

Workers Struggles: Europe & Africa

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The World Socialist Web Site invites workers and other readers to contribute to this regular feature.

London City Airport staff ballot over strike

The workforce at London's City Airport is to be balloted for possible industrial action, to take place next month, in a dispute over pay and conditions. Pay for ground staff has been frozen since 2008.

The workers are employed by an agency and provide check-in services for CityJet, Air France and KLM flights.

UK train cleaners to strike over pay and pensions

Train cleaning staff employed by Mitie at Swansea High Street Station and Cardiff Central Station on First Great Western trains are to take a further 24-hour strike February 25-26, after a vote of 100 percent in favour of taking action in a dispute over payment of wages, pensions and a communication breakdown.

The dispute has concerned wage discrepancies and a protracted lack of pension contributions by First Great Western Cleaning Contractor Mitie, on behalf of workers employed at Swansea High Street and other depots.

Mitie, which recently announced a 12 percent increase in profits, prides itself as an "outsourcing specialist" buying up facilities contracts in both the private and public sectors.

Welsh auto plant workers protest over agency labour

Former employees at the TRW automotive parts manufacturing plant in Resolven, South Wales, who were made redundant due to the recent plant closure, protested February 15 outside the factory over the company's use of agency labour to

keep the plant running.

The company, which employed over 200 workers, has transferred its operations from Resolven to a plant in Germany. The workers have planned further protests.

Spanish paper workers strike over pay and conditions

Paper workers across Spain began strikes February 3 over futile year-long bargaining that has left them nothing in a dispute over wages and an adverse pay structure that employers are trying to impose.

The workers are to take a 24-hour action March 3. The bargaining between International Federation of Chemical, Energy, Mine and General Workers' Union affiliates FIA-UGT and FSC-CCOO and the employers' grouping, Aspapel, is for 2010-2012 national sector talks and covers 17,500 workers at around 120 mills and plants.

The dispute also concerns what are seen as Aspapel's aggressive methods to casualise work rules, and workers not receiving a pay rise in 2010.

Finnish security workers strike looms

A three-day strike is to begin March 2 at the security company Securitas in protest at what the union claims is the company's deliberate efforts to complicate collective bargaining negotiations over changes to the pay system.

The previous collective agreement for the industry expired January 31 and affected around 7,000 employees.

Ann Selin, the president of Service Union United (PAM), said, "The company has interrogated and put pressure on employees and shop stewards who have participated in industrial action. Securitas has also sent its employees a message where it urges them to leave PAM and to search for an alternative to it."

The union declared an overtime ban for the whole security industry from February 16.

Dublin hotel staff protest wage reduction

Low-paid migrant staff employed at the Davenport Hotel in Dublin mounted pickets February 20 after being taken off the roster for refusing to sign new contracts reducing their national minimum wage rate (€8.65 an hour) by almost €1 an hour.

The female workers, who are from Lithuania and Poland and have worked at the Davenport Hotel for between four and six years, refused to sign the new contracts on February 1 when the new legislation came into force and have been removed from the payroll ever since.

The SIPTU union served strike notice on the hotel February 9.

The hotel workers have been brought into three meetings over the past three weeks and repeatedly told they must sign the new contracts, or face being taken off the roster. They were not given a copy of the new contract, either in English or in their own languages.

Botswana: Striking workers sacked

Around 70 workers employed by the leading pre-fabricated concrete products firm Kwena Rocia have been sacked. They went on strike last week, seeking redress against poor conditions, unpaid back pay and protesting the breakdown of relations with management.

The workers were sacked Monday following the two-day strike. The company, which employs around 200, had previously warned it would cut back the workforce due to the recession and lack of government orders. Workers accused the union of conspiring with management.

Botswana civil servants strike proposal

Botswana Federation of Trade Unions (BOFEPUSU) is proposing strike action in pursuit of a 16 percent pay increase for civil servants. BOFEPUSU acts as an umbrella group for five unions representing government employees, including teachers. The unions put forward their claim, but so far the government has refused negotiations.

Two member unions, the Botswana Government Workers Union and the Trade and Allied Workers Union, have already begun to distance themselves from the proposed strike. The federation is holding a series of meeting this week addressing workers throughout the country.

Solidarity action in support of Johannesburg Metrobus strikers

This week members of the South African Municipal Workers Union (SAMWU) in Johannesburg began a strike in support of Metrobus workers. The bus workers have been on strike for two weeks in opposition to newly imposed shift schedules.

The union had pressed for Johannesburg mayor Amos Masondo to intervene to resolve the strike. Following his refusal to do so, the union began solidarity action.

Widespread strikes across Nigeria's Plateau State

The central Nigerian Plateau State is embroiled in various ongoing strikes. Civil servants went on strike four weeks ago demanding payment of salary arrears and the implementation of a previously negotiated salary structure. Their action has begun to affect water services and waste management collection. Plateau state has a high concentration of civil servants, with around 20,000 employed.

They join the workers in state tertiary education institutions, on strike now for several months, who are demanding the implementation of an agreed salary structure.

Health sector workers, who had been on strike for the last four months, have currently suspended their strike to allow further discussions with the employers, but will resume if their demands are not met.



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