

Workers Struggles: Europe, Middle East & Africa

18 April 2014

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

Europe

Amazon workers in Germany walk out

Hundreds of workers employed by Amazon in Germany walked out last Thursday. It is the second walkout this year, and one of a series that began in April 2013 over pay.

The 24-hour strike involved workers employed by Amazon in Leipzig and Bad Hersfeld.

The Verdi union has called on Amazon to adopt collective bargaining agreements that are in place for the mail and retail sector in Germany. Amazon currently classifies them as logistic workers, who receive lower rates, and has refused to budge.

The company employs 9,000 permanent staff at its nine distribution centres in Germany, and 14,000 casuals.

UK health staff to be balloted over pay

Over 100,000 health workers in the National Health Service (NHS) covered by the public sector union UNISON are to be balloted over pay. UNISON health worker delegates in conference at Brighton, England voted Tuesday for the ballot.

The ballot is in response to the derisory one non-consolidated pay increase offered by the Conservative/Liberal Democrat coalition. This will be paid only to staff at the top of their incremental scale.

The remaining 60 percent of staff, which includes nurses, paramedics and support staff, will receive no increase. It comes after several years of pay freezes and mass job losses.

The largest union UNITE, which also represents health workers is still to decide whether it will ballot its members.

London care staff lobby over low pay

Over 400 employees working for the care company Outward, which operates in north and east London, lobbied the company's office in Tottenham last Friday. They care for people with severe learning difficulties and autism.

The company wants to cut pay, extend the working week and implement a restructure which staff say will lessen the effectiveness of the service.

Staff at London cinema hold walkout

Staff at the Ritzy cinema Brixton in London held a one-day strike Friday 11 April. They are demanding to be paid the so-called London living wage, currently set at £8.80 hour (\$14.80). They are currently paid £7.24 (\$12.20) an hour.

The popular Ritzy cinema is owned by Cineworld, the largest picture house chain in Europe.

Irish bus drivers threaten strike action

The National Bus and Railworkers' Union (NBRU) has threatened industrial action over plans by Dublin Bus and Bus Eireann to privatise 10 percent of its services if the companies failed to consult with the union. The threatened privatisation would lead to the loss of some 440 jobs.

Moldovan teachers hold week of protests

Teachers in Moldova held mass protests outside the parliament building every day last week. The union representing the teachers, the Education and Science Trade Union, is calling for a package of measures, including a 50 percent pay increase backdated to the beginning of the year.

In a bid to stop the action, Prime Minister Iurie Leanea pledged his government would find the resources to give teachers a 1 percent pay rise in May, but no further details are forthcoming.

Israeli pizza workers demonstrate over right to unionize

Staff working for Domino Pizza in Israel held protests last week in their campaign to form a union. One protest took place outside the house of company CEO Yossi Elbaz, and the other protest was held outside the Domino branch in Tel Aviv port.

Spokesman for the Domino workers, Tomer Shmukler, told press they were pushing for the formation of a union to be able to raise disputes over pension rights, overtime pay, recuperation pay and other issues.

Africa

Liberian health workers protest

Health workers protested with a nine-point petition at the assembly of health ministers in Monrovia, Liberia. They were protesting the atrocious conditions they have to work under, including working with no protective clothing when treating patients with infectious diseases, such as the recently emerged Ebola outbreak.

Although they deal with life-threatening diseases such as HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis, Lassa fever and Tuberculosis, as well as Ebola, they say they are the lowest paid in Liberian society. They added that they are overworked, working holidays, weekends and lunch breaks without overtime pay or any kind of benefits.

The nine-point plan presented by the National Health Workers Association of Liberia (NAHWAL) and the Private Health Workers Union of Liberia started with the call for reinstatement of the NAHWAL president and secretary sacked while negotiating for their members.

Other points called for a living wage, for contract staff (who make up the majority) to be brought onto the books, access to medication for all of society, death benefits for all those who die from Ebola infection through active service and the return of wrongly-deducted money.

Action by Nigerian teachers

Nigerian primary school teachers in the state of Kogi were protesting Tuesday over the non-payment of their wages for February and March. In addition leave and allowances have not been paid for three years. The teachers, members of the Basic Education Staff of Nigeria (BESAN) took their protest to the gates of State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB).

Last December, SUBEB had agreed that the minimum wage paid

to teachers, which then stood at 60 percent of the nationally agreed minimum wage passed into law, would be increased to the full amount by March, but they have not received any salary for February or March this year.

The Kogi State BESAN chairman also complained that teachers got promotion in 2009 but they did not receive any financial benefits, and had nothing to show for being screened on a yearly basis since 2011.

Strike of Kenyan civil servants in Kirinyaga County

Kenyan civil servants went on strike Monday after issuing a seven-day notice last week over pay. Kenyan National Union of Civil Servants branch secretary Paul Ndung'u said the 2,700 civil servants of Kirinyaga County are stressed and disappointed at the announcement by the county governor that there is no money to pay wages for April, May and June.

The branch secretary also said many of the civil servants haven't been paid for the last two months.

Ban on proposed march by trade unionists in Swaziland

A planned march on Saturday 12 April by trade unionist organized by the Trade Union Congress of Swaziland through the city of Manzini in central Swaziland was banned by the Manzini municipal council.

The march was to protest the proclamation by the Swazi King on 12 April in 1973, which made him absolute monarch and placed all executive, judicial and legislative functions in his hands.

Trade union rights and activities are severely curtailed under Swaziland's reactionary form of government.



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