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# Brazil: Workers Continue To Fight Back Against Government Austerity Policy

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## **Brazil: Workers Continue To Fight Back Against Government Austerity Policy**

*by John Neagle*

*Category/Department: General*

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On April 20, 700,000 private bank employees demanding higher wages walked off the job, one day after the government announced that wages frozen since Jan. 15 would be raised 15.8%. The bank employees joined an estimated 2 million workers on strike in key industries, including ports, steel mills and chemical plants. Bank employees demanded a 129% pay hike, while steel workers in Sao Paulo's industrial belt want an 88% increase. Walkouts in April numbered 600, after 470 in March and 200 in February. On April 20, Army Minister Leonidas Pires Goncalves said the military would intervene "if the law is- broken." Also on Thursday, business daily Gazeta Mercantil called on the government to put the finishing touches on strike laws included in the constitution approved in October. The document guarantees the right to strike in all sectors, but legislators have yet to define rules for walkouts in essential industries. The Gazeta said the lack of legislation served as a stimulus for workers to walk off the job. (Basic data from AFP, 04/20/89)

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