

# Workers Struggles: Europe & Africa

11 August 2006

## Europe

### State broadcasting employees in Macedonia strike

Staff at the Macedonian national broadcaster MRT took strike action on August 7 in a dispute over overdue wages, food bonus and pension contributions for November and December 2005. The strike continued for two days.

The industrial action began following a breakdown in talks between MRT executive Gordana Stosic and workers representatives. The employees are demanding that Stosic and the managerial board are punished for alleged mismanagement of the public broadcaster over the past four years.

Following the commencement of the industrial action Stosic offered her resignation, which was accepted by the MRT board.

On August 9, MRT announced that it could settle one of the wage claims by August 31 and that further negotiations could be organised to settle other outstanding unpaid pay claims. This offer was rejected by the MRT staff.

### Refuse workers continue industrial action in north London

A refuse workers strike in north London entered its second week on August 8. The 48 striking workers, members of the Transport and General Workers' union, are in dispute with Haringey Accord, which runs waste collection in Haringey. The dispute began in July, 2005 over proposals by the firm to remove two trucks from rounds and split the work between remaining crews.

Since the start of the industrial action rubbish bins belonging to 95,000 residents have gone unemptied, with rubbish piling up throughout north London.

The TGWU said that Haringey Accord had offered staff £1,450 each to take on the extra work, but that this was rejected. A union spokesman said "to complete the workloads that the company wishes to impose on us, would mean the crews would have to be running. They would have to run, literally, around the beats to

facilitate the work they want us to do".

The company said that it needs to implement the plan to make "efficiency savings" as part of its contract with Haringey Council.

### Nurses in County Limerick, Ireland protest lock out

On August 9 seven nurses employed by the Maria Goretti Nursing Home in Kilmallock, County Limerick, Ireland picketed their workplace after being locked out.

Last week the workers had been involved in protesting the dismissal of a colleague. Upon returning to work on August 6 and 7, "they were informed by their employer that there was no work available for them" according to a representative of the SIPTU trade union. Upon further investigation they found that the company had replaced their jobs with five new workers.

## Africa

### South African striking shopworkers reject company's "final" offer

Shopworkers employed by Shoprite Checkers in South Africa are continuing their strike in spite of the company's claim that it has made its final offer in pay negotiations.

According to *SABC News* the union involved, the South African Commercial Catering and Allied Workers Union (Saccawu), said the workers had rejected an offer of a R265 (\$US39) per month pay rise, and an increase in the minimum monthly pay to R1,800 (\$US265). Saccawu is demanding a pay increase of R300 (\$US44) or ten percent, whichever is the greater.

Picketing of Shoprite premises has been continuing since July 18, when the shopworkers first went out on strike to oppose the company's intended wage offer. The company has said that it would impose the pay increase on August 8, regardless of the strike.

### South African transport workers strike

Transport workers at 11 bus depots owned by Great North Transport (GNT) in Limpopo, South Africa,

started strike action on August 8 as part of their campaign to win a wage increase of 2.7 percent. The strikers are members of the SA Transport and Allied Workers Union (Satawu) and the Transport and Allied Workers Union (Tawu).

### **Gambian cleaners strike over poor pay and conditions**

Gambian local council workers at the Cleansing Service Department in Banjul walked out on strike on August 3, to protest against their low pay and difficult conditions of work. The workers want protective clothing to use when they are at work.

Dodou Jarjue, a member of the BCC Cleansing Service Committee who is acting as a spokesperson for the strikers, told the *Point* newspaper that their average income is just D600 (\$US22.35) per month. He said that this was not enough to cover normal family expenses, let alone medical bills and the like, which are not paid by the employer.



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