

Argentine health care workers continue strikes and protests

Workers Struggles: The Americas

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

Latin America

Argentine health care workers continue strikes and protests

Thousands of striking health care workers marched and rallied in central Buenos Aires on October 28. The demonstrators included residents, doctors, nurses and other health workers. At issue is their demand for higher wages and better working conditions.

The health workers' struggle, strikes and protests, began six weeks ago. Public and private hospitals have so far refused to seriously respond to workers' demands. In several hospitals workers have spontaneously elected committees of medical and non-medical workers in response to the class collaborationist policies of the unions that supposedly represent them.

Chilean longshore workers strike 23 ports

Over 6,500 longshore workers carried out a 48-hour strike last Thursday and Friday, shutting down 23 ports along Chile's maritime coast. The strikers are demanding that the government seriously negotiate their demands.

Among the workers' demands are an end to part-time and contingent employment, and improvement of working conditions that affect workers' health. The strikers are also demanding early retirement for injured workers and

improved health insurance for at-risk workers.

In Chile's main port, Valparaiso, striking workers put up barricades and blocked truck and street traffic.

Demonstrators protest foreign intervention and call for new elections in Haiti

On October 25, hundreds of demonstrators marched in Port-au-Prince rejecting the threat of foreign intervention, demanding the resignation of prime minister Ariel Henry and demanding a new election.

As the protests were taking place, Haitian radio reporter Roberson Alphonse was shot at, raising fears of an escalation in attacks on the press.

On October 7 Haitian authorities requested international military intervention.

Uruguayan teachers reject education law

Last Wednesday and Thursday, Uruguayan secondary school teachers carried out protest strikes and occupied a Montevideo high school to protest a so-called education reform being implemented by the National Public Education Administration (ANEP) and Uruguayan President Luis Lacalle Pou. Among the "reforms" are budget cuts of millions of US dollars and 30 unpaid hours (six weeks) of virtual training classes for teachers.

Literature teacher Margarita Osta posted on Twitter that the government "presents the reform as a revolution in education, while planning to impose a 150 million dollar cut" in education spending.

United States

Non-medical staff at Connecticut hospital carries out two-day strike

Some 200 non-medical staff at Windham Hospital in Willimantic, Connecticut, brought their two-day strike to a close on October 26. Members of WCMH United Employees Local 5099 are seeking increased wages and improved health care coverage. The union has also accused Hartford HealthCare, which owns Windham Hospital along with other facilities in Connecticut, of failing to deal with staffing issues that have led to “the region’s patient care crisis.”

Back in September, over 100 nurses at Windham Hospital carried out a two-day strike separate from the technical and support staff who struck last week. The nurses’ union claims to have gotten Windham to end the practice of mandatory overtime shifts, which allowed the facility to place the burden of understaffing on the existing workforce without hiring additional help.

But management negotiators have not conceded to nurses’ demands over wages and health care benefits required to attract new recruits. In the aftermath of the September strike, the union has raised the concern that Hartford HealthCare is shifting patients to two other facilities in its system and closing units in the Windham Hospital and canceling shifts to punish nurses for striking.

University of New Mexico graduate workers hold protest

On October 27 about 60 graduate workers at the University of New Mexico in Las Cruces staged a protest outside the administration building demanding tuition remission and that the university bargain their contract in good faith.

The graduate workers union was recognized last spring, but talks have yet to yield a contract. New Mexico bars public workers’ strikes. The graduate students accuse the university of failure to bargain in good faith.

At a previous event police were summoned after a student tore up a copy of the university’s contract offer and threw it into a meeting room at the administration

building.

Canada

School support staff in Nova Scotia strike

One hundred and thirty childhood educators, office and outreach workers and clerks, members of the Nova Scotia Government and General Employees Union (NSGEU), struck last week at the South Shore Regional Centre for Education. The workers joined more than 600 fellow school support staff who also struck last week at the province’s Annapolis Valley Centre for Education.

Another 60 school support workers, also members of the NSGEU at Nova Scotia’s Tri-County education centre are poised to strike after voting 98 percent for the job action earlier in October. The low paid workers are demanding a significant wage raise to protect themselves against the sky-rocketing cost of living. Already, 1,500 teachers’ assistants and other education workers are on strike in the province against poverty wages at Dalhousie University.

The strikes in Nova Scotia occur as over 55,000 school support workers in Ontario, members of the Canadian Union of Public Employees, were set to begin a strike this coming Friday. However, in an unprecedented move that has raised the anger of the low paid workers to a boiling point, the provincial Conservative government of Premier Doug Ford has moved to outlaw the strike even before it has begun in order to impose a contract on the workers that cuts real wages deeply.



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