

Workers Struggles: Europe, Middle East & Africa

30 October 2015

Further strikes planned by Irish train drivers

A three-hour rail strike on October 23 by drivers working for the Irish rail network Iarnrod Eireann is to be followed by another on Friday, November 6. Services Industrial Professional and Industrial Union (SIPTU) and the National Rail and Bus Union (NRBU) members took the action to fight for a pay rise to compensate for past productivity gains imposed on rail staff.

Talks between the unions and Irish Rail management mediated by the Workplace Relations Commission broke down on the eve of the strike. The two unions have announced they may consider further strikes. Irish rail management threatened to recoup costs of lost revenue resulting from the October 23 strike from any eventual settlement.

London light railway staff to walk out

Staff working for the London Docklands Light Railway (DLR) are to begin a 48-hour strike at 4 a.m. Monday. The members of the Rail Maritime and Transport union (RMT) voted by a 90 percent majority to strike. Kellas Amey, the company operating the DLR service, is seeking to push through new working practices and conditions. The staff are also concerned over the company's use of agency staff. The DLR, which serves the City of London financial district, carries 300,000 passengers a day.

Vote by UK offshore catering staff for action over pay

Catering staff on UK offshore oil platforms have voted to take action short of a strike. They are members of the Rail Maritime and Transport union (RMT). The employers association, the Caterers Offshore Trade Association (COTA), which represents six offshore catering companies, is seeking a

pay freeze and has announced it is seeking 500 redundancies throughout the offshore catering industry.

COTA is seeking to retract the second year of a two year pay contract previously signed with the RMT. COTA is in discussions with the RMT and the Unite union over the proposed pay freeze and job cuts.

Protest by air crew staff in Spain

Airline crew supported by the International Transport Workers Federation (ITF) held a protest outside the FC Barcelona shareholders meeting on Sunday. The protest is to call on the club to refuse further sponsorship from the Middle Eastern Qatar Airlines company. ITF supports the ongoing protest against the airline's refusal to let its staff join a union.

Maltese medics protest working conditions

Maltese doctors organised by the Medical Association of Malta (MAM) are threatening strike action if the government does not address complaints about working conditions and staff shortages. MAM representatives have twice met with government officials since the medics raised their concerns.

Following the talks last week, medics have put the government on two weeks notice that they may strike if the government does not address the issues being raised.

Strike by Egyptian textile workers continues

Textile workers employed by the Holding Company for Spinning and Weaving in Mahalla in Gharbeya are continuing their strike. They came out on strike on October 19 to protest the non-payment of a 10 percent bonus.

Initially the strike was partial, but following an acrimonious meeting between management and a delegation of workers, it escalated. All three shifts walked out, raising the additional demand that they be paid a monthly compensation for meals.

Iraqi teachers and civil servants demand payment of wage arrears

Teachers and civil servants in the Iraqi provinces of Sulaimaniya and Halabja are continuing their strike, which began at the beginning of October. They are demanding arrears of wages running into many months. Six protestors were killed when they clashed with security forces October 9. On October 19 several thousand teachers held a protest rally outside the education directorate in Sulaimaniya.

Israeli power workers dispute

Power workers employed by the Israeli Electricity Company (IEC) were scapegoated for the poor response to power outages in parts of Israel following a severe storm over the weekend. IEC staff are in dispute with the company's plans to privatize the service, and over lack of resources for staff and infrastructure.

Strike by Jerusalem light rail staff

Staff working for CityPass, which runs the Jerusalem light railway system, held a strike Sunday. It was part of a long running dispute between the company and its drivers over attempts by the company to increase the frequency of the tram service infringing upon drivers' break times.

Nigerian water staff walk out

Around 600 workers went on strike Monday at the Kwara State Water Corporation in Nigeria, demanding four months of salary arrears. The strike followed a 14-day warning after their union made several attempts to instigate negotiations. The union secretary said the governor went on air to say the state government does not owe anybody. The union stated they

would not return to work until their demands are met.

South African miners' sit-in

Five hundred miners at the ASA Metals' Dilokong mine in Limpopo, South Africa have returned to the surface after a five day underground sit-in. The National Union of Miners (NUM) said the industrial action will continue to seek the dismissal of the human resources manager and the removal of charges against local NUM officials.

The strike began October 22 in response to the dismissal and suspension of the officials on what the union regard as "spurious grounds." Outstanding issues go back to March when the union officials were suspended. An agreement has been reached to bring in the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration.

Miners are also demanding additional workplace rights for underground safety representatives and a discussion on the date of the overdue compliance of the company/employee share ownership plan.

Strike by Nigerian port employees and air staff suspended

Around 3,000 maritime workers and clerks, members of the Maritime Workers Union of Nigeria (MWUN), began a strike October 22 but suspended it shortly afterwards on a promise of negotiations. They are demanding the payment of nine months wages arrears as well as other issues of concern.

The MWUN accuses the employer, the National Port Authority (NPA), of ignoring rules and regulations and conniving with shipping companies to deprive the government of due revenues.

The National Union of Air Transport Employees (NUATE) and the National Association of Aircraft Pilots and Engineers (NAAPE) suspended their threatened strike due to start Midnight Sunday.

The strike had been called after the Nigeria Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA) did not comply with an agreement relating to promotions and other conditions of service. It was halted after the NCAA agreed to suspend the interviews.



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