

Workers Struggles: Europe and Africa

19 October 2000

Italian transport workers continue strikes over contracts

Bus, tram and subway train drivers took strike action throughout Italy on October 12. The action was in protest at the failure of their employees to agree terms on a new contract.

In Milan more than two-thirds of bus and tram workers participated in the stoppage, leading to widespread traffic jams in the city. As well as bus and tramway employees, local train drivers also struck in Rome. Train drivers unions said that there could be more strikes this week if progress is not made.

Aer Lingus cabin crew staff strike over pay

Aer Lingus cabin crew in Ireland struck for 24 hours on October 17 in a pay dispute. The action halted 2,000 scheduled flights and stranded more than 20,000 passengers. Aer Lingus estimated that the strike cost IR£2m in lost revenue. The airports at Dublin, Cork and Shannon were all affected by the stoppage.

The strike was organised by the Impact trade union, which has called on the Labour Relations Commission to intervene. Impact said that further industrial action might take place next week unless talks with management were resumed.

The SIPTU trade union, which represents about a third of cabin crew and about 3,000 general operatives, instructed its members to cross picket lines during the strike.

In another dispute baggage handlers and other staff have threatened to strike this week to continue their campaign against low pay.

Social workers in Ireland plan strike action

Social workers in Londonderry, Ireland plan to strike on October 18. The strike has been called by the NIPSA trade union. The workers are to hold two half-day strikes, after complaining of being overworked. They say that children in their care are suffering because of a lack of qualified social workers and resources.

The staff are employed by the Foyle Health & Social Services Trust and have rejected its offer to create six new posts. Eileen Webster, a spokeswoman for the union said, "We carried out widespread consultation with our members, who say that at least 16 new posts are needed for them to be able to carry out their statutory requirements."

The Foyle Trust has requested that Health Minister Bairbre de Brun intervene in the dispute. As part of the campaign the staff have stated that they will withdraw a number of other services and work to rule.

Land Rover workers strike in England

On October 17, Land Rover production workers took strike action at the company's Solihull plant in the West Midlands. Hundreds of workers walked off the job in a longstanding dispute over holiday pay.

The plant is the main UK factory of Land Rover, which is owned by Ford. The strike action led to the loss of 100 Freelander models from the normal 350 units produced each day. The dispute centres on how workers "bank" their holiday hours. Land Rover management is now in negotiations with unions representing the workforce.

Nigerian bank workers demand minimum wage

Thousands of members of Nigeria's National Union of Banks, Insurance and Financial Institution Employees (NUBIFIE) began strike action October 17. The strike was solid in most parts of the country, including in the insurance sector, with only a few banks remaining open in the capital Lagos. Union leaders were calling for the involvement of the Nigeria Labour Congress in attempting to negotiate a settlement.

Lagos State attempts to halt education strike

Academic and non-academic staff have been on strike for the last two months in the tertiary education sector in Lagos State, Nigeria over the non-implementation of the Harmonised Tertiary Institutions Salary Structure IV (HATISS IV).

Special adviser on education to the Lagos State

Governor, Dr. Idowu Shobowale, said that a commitment that the HATISS IV would be paid soon was made last week and asked the staff to call off their action. Whilst the salary structure is put forward at federal (national) level, Shobowale said that the Federal Government does not give financial backing to State governments to pay its staff on some of its pronouncements and the state had the right to negotiate pay levels.

Nigerian Doctors Continue Strike

Doctors belonging to the National Association of Resident Doctors (NARD) have said they will continue their two month old strike and would not “succumb to threats of the sack and other forms of blackmail and intimidation”. NARD is the umbrella body for resident doctors in Nigeria's specialist and tertiary hospitals. The doctors are demanding implementation of allowances agreed by the interministerial committee on reviewing allowances of medical/health professionals. They are also demanding the payment of salary arrears and a 50 percent increase in call-duty and clinical supplementation allowances, as well as payment of salaries withheld during the strike of December 1998 to March 1999.



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