Argentine Labor Confederation Promotes Labor Stoppages

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by LADB Staff
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Since mid-October the General Labor Confederation (CGT) has been organizing or supporting work stoppages in several private and public industries throughout the country. At this time, however, labor conflicts are concentrated in the public sector, principally in the areas of health and education. The CGT has been instrumental in articulating protests against the government's social welfare and economic policies, arguing that the welfare of Argentine workers is being sacrificed to foreign banks and insensitive business and government elites.

The CGT organized a series of work stoppages in Buenos Aires and provincial capitals from Oct. 14 to Oct. 30. Reports by news agencies NOTICIAS ARGENTINAS and ADYN (Deportes y Noticias) were rather sketchy in terms of the participation of private sector workers in the strikes and demonstrations.

In contrast, the involvement of teachers at all levels of the education system and hospital employees throughout the country was widely reported. Oct. 27: Spokespersons for the Confederation of Education Workers (Confederacion de Trabajadores de la Educacion-CTERA) told ADYN that labor conflicts are being "aggravated," while teacher unions in nine provinces were participating in work stoppages and other actions to demand better salaries. University professors are expected to suspend November exams if the government does not meet their demands.

At a press conference in Buenos Aires the CTERA reiterated its support for a strike in force until Oct. 29 involving all union entities at the primary, secondary and university levels. The strike was organized by the Argentine Teachers Union (Union Docentes Argentinos-UDA), the National University Teachers Confederation (Confederacion Nacional de Docentes Universitarios-CONADU), the Ministerial Association of Technical Instruction (Asociacion del Ministerio de Ensenanza Tecnica-AMET), and the Association of Secondary and Higher Education Teachers (Asociacion de Educadores de Ensenanza Media y Superior-ADEMYS).

The objective of the work stoppages was to demand salary increases, as well as bringing teacher salaries to comparable levels throughout the nation's provinces. Public health employees completed the first day of a 72-hour work stoppage, and discussed plans for extending the strike until Nov. 3. According to union sources in Buenos Aires, the national public hospital system will enter into chaos if the strike is continued throughout the weekend.

Oct. 29: The Asociacion Judicial Bonaerense realized a four-hour work stoppage in protest of the reported failure by the federal government to distribute judiciary funding as designated by law. Spokespersons for the judiciary employees also announced a 24-hour strike to take place the following day. Delegates from several public health sectors met in Buenos Aires to discuss the organization of a 96-hour work stoppage.
Meanwhile, government officials in Buenos Aires under the leadership of Labor Minister Hugo Barrionuevo continued to announce the possibility of declaring such actions illegal in order to avoid complete "chaos" in public hospitals.

On Nov. 1 demonstrations in downtown Buenos Aires and several provincial capitals are scheduled to take place to demand budget increases for all levels of the national education system. The demonstration and subsequent meetings were being organized by the National Confederation of University Teachers (Confederacion Nacional de Docentes Universitarios-CONADU), the Union of Workers and Employees of the Education Ministry (Sindicato de Obreros y Empleados del Ministerio de Educacion-SOEME), affiliates of the Argentine University Federation (FUA), National University Workers (Trabajadores de Universidades Nacionales-FATUN), and organizations of secondary and university students. (Basic data from ADYN, 10/28/86)

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