

Workers Struggles: Europe & Africa

2 May 2008

Europe

Workers strike at Airbus plants in France

A four-hour strike against restructuring, involving five unions, hit production at Airbus factories in France on April 24.

Airbus, owned by European aerospace group EADS, dropped plans to sell some of its factories in Germany to an outside investor but is continuing with plans to sell two of its three factories in France.

Output was disrupted at Airbus headquarters in Toulouse, as well as at two plants due to be sold to aerospace supplier Latecoere St Nazaire—Ville in western France and Meaulte in northern France. According to the unions, around 500 workers gathered in front of the Bouguenais site near Nantes, 300 at the St.-Nazaire site and 800 at Gron, in Loire-Atlantique, western France.

French unions have objected to the plans, saying French and German plants should be “treated equally.” They have asked to meet with EADS chairman Louis Gallois. They are also demanding that the plans to sell the plants be withdrawn.

Strike over pay and conditions at Irish care home

According to the *Donegal News* on April 25, a strike notice has been served on the owners of a nursing home in Milford over pay and working conditions.

The 16 care assistants in the nursing home are represented by the SIPTU trade union.

SIPTU branch organiser Martin O’Rourke said he was “bitterly disappointed” the company had failed to discuss issues of concern for more than three months. “After 21 years of social partnership we have now been forced to engage in threatening strike action to ensure the collective voices are heard in the workplace. These committed workers who care for the old and vulnerable in our society have very reluctantly decided that unless they are able to secure reasonable improvements in their terms and conditions of employment they will engage in strike action.”

Africa

Namibian uranium miners on go-slow

Hundreds of employees at the Rössing uranium mine in Arandis, Namibia, held a 12-hour strike and a two-day go-slow starting on April 23. The Mineworkers Union of Namibia (MUN) said that the cause of the go-slow was that Rössing had changed the salary structure without informing the union.

Operations were closed down on the day of the strike, but Rössing initially claimed this was due to maintenance work. Around 400 workers had refused to enter the mine and had demanded that the company change its pay structure, according to the *Namibia Economist*. Rössing then went to the courts and got the strike declared illegal. Operations resumed late on April 24.

Nigerian oil workers’ strike enters second week

A strike by Nigerian employees of Exxon-Mobil entered its second week on April 29. The strike has stopped the operations of Nigeria’s largest oil producer and has reduced the country’s oil production by around half.

Mobil Producing Nigeria (MPN), a subsidiary of Exxon-Mobil, has been forced to halt all production. The striking workers want a 25 percent increase in pay, better working conditions, including the replacement of old pipelines, and pensions brought into line with the 2004 Pensions Act. Management has offered a pay rise of 10 percent.

MPN is the second largest oil company operating in Nigeria after Shell. The Nigerian minister for labour has intervened in the strike, pressuring the workers to go back to work.

Nigerian lecturers on strike over dismissals

Nigerian lecturers are taking strike action for the second time in recent weeks over the dismissal of 49 of their colleagues from the University of Ilorin in 2001. The current strike is affecting the holding of examinations, such as those at the University of

Calabar.

“After waiting for such a long time without anything positive happening, we have no option other than to begin the second warning strike,” said the chairman of Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) at the University of Calabar.

Students appealed to the government to bring an end to the strikes by reinstating the dismissed teachers.



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