

Puerto Rico: Strike at Switzerland Dairy

written by Berta Joubert-Ceci
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Workers picketing Switzerland Dairy.

In Puerto Rico, being a colony, each of our struggles has several ramifications and consequences. A simple strike conflict can become a real national conflict. This is the case of the strike of the Suiza Dairy workers who have been demonstrating since June 11.

Suiza Dairy is one of the three milk processing companies in Puerto Rico. But unlike the other two, since 2002, it has been managed by a Peruvian foreign capital group, the Gloria Group.

The workforce is represented by the Central General de Trabajadores, the CGT, which in 2013 signed a collective bargaining agreement with the company, but the part of the company's contributions to the medical plan were left pending to be negotiated later. It should be noted that due to the privatization of the healthcare system, the cost of medical care in Puerto Rico has increased significantly.

Now, when it was time to resume these negotiations, the Company stepped back and refused to negotiate in good faith. It asked for more time and instead of submitting a counter offer, it shut down operations and laid off 483 workers.

So since then, the union has been demonstrating daily in front of the plant. La Suiza, for its part, by laying off its workers, stopped delivering fresh milk, especially to the most distant and mountainous places.

The most sinister objective in this conflict is that they are trying to replace fresh milk with UHT, or ultra-pasteurized milk, which lasts longer and can, therefore, be imported instead of produced locally. This would destroy the dairy industry, one of the few we have left in this colony. They already did it with the poultry industry when gringo companies flooded the country with chickens and eggs from the United States at very cheap prices and thus killed local production.

But besides the CGT, other organizations and the people are joining the picket lines

and the struggle for food sovereignty.

Berta Joubert-Ceci on Radio Clarín de Colombia from Puerto Rico.

Source: [Struggle-La Lucha](#), translation [Resumen Latinoamericano - English](#)

