

Workers Struggles: Europe & Africa

11 November 2005

Europe

Seat auto workers in Spain strike against job losses

Workers at the auto manufacturer Seat at its Barcelona and Martorell factories took 24-hour strike action on November 9 to protest job cuts. The company, owned by Germany's Volkswagen, plans to shed 1,340 jobs or 8 percent of its workforce.

Seat is imposing the cuts as part of a restructuring programme and has been in negotiation with trade unions over the cuts. The company employs about 16,000 people in northeast Spain and manufactures several cars, including the Altea, Cordoba and Toledo models. It has cited increasing competition from auto plants in eastern Europe as the reason for the cuts.

Cleaners at Britain's parliament hold second strike in pay dispute

On November 9, cleaners at the Houses of Parliament in London held a second strike in a dispute over pay. The stoppage involved 140 workers who have been in dispute with their employers since July. The workers are members of the Transport and General Workers' Union.

The cleaners are calling for a pay increase from £5.20 an hour to £6.70, and provision for sick pay and pension entitlements.

Bus drivers in northwest England continue dispute

Bus drivers in Staffordshire and Cheshire held their seventh strike on November 7 in an ongoing dispute over pay and conditions. The drivers employed by First Bus are demanding pay parity with First drivers in other parts of the UK.

First has offered a pay deal of £6.60 an hour. The drivers rejected this as it is tied to changes in working conditions. Further strikes are scheduled for November 19 and 21 if the dispute is not resolved.

Africa

Nigerian doctors and health care workers strike

Doctors and health care workers in Nigerian

government hospitals of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) have been on indefinite strike since October 28 over the non-payment of allowances and benefits.

They are demanding the government honour the repayment of arrears of the 22 percent increase on basic salaries that was agreed between the Health and Human Services Secretariat and the Joint Action Committee (JAC). The agreement was made following weeklong strike action by doctors, nurses and other public health professionals in September.

Health workers allege that the FCT administration defaulted on the agreement and strike action was resumed on October 28.

Congolese teachers end month-long strike

Unions representing Congolese teachers, who have been on strike for more than five weeks, have negotiated an end to the action and called for a return to work.

The strike began on October 3 to press for a series of demands, included freeing up funds from the 2006 budget and integrating voluntary teachers with the civil service.

An umbrella organisation made up of the eight teacher unions, Le College Syndical des Enseignants, has warned that if the demands are not met they will call another strike next March 6.



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