

Workers Struggles: Europe and Africa

18 May 2000

Irish hospital doctors set to strike

Irish non-consultant hospital doctors (NCHDs) were set to strike May 17 for 24 hours in a dispute over a new contract. A further two-day strike is to be held next week. The Irish Medical Organisation (IMO) called the action following talks on a new contract with the Health Service Employers' Agency and the Labour Relations Commission. The main issue in dispute concerns full overtime rates for NCHDs, which employers are refusing to guarantee. The Health Service Employers' Agency plans to introduce a shift system for NCHDs, but the IMO stated that "Until such time as management come up with realistic proposals to reduce doctors' working hours, proper overtime rates will need to be reviewed."

Ford UK workers may strike, union warns

Ford workers at its biggest UK factory have threatened strike action in opposition to the recent company announcement that it will close its assembly plant in Dagenham in 2002. Some 1,900 jobs will be lost on closure, but the unions argue that the total number would be nearer to 5,000. Discussions were continuing this week on what action, if any, should be taken.

Power workers threaten to strike in Mozambique

About 900 workers at the Cahora Bassa dam and hydroelectric complex have threatened strike action. They are demanding that Mozambican workers should enjoy the same rights as foreign workers at the plant, and are also calling for the sacking of company Chairman Hermenegildo Gamito, who is a member of parliament for the ruling FRELIMO party.

Meetings between the board of directors and the company's Trade Union Committee have so far failed to resolve the issue, and workers have reiterated their determination to strike. Portugal owns more than 80 percent of the Cahora company.

Radio Mozambique reported that if the strike goes ahead there will be a risk of flooding in the Zambezi

valley, and neighbouring Zimbabwe may be deprived of electricity.

Moroccan journalists strike over democratic rights

Members of the National Union of the Moroccan Press carried out an hour-long work stoppage Tuesday, May 16 in protest against the suppression of press freedom and the right to voice opinions. In a press release, the union denounced "repeated acts of aggression against journalists, the banning of several national and foreign publications and the condemnation of two journalists."

The two, Mustapha Alaoui and Khalid Mechbal, were charged with defamation in two separate trials by the foreign minister, Mohamed Benaissa. They received suspended jail sentences of three and six months respectively and are not allowed to work as journalists for the next three months and one month respectively. They were also fined heavily.



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