fire dampers and the fiberglass used for insulation in the production process releases particles into the air. Workers want a new healthcare plan. Many workers are unable to afford the current plan and go without healthcare.

Back in August, the company issued a final offer and ended negotiations with the union. That proposal offered a one-year contract and a fifty-cent raise. Despite Local 19's filing of unfair labor practices charges, the company has shown no indication it will resume contract talks.

Bryon Blum, Local 19 business agent told *The Inquirer* that the facility is "filthy… nobody cleans in there. The workers want the machines to be cleaner, the air to be cleaner. They want management to stop turning off the exhaust fans."

Reuters media workers authorize strike action

The NewsGuild of New York announced November 16 that nearly 300 media workers for Reuters voted by a 94 percent margin to authorize a strike. The bargaining unit represents workers from across the country who have been working under an expired contract since December 2025.

Citing a national rate of inflation of 4 percent, the union charges that Reuters wage offer amounts to a pay cut. The NewsGuild also alleges that Reuters' doling out of merit pay is "capricious" as it is unevenly and unfairly distributed by management to "favorites" and "bearing little relation to actual performance."

Reuters rejected a union proposal over AI that provided protections for journalists and their reporting. The NewsGuild also bargained for compensation to those workers who are eliminated by AI or allow journalists a cut of its profits from AI licensing revenue based on their work. Reuters also refused workers' demands for human oversight and correction in relation to material generated by AI.

The NewsGuild has filed unfair labor practices charges against Reuters over a number of issues, including allegations that management was illegally taking away work from union members and engaging in intimidation.

Ontario teachers and support staff vote massively in favor of strike authorization

Some 275, 000 teachers and other education workers have returned solid strike mandates to their unions in membership ballots over the past three weeks. The Ontario Secondary School Teachers Federation (OSSTF) voted by 96 percent in favour of strike action as did those in the OSSTF French school programs. The Elementary Teachers Federation of Ontario (ETFO) supported a strike mandate by a vote of 97 percent. English Catholic Teachers (OECTA) voted in favor by 98 percent. Education assistants, social workers, office staff and custodians in the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) voted by 94 percent. OSSTF education and ancillary workers voted by 92 percent to provide their union with a strike mandate.

Teachers across Ontario have been without a contract since August. Previous discussions had stalled after the unions and province found little agreement on which concerns should be negotiated centrally, and which should be bargained with local school boards. Teacher unions negotiate central and local collective agreements covering salaries, class sizes, prep time, benefits, and working conditions.

Facing the hard-right Conservative government of Premier Doug Ford which is committed to the dismantling of public education, and trade union bureaucracies that have repeatedly enforced concessions and smothered workers' opposition, education workers must seek to broaden their struggle if they are to win their contract demands.

Victoria, British Columbia transit workers set strike date

Around 790 British Columbia transit workers in Greater Victoria, members of Unifor, will conduct a one-day strike on November 27 that will shut down all routes across the province's capital city. The bus drivers have been without a contract for over 19 months.

Union officials brushed aside demands for strike action for months and only sanctioned a uniform ban in August, calling on workers to refuse to wear company issued clothing on the job. When BC Transit failed to "buckle" to this milquetoast tactic, the union then proposed settlement of the dispute through the binding arbitration process. BC Transit rejected the proposal. The workers are demanding better wages, sick leave, dental benefits and improved recovery time and breaks for late-running buses.



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