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Strikes in the U.S.: Actors, Street Sweepers, and Others Join the Fray

By: Arnaldo Musa / Cubasi  
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For more than 40 years there has not been a strike movement in the United States, where the state of California has been the most prominent in this fight to claim legitimate interests in the face of neglect and abuse by the most powerful strata.

If something has attracted attention, it's the strike that has paralyzed Hollywood for months, in an action that began with the strike of screenwriters and writers demanding better wages and has been followed since July by more than 170,000 actors in support of their colleagues and demanding better conditions in general, alleging that it's necessary to hurt the pockets of those who become millionaires on the work of others, the owners of film companies.

The movement today is not linked to interests in which the mafia practically led the union movement, such as when the thug boss Sam Giancana took advantage of singer Frank Sinatra's debts so that he managed certain favorable conditions for crime with his friend and then candidate President John F. Kennedy in exchange for some 150,000 votes from AFLACIO workers.

The mobster complied, but John didn't, pressured by his brother Robert, and Sinatra was left in the middle, death-threatened by Giancana, who later repented "because, he confessed, he could not kill such a beautiful voice." Days later, an unidentified person murdered Giancana as he was getting a shave at a New York barbershop.

But the current movement has other characteristics, and the Hollywood strike was joined by another strike of more than 11,000 Los Angeles municipal workers, including garbage collectors, gardeners, hotel employees, and first responders, represented by the SEIU Local Union 721.

Municipal workers are demanding that city authorities create new jobs since the widespread staff shortages have pushed employees to the limit of their capacity. The strike paralyzed a number of operations, including garbage collection and services at LA International Airport.

Previously, thousands of hotel employees, receptionists and chefs in LA had gone on a three-day strike to demand their wages and benefits, and since then they have carried out other days of strike.

So far this year, more than 320,000 U.S. workers have gone on strike, 75% more than on the same date in 2022.

In recent weeks, workers from the logistics company UPS (Untad Porcel Servicio), represented by the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, were on the verge of a national strike, before the company offered an agreement that is still under discussion among employees. Auto workers and waiters have also gone on strike, and others have threatened to do so.

The aforementioned strike taking place in Los Angeles comes after a "bad faith bargain" by city administrators, according to statements by David Green, head of the SEIU Local 721 union, in which he said that officials conducted negotiations with such administrators who don't have the necessary authorization to make decisions. The union is scheduled to meet with city managers at the negotiation table next week, Green said.

Obviously, this wave of strikes begins to encourage different sectors to step forward, and continues to inspire millions of workers to take strike action and solidarity between unions, in order to fight for their own interests.

### RECOLLECTION

The more than 11,000 striking city workers represent the unwillingness of L.A. City to pay workers enough to survive and force one worker to do the work of three people.

Such a move by SEIU 721 comes as workers in the Writers Union (WGA) and Actors Union (SAG-AFTRA) are currently on strike, thousands of hotel workers went on strike through UNITE HERE and were brutally repressed days ago on the picket line.

UPS workers across the country are debating their provisional agreement. While city workers in Los Angeles are fighting for higher wages, the LAPD took them in without making a claim and is currently paid close to 60% of the budget.

The repression of the workers, the homeless and protesters is the priority of Democrats and Republicans who run the city government. Workers even shut down Los Angeles International Airport, the second largest airport in the U.S., showing the workers' willingness to go on the offensive.

Workers are demanding better working conditions, updated contracts due to the arrival of new technologies, and delayed compensation due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

This week, the International Brotherhood of Truckers, known as Teamsters, reached a tentative agreement with UPS days before a nationwide strike was to break out. The carriers were seeking higher wages, full-time positions and air-conditioned vehicles, among other benefits.

The already prominent actors' strike from the SAG-AFTRA union, which began on July 14, has joined the strike by Hollywood scriptwriters, halting or delaying numerous film and television productions. In July, nearly 3,000 Starbucks workers in the United States protested the decision to remove LGBTQ decorations from stores during the Pride Month.

Companies like Amazon and McDonald's have also seen minor strikes this year. Labor relations experts warn that a new dispute could break out next September, when the union contracts of 150,000 General Motors and Ford employees expire.

It's really striking the awakening of the working class in a nation that has experienced decades of weakness before the powerful business class and the instruments of repression that it has historically used to decapitate the labor movement.

But this requires a more detailed and extensive explanation in which the absence of a strong socialist movement, a great driving force in other nations, has a lot to do with it.

**Translated by Amilkal Labañino / CubaSí Translation Staff**

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