

Workers Struggles: Europe

27 April 2007

Scandinavian Airlines staff stage unofficial strike

On April 24, cabin crew at Scandinavian Airlines staged unofficial strike action over working conditions. By the second day, the company had been forced to cancel more than 280 flights to and from Copenhagen Airport. An estimated 20,000 passengers were left stranded as a result.

Scandinavian Airlines denounced the strike as illegal and threatened the Danish Cabin Attendants Union with legal action if the strike was not called off. On April 25, the Danish Labour Court ruled that the strike was illegal.

According to the company, the strike is costing it an estimated 20 million kroner (euro 2.7 million; US\$3.7 million) a day. SAS is the joint flag carrier airline of Denmark, Sweden, and Norway. Norwegian and Swedish cabin crew were not involved in the dispute.

On Wednesday, officials of the Danish Cabin Attendants Union met with management representatives in an attempt to end the strike. The talks ended without an agreement. On Thursday, the strike entered its third day with the airline cancelling about 100 departures. Around half of flights between Kastrup and Stockholm were cancelled.

Bus drivers in Amsterdam strike

Bus drivers in the Amsterdam region of the Netherlands began partial industrial action on April 23 in a pay dispute. Buses ran in the rush hour but stopped between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. each day. During the stoppages, drivers did not check passengers' tickets.

During the evening of the first day of the strike, management and trade union representatives resumed negotiations and reached agreement on a pay deal. Initial reports stated that the workers would be awarded a pay increase and that bonuses would be increased by 3 percent.

Caterers at Virgin Trains in Liverpool strike

More than 70 Virgin Trains catering workers employed at Liverpool Lime Street station in the

northwest of England took one-day strike action on April 2. The workers are in dispute with the company to demand the reinstatement of three co-workers, including a representative of the Rail, Maritime & Transport Workers Union (RMT).

The union accused management of Virgin of using "trumped-up charges" and "management intimidation" against staff.

According to the union, in an attempt to break the strike Virgin manned trains out of Liverpool with managers who acted as chefs and stewards. Some of the managers do not possess a food hygiene certificate. The RMT said that among the managers staffing trains were the investigating officer from the disciplinary process, the dismissing officer and a Virgin press officer.

Bus drivers in Belgium protest sacking of union representative

Drivers at the Haren Bus Depot in Brussels, Belgium, carried out a wildcat strike on April 20 and 21 after workers were informed that a man had been sacked after being accused by management of falsifying an expenses claim for hours spent on union tasks. Management alleges he was effectively paid twice.

The walkout led to about half of all services from the depot being cancelled. According to management,

one in six buses across the city were affected, particularly bus line 12 linking Brussels to the airport.

Following talks with management, the CGSP union refused to support the strike. Instead it stated that contract legislation did not allow for wildcat strikes.

Workers at Siemens AG plant in Wuerzburg, Germany, protest planned sale of plant

On April 21, several hundred employees at Siemens AG's VDO plant in Wuerzburg, Germany, staged a protest against the possible sale of the factory. According to the IG Metall trade union, the firm is planning to sell the operation to the German car part supplier Brose.



To contact the WSWs and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact