Workers Struggles: Europe & Africa

17 August 2000

Refuse collectors in east London set to strike

Refuse collectors in east London have voted to take strike action this week in protest against job losses. This follows Hackney council's decision to lay off 40 of its 240 refuse staff. The council announced the redundancies after it tendered out the refuse contract to Service Team, a private company.

The three main unions involved—Unison, the GMB and the TGWU, have sanctioned the industrial action. The unions plan a two-day strike next week, followed by another two-day stoppage and a weeklong strike at the beginning of September.

Industrial action by the workers would affect some 190,000 residents in east London.

Eurotunnel train drivers vote to ban overtime

Eurotunnel train drivers have voted for an overtime ban from August 20 in a dispute over union recognition. The workers, members of the train drivers union Aslef, voted by 110 to 7 to ban overtime.

The union represents more than 200 of the 260 drivers who operate Eurotunnel car and freight shuttles between Folkestone in Kent and Calais, France.

Aslef said that it would meet with management over the next week in a bid to end the dispute. A union spokesman said, “We expect the action to cause delays, but we are hoping that the ban can be avoided by the staging of more talks in the next few days.”

UK hospital workers strike in opposition to privatisation

On August 15 over 550 hospital workers walked off the job at four hospitals in the West Midlands, England in a dispute over privatisation. The staff, support and ancillary workers at the four-strong Dudley Group of hospitals plan to strike until August 18. The strike led to the postponement of 31 operations by hospital authorities. Major surgery was unaffected by the strike.

The public sector workers union, Unison, called the action in response to staff opposition to their National Health Service contracts being transferred to a private company.

Brewery workers in Ireland begin balloting for industrial action

Last week 2,500 workers employed by the Guinness brewery began balloting for industrial action. The ballot issued by unions specifies two options if workers vote to strike—an all-out stoppage from September 15 or a number of one-day strikes.

The action is in protest at Guinness's plan to shed 290 jobs at its Dundalk plants—Dundalk Packaging and Dundalk Brewing. The company intends to lay off packaging staff in September and brewing workers by next June. Guinness has also warned that there could be further redundancies at its operations in Dublin, Kilkenny and Waterford. The company and unions are to have further talks with the Labour Relations Commission.

Irish building workers end strike over pay

Construction workers at Croke Park stadium in Dublin ended their 24-hour stoppage on August 11. The 100 workers involved in the rebuilding of stands at the site struck over non-payment of overdue wages. They returned to work after accepting a new “substantial” offer from management.

Cable workers strike in South Africa

Workers at the Cable Corporation Lugazi went on strike last Friday demanding an increase on their salaries and protesting the failure of the company to pay their six months advance. The workers camped outside the factory after management reneged on an agreed wage rise. The workers are also protesting the harsh conditions in the factory and management's refusal to give assistance to workers who get sick while at work.

Miners strike in Zimbabwe

Around one third of Zimbabwe's 60,000 miners went on strike Monday to press for a pay claim. Among the mines affected are the two biggest gold producers, Freda-Rebecca and Renco, the biggest nickel mine,

© World Socialist Web Site

Shangani, and nickel processing plant Empress.

The government declared the strike illegal, following a ruling by an arbitrator and said work must resume within the next 24 hours. The Minister of Mines, July Moyo, ordered the miners to go back to work or face dismissal.

To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact

© World Socialist Web Site