

# Workers Struggles: Europe and Africa

27 October 2000

## French airline pilots continue strike over 35-hour week

A strike by airline pilots in France entered its third day on October 22. The national airline Air France was forced to cancel around 100 of its 1,300 daily flights due to the stoppage. The action has affected domestic and medium-range flights and was set to last for four days.

The dispute, over the implementation of the 35-hour working week in the airline industry was called by the four minor pilots' trade unions. The main SNPL pilots' union is not supporting the action.

The conflict between the pilots and the airline authorities has developed over a number of months and the latest action is the fifth protest over the 35-hour week at Air France in as many months.

## Scottish council workers reject new pay offer

On October 23, Council workers in Scotland voted to reject a new pay offer by the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA). In a ballot organised by the public sector trade union, Unison, the members of its 32 council branches have rejected the offer of a 6.1 percent pay rise over two years. In total 68 percent of Unison members rejected the new deal.

Following the ballot the union said that there would be "selective action" involving small groups of workers who would be called out for an indefinite strike. No date has yet been set for strike action and the union must give COSLA seven days notice to strike.

In recent months, schools and other local government services such as refuse collection and social work have been hit by a series of one-day stoppages involving council workers. Some 80,000 workers took part in the action.

## Russian teachers call off blockade but not the strike

Teachers in the Altai Republic in the Russian Federation, have ended their blockade of a highway leading to Mongolia. The staff were protesting against

the local authorities over unpaid wages. The teachers have made clear they will continue with their strike, which began on October 2, if the issue is not resolved soon. The Altai President, Semen Zyubakin, has promised to repay some of the teachers' wages in the future.

## South African petrol attendants step up pickets

Petrol attendants are to step up their pickets at service stations after talks on their demands for a 13 percent pay rise failed again last Thursday, the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (Numsa) said. Negotiations continue on Friday.

The attendant's demands included a wage increase of 13 percent across the board and a minimum wage of R7 per hour (just less than a US dollar) for all petrol attendants, who now earned a minimum of R4.03 in urban areas and R3.10 in rural areas. Numsa have not declared an official strike.

## Teachers strike for release of student leaders in Burkina Faso

The National Union of Teachers and Researchers (SYNTER) embarked on a 72-hour strike with effect from Wednesday this week to obtain the "immediate" release of imprisoned students. Those arrested include the president of the National Students Association of Burkina (ANEB), Souleymane Kologo, along with some of his colleagues. Over 20 students were arrested last Wednesday, as they were about to meet secondary school students to discuss issues related to the closure of the University of Ouagadougou by the government.

The teachers plan to organise a protest march followed by a meeting on Saturday in Ouagadougou to force the government to meet their demands.



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