

Strike by Iranian contract oil workers spreads amid rising wave of protests and stoppages; thousands of nurses on pay strike in Denmark; Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency workers in Wales continue stoppages over COVID safety; UK telecom workers' union signs up to job-cutting deal despite workers' readiness to strike

## Workers Struggles: Europe, Middle East & Africa

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

### Strike by Iranian oil workers spreads amid rising wave of protests and stoppages

The strike by Iranian oil contract workers is about to enter its fifth week. It has spread to 105 refineries, complexes and companies across 35 Iranian cities. The contract workers walked out over low pay and poor working conditions. They make around \$300 a month, and are demanding to be paid around \$500.

A defence committee to support the strikers issued a statement on Sunday, appealing to other workers to come out in support of the contract workers, including workers directly employed by the national oil company. It also appealed for rallies in support of the strikers.

Other recent protests in Iran include the ongoing Haft-Tappeh sugar cane workers' dispute and strikes by Tehran bus and taxi drivers over working conditions.

Retired social security department workers held a rally Sunday, in Rasht, protesting their inadequate pensions. The same day, retired steel workers rallied outside the social security offices in Isfahan, protesting that the level of pensions do not meet basic needs.

Also on Sunday, water and sewage workers in Khuzestan province held protests against wage arrears, suffered over the last year.

The Iranian economy is ravaged by inflation, which was 30 percent last year. Its economy is suffering the long-term effects of the ongoing economic boycott by the United States.

### Israeli medical support staff stoppage against workload

On Tuesday, 13,000 medical support staff at 30 government hospitals

across Israel walked out. The hospitals involved included Rambam, Galilee and Hillel Yaffe.

The administrative, cleaning and kitchen staff, hospital transport workers, maintenance and others are protesting staff shortages, which have led to excessive workloads. The government agreed to finance an extra 2,000 posts during the pandemic, but the funding for 200 posts is due to end imminently. The unions representing medical support staff state reported a staff shortage of an additional 1,000 posts.

### Danish nurses continue strike for better pay

Around 4,750 of Denmark's nurses remain on strike, after walking out on June 19. They rejected a five percent pay offer over three years by the Mediation Institute, reported the *Bornholms Tidende*.

Despite having 75,000 members, the Danish Nurses' Organisation (DSR) excluded members from many areas of care and hospitals from the strike, and in announcing an escalation of the dispute it only threatened to call out an additional 702 nurses in August.

The DSR denounced the poor salary conditions and pointed out that it is causing problems of recruitment. The DSR present the dispute in terms of gender, referring repeatedly to the civil service reform of 1969, which set the pay for nurses at a lower level than for professions dominated by men. This allowed the Social Democratic Party and its allies, with a majority in the parliament, to pose as supporting the demands of the nurses, claiming they would take political measures to raise wages in "women-dominated occupations."

### Dutch childcare workers continue "relay strikes" over workload

Childcare workers in the Netherlands held a one-day national stoppage on July 8, to protest excessive workloads, following numerous isolated "relay strikes."

*Algemeen Dagblad* reported that 538 day-care centres were closed nationwide, and over 2,500 joined a protest called by the Federation of Dutch Trade Unions (FNV) in Nieuwegein.

The FNV began the campaign with national protests on June 18, calling strikes in “various locations” on June 23, and in two provinces on July 1. Workers in the childcare sector denounced the high workload, and criticised a new collective agreement proposed by the employers for not doing enough to reduce the pressure.

The Christian National Trade Union Federation signed the agreement, and kept its members from joining the strike.

### **Hospital staff in Berlin, Germany hold warning strikes in wage dispute**

Workers in the Vivantes and Charité hospitals in Berlin, Germany held two warning strikes on July 8 and 9, to demand a pay rise for employees of the subsidiary companies who provide cleaning, technical and catering services, the *Berliner Morgenpost* reported. The strikes were called by the United Services Union (Verdi) to demand outsourced workers are paid the same as those hired in-house, as well as to oppose low staffing levels.

Verdi announced that doctors, administrative staff and care workers would not take part in the warning strike, following a court decision banning care workers from joining the stoppage. On the second day of the warning strike, over a thousand people joined a rally in a local football stadium to support the strikers, according to *Junge Welt*.

### **Eight-hour day restored at Serbian auto factory following sickout**

Workers at the Aptiv auto factory in Leskovac, Serbia, returned to work on July 5, after management agreed to return to an eight-hour working day, according to *Danas*.

The multinational auto parts manufacturer placed the factory’s more than 4,000 workers on a 12-hour day for two weeks, with some working a 72-hour week, after the company cited increased demand. It reversed the decision after around 900 workers called in sick, but Aptiv has now asked workers to “voluntarily” work Sundays.

The trade union at the company claimed to *Danas* that it agreed with the company that workers could work on a Sunday, but only voluntarily. It said that it was unable to negotiate further to ensure Sunday was a rest day, because it did not represent enough of the workers in the company.

### **Strikes continue at French state-owned airports against wage cuts**

Last week, workers at Charles de Gaulle and Orly airports in Paris continued a wave of strikes against plans by Aéroport de Paris (ADP) to cut bonuses.

The workers walked out on Friday and Saturday, and 550 joined rallies at the two airports on Friday, reported *France Bleu*. The police blocked Friday’s rally to prevent workers entering the airports or picketing the access roads, and tear-gassed firefighters attempting to help ADP workers pass the blockade. Officials from several unions were arrested during the protest, and released that same afternoon.

Workers at ADP, the state-owned company responsible for maintaining

the two airports, took part in multiple stoppages over the past month. On July 1 they began a five-day strike, following a three-day stoppage from June 18 to 20, and a three-hour wildcat strike on June 25.

The company announced plans to cut bonuses, which one worker told *Le Figaro* made up 15 percent of his income. ADP threatened to fire any employee who refuses the variation to their contract.

### **Street cleaning strike ends in Alonsotegi, Basque Country, Spain**

A 67-day strike of street-cleaning workers in the Spanish municipality of Alonsotegi, near Bilbao ended after the Basque Workers' Solidarity (ELA) union agreed a wage deal, according to *Europa Press*. The strike began on May 3, following an 11-year pay freeze at the subcontractor Garbinaldi, to demand a real-terms pay increase.

Reportedly the deal involves an immediate pay increase of 10.3 percent, and a total pay rise of 3.5 percent above inflation for the next two years. If inflation remains at its current level of 2.7 percent, this represents less than a 1.2 percent annual pay rise over the 13-year period.

### **Strikes at Barcelona Airport, Spain against forced leave**

The works council at Sacyr, the company with the contract for cleaning Barcelona El Prat Airport, Spain, called six days of strikes over the next four months over the company’s continued use of forced leave.

Sacyr took advantage during the pandemic of a legal provision allowing a company to temporarily suspend parts of its workforce, and only 25 percent of its employees returned to work while the airport reopens, *Europa Press* reported. The Workers’ Commissions union denounced the high workloads of the returning staff, and called for more to return.

The first one-day strike took place on July 2, and the next takes place Friday. There are four further 24-hour stoppages scheduled the following three months.

### **Sardinian hygiene workers protest death of colleague in work accident**

On July 9, workers in the hygiene sector in Sardinia joined a two-hour strike called by three unions to denounce the death of a colleague at work.

Ignazio Sessini was alone on the night shift in the Villaservice waste treatment plant, before being found dead in the machinery, according to ANSA. His colleagues rejected suggestions that this was suicide, saying, “We cannot allow Ignazio to be killed a second time.”

### **Public sector workers in Bosnia and Herzegovina protest for salary increase**

Around 100 public sector workers and civil servants in Bosnia and Herzegovina protested in front of the parliament in the capital of Sarajevo on June 7, to demand an increase in salaries, according to *Radio Slobodna*.

The Union of Civil Servants and Employees in BiH Institutions asked

the government for negotiations for a collective agreement, and for the base monthly salary to be set to 530.50 marks (around 270 euros).

### **Kosovo Tax Administration workers hold second warning strike over work conditions**

Workers in the Tax Administration of Kosovo (TAK) held a three-hour warning strike on Tuesday to demand improved working conditions, *Kosova Press* reported.

The Trade Union of the Tax Administration of Kosovo called the warning strike after its demands were ignored following a one-hour warning strike on May 20. The union threatened to call an indefinite strike if the government did not respond to its demands, but limited itself to a three-hour stoppage.

### **Further strikes over COVID safety by driver and vehicle registration staff at UK centre in Swansea, Wales**

On Monday, workers in the casework and enforcement group at the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) in Swansea, Wales walked out. They were due to strike Thursday and Friday. The stoppages are part of a series over COVID-19 safety at the site, ongoing since April. The strikes led to a huge backlog of work.

Around 1,400 Public and Commercial Service union (PCS) members voted to strike by almost 72 percent on a turnout of just over 50 percent. The DVLA employs around 6,000 staff at its headquarters and call centres across eight buildings in the city.

The dispute began after management insisted more than 2,000 staff work in offices despite lack of social distancing. A major COVID-19 outbreak hit the workplace in the second half of 2020, with more than 600 cases and one tragic death.

The company insisted hundreds of staff cease working from home and come into the office from May 17, in line with the Johnson Tory government's "road map" back to pre-COVID conditions. It was lower-paid staff most likely to be denied permission to work from home.

The outbreak at the DVLA is the highest number of infections linked to a single employer or workplace in the UK. The site is run directly by the government through the Department of Transport.

The PCS has isolated the strike, which is the only officially sanctioned action against lack of COVID-19 safety provision.

### **Stoppages by ScotRail staff in Scotland for equal overtime pay continue as cleaners join dispute and gate line staff vote on action**

Several hundred train conductors and ticket examiners at Scottish rail transport company ScotRail held a further one-day stoppage on Sunday. The Rail, Maritime and Transport union (RMT) members are demanding equal overtime pay with train drivers.

Train cleaners at ScotRail began an overtime and rest day working ban Tuesday, over the same issue. This week, it was announced gate line ticket barrier staff at the company voted against striking, but will join other action over the same issue.

The conductors began their Sunday stoppages at the end of March.

Ticket examiners later joined the walkouts.

The RMT accuses ScotRail of endangering safety by drafting in managers, who lack safety training and knowledge, to replace the strikers. The union warned the dispute could continue throughout summer and called on the Scottish government to intervene.

Transport Minister Graeme Dey met with the union on June 24, but no progress was made. The RMT is calling for a summit meeting with the participation of Scottish First Minister Nicola Sturgeon.

### **Rail catering workers in Scottish capital walk out over management bullying and harassment**

Staff in Scotland at Rail Gourmet, at Edinburgh Waverley train station, held the first of four 24-hour strikes Wednesday. They mounted a picket line at Waverley. Rail Gourmet provides food and drink on the LNER rail service between Edinburgh and London.

Further 24-hour strikes are planned for July 17, 18 and 31.

The RMT members who voted 100 percent to strike are protesting bullying and harassment by management which led to a breakdown of industrial relations.

### **Protest by catering workers at Glasgow University, Scotland over pay and conditions**

On Tuesday, catering workers at Glasgow University and their supporters protested on the campus outside the new James McCune Smith Building. The Unite union members oppose the takeover of catering facilities at the university by a new wholly owned subsidiary company, UoG Commercial Ltd. They face losing thousands of pounds and loss of protection as directly employed catering staff.

In a consultative ballot, Unite members voted by an 88 percent majority to take industrial action. 100 workers took voluntary redundancy.

### **Refuse workers begin walkout in London borough over pay and conditions**

Around 140 refuse workers in the London borough of Bexley began a two-week stoppage on Monday. The Unite union members work for outsourcing company Serco, providing refuse collection for Bexley council.

The workers oppose a 1.5 percent pay offer, the removal of industrial sickness benefit and Serco's refusal to implement a pay progression scale over the last five years. This led to a backlog of pay for about 50 workers, owed thousands of pounds. Refuse workers in Bexley are on a minimum of £10.25 an hour, which is below the London Living Wage. Refuse workers in nearby Greenwich are on £13 an hour.

### **Elderly assessment staff at Tower Hamlets council in London strike in protest as unit is transferred to voluntary sector**

Five staff at the elderly assessment unit in the London borough of Tower Hamlets, which gives advice to the aged, began a five-day walkout Monday. The Unite union members are protesting the transfer of the unit and their employment to the Age UK charity for the aged.

The council promised they would not be transferred. Their employment is being moved to Age UK under Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) legislation, which gives workers some protection of terms and conditions.

### **London underground rail staff to strike over abolition of night grade driver posts**

Drivers on the London Underground Tube network will walk out in four 24-hour strikes, beginning each day at 12 noon on August 3, 5, 24 and 26.

The RMT union members are opposed to Transport for London's (TfL) plans to eliminate the grade of night driver. The RMT states this could lead to around 200 job losses but TfL disputes this. RMT says eliminating the grade will impact on part-time drivers, mainly women, who are able to incorporate part-time working as part of their work/life balance.

### **Further walkouts by teachers at primary school in UK capital over pay cuts**

Teaching staff at the two sites of Valence Primary school in Dagenham, London walked out Tuesday beginning a three-day strike. This follows a two-day strike last week and a one-day strike the previous week.

The National Education Union (NEU) members are opposed to proposed restructuring which would see around 15 of 46 staff facing pay cuts and demotions. The school argues the restructuring follows a fall in roll numbers and subsequent financing.

### **Further strikes at two schools in Derby, England over restructuring**

Teachers at two schools in Derby run by Nottingham-based Archway Learning Trust began a two-day strike on Tuesday. This follows a one-day strike on July 1.

The NEU members at Merrill Academy in Alvaston, and Lees Brook Community School in Chaddesden were protesting a restructuring exercise. They claim it will lead to job cuts, the replacement of qualified teachers by less qualified, cheaper teachers and an increase in class sizes.

Pupils at the schools began a petition in support of the strike.

### **Teachers at school in Southend, England hold strike over pension cuts**

Teachers at the Alleyn Court preparatory school, in Southend, England were set to begin a three-day strike Tuesday, following a three-day strike last week. The NEU members are protesting plans by the Alleyn Court Educational Trust to remove them from the Teachers' Pension Scheme and replace it with an inferior one.

### **Striking Leicestershire engineers in England face ultimatum to sign inferior contract or be sacked**

Around 30 striking field service engineers at the Ashby, Leicestershire branch of Brush Electrical Machines (BEM) were told to sign a new contract by July 24 or face dismissal. They are now in the eighth week of their all-out strike—planned to last until August 16.

The ultimatum follows news that BEM was sold by its present owners. A June 23 article on the business news website, *TheBusinessDesk.com* noted, "Melrose, the firm which specialises in buying and selling underperforming businesses, has sold Loughborough-based Brush in a deal worth £100m to One Equity Partners ... Melrose had owned Brush since 2008, when it acquired FKI, which included the Brush product lines, and companies."

Unite said its members were threatened with the sack "unless they sign contracts that will see them being paid well below the industry standard."

The engineers, who service generators around the world, face reduced overtime rates, allowances, holidays and other terms and conditions, resulting in a pay cut of between £10,000 and £15,000 a year.

Throughout the pandemic they continued to travel across the world to carry out their duties. It meant spending weeks in quarantine, but now they face fire and rehire.

### **Marking boycott by academics at Liverpool University, UK over staff cuts as international boycott begins**

On July 10, the University and College Union (UCU) announced an international boycott of Liverpool University as part of its dispute with the university over proposed job cuts of academic staff. The UCU is asking academics not to apply for jobs advertised at the university, accept invitations to lecture or organise conferences there.

A marking and assessment boycott by around 1,300 Liverpool University academics began on June 18. The university management announced it would withhold 100 percent of the wages of those taking part. The staff are performing all other duties. A June 18 UCU press release explained, "it [the University] considers all other work staff carry out to be voluntary and not worthy of payment."

On Saturday, staff and students joined a march of around 300 people in the city against the job cuts. Academics held a three-week strike beginning May 10, which followed a programme of working contracted hours and boycotting voluntary activities.

The UCU members voted by an 84 percent majority to protest proposed redundancies in the Health and Life Sciences Faculty. The university initially proposed to axe 47 jobs, subsequently reduced to 24. The university devised so-called "rank and yank" criteria to select academics deemed to be the worst performing. UCU members condemned the criteria as "statistically innumerate."

Louise Kenny, executive pro vice-chancellor at Liverpool, is cutting jobs while selling her luxury property in Ireland for 3.5 million euros. The university vice chancellor Janet Beer is paid an annual salary of £410,000, according to the *Liverpool Echo*.

The UCU sold out national strikes in 2018 and 2020 over pay and pensions and refuse to oppose marketisation and redundancies in a joint struggle across the education sector.

### **Pharmaceutical workers at Nottingham, UK-based company 24-hour**

## **strike announcement against “fire and rehire”**

Workers at BCM Fareva’s plant in Nottingham, England will hold a 24-hour strike on July 22. A ballot of the 300 Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers (USDAW) members returned a 90 percent majority in favour of walking out against a “fire and rehire” ultimatum resulting in inferior terms and conditions.

The French-owned company produces pharmaceutical and beauty products for the Boots pharmacy chain.

In a press release USDAW expressed its willingness to help the company impose the changes if only it lifted the fire and rehire threat. USDAW national officer Daniel Adams explained, “USDAW has consistently reiterated its willingness to talk should the threat of dismissal be removed, including under the auspices of ACAS if necessary. Sadly, this has been consistently rejected by the company. However, the offer remains, and the company could still prevent industrial action if they withdraw their ‘fire and rehire’ threat.”

## **Strike by Clarks shoe workers in Street, England on the cards**

Workers at the UK’s famous Clarks facility in Street, England could strike over fire and rehire threats. The firm was taken over in February by Lion Rock, a Hong Kong-based private equity firm. Lion Rock is seeking to cut overtime rates, reduce pay, cut sick pay, reduce parental leave and cut redundancy and call-out pay.

A press release issued by Unite on July 8 stated, “Unite said that it will work with Community [union] to stop the fire and rehire attacks, including coordinating any potential strike action.”

## **UK Yodel delivery workers demand strike ballot over pay and conditions**

Drivers at UK delivery firm Yodel are demanding their union organise a strike ballot. The GMB members are protesting unworkable rotas, the non-honouring of pre-arranged leave and not being included in pay enhancements offered to agency drivers.

Brexit and the pandemic led to a general shortage of commercial drivers in the UK. The UK Transport Secretary, Grant Shapps, authorised a temporary extension in lorry drivers working hours. A strike of Yodel drivers would impact the company as it enters the busy summer period.

## **Weetabix cereal production workers in Kettering, England set strike dates in dispute over shift payments**

Production workers at breakfast cereal maker Weetabix in Kettering, England voted by a 100 percent majority to strike. The USDAW members are threatened with a change in shift patterns and a cut in premium pay for unsocial hours.

A USDAW press release on July 13 announcing the result stated, “USDAW anticipates that the first 24-hour stoppage will be called within a week from 28 July 2021. It is anticipated that further 24- or 48-hour stoppages will take place on a periodic basis until a resolution is found.”

Around 80 engineers at Weetabix faced the imposition of “fire and rehire” contracts. The Unite members voted to strike. Instead of unifying engineers and production workers, Unite called off a planned strike on June 23, to allow for two weeks of talks between the union and the company.

## **UK telecom workers’ union signs up to job-cutting deal despite workers’ readiness to strike**

On July 8, a deal including redundancies was announced between UK major telecom company BT and the Communications Workers Union (CWU). A previous consultative vote of the 40,000 membership showed workers ready for a fight to defend jobs and conditions.

BT wants to push through a reorganisation, cutting jobs and worksites under the Better Workplace Programme. In May, the CWU scheduled a ballot for early June if negotiations broke down.

Broadband internet information website *ispreview.com* carried an article July 8, titled “Risk of National UK BT Strike Averted After CWU Agreement.” This detailed three key areas in the BT-CWU agreement:

On pay, BT are “committed to implement a pay increase for team members ... that will be awarded next year,” but “precise details will be determined nearer the time and will depend on various factors.” Discussions on these with the CWU and Prospect union “will begin in the usual way and in good time.”

BT “have agreed to look at the timing and location of some of the sites we are proposing to close in order to minimise the impact on our people.” Over the next 12 months the company has said it will “only propose to close buildings where we anticipate colleagues can relocate.” BT said there would be “no changes to locations and sites previously announced.”

The company remains committed to redundancies, saying “modernisation” would result in “a leaner, simpler and more agile organisation with fewer people.” BT said it was looking “to avoid compulsory redundancy where we reasonably can,” by looking to natural wastage, voluntary redundancies and “supporting colleagues to move to new roles by retraining and reskilling ... helping them to move to new locations.”

Angry BT workers took to the CWU Facebook page to express criticisms of the deal, on which they will not have the opportunity to vote.

## **Liberian electricity power station workers’ wildcat strike against maltreatment and pay cut causes shutdown**

Workers at the Bushrod Island Power Station in Liberia mounted a two-day protest starting on July 6, causing the shutdown of the power station and its offices.

The workers are angry over mistreatment by management that led to the death of colleague, Peter Dukuly, and over a pay cut of 30 percent, justified by Liberia Electricity Corporation management on the grounds of the pandemic.

After the Labour Minister intervened to reverse the pay cut, the local and the national Independent Electricity Workers’ union apologised for the strike and promised to use dialogue in future. The strike, however, was a wildcat organised by the workers themselves.

## **Unions sell out month-long strike for minimum wage health workers in Nasarawa, Nigeria**

The Coalition of Nasarawa State Health Professional Associations (CNSHPA, a coalition of six health unions) told workers to return to work without achieving the minimum wage and access to promotions they were demanding.

This follows the sellout of the minimum wage strike by the Nasarawa state branch of the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC), leaving health workers isolated.

CNSHPA spokesperson Kyari Caleb directed a return to work immediately to allow mediation on outstanding issues. The local branch of the Nigerian Medical Association dissociated itself from the agreement signed by CNSHPA, saying it was not party to the negotiations.

Workers held national strikes across Nigeria in 2019 for a national minimum wage increase to N30,000, which has still not been secured.

## **Retail workers at game store walk out in Lagos, Nigeria after pay promises broken**

Staff at the Game Store in Lagos, Nigeria walked out over what the Shop and Distributive Trade Senior Staff Association described as a breach of contract. The association had agreed with management to delay a pay rise for one year to June 30, 2021.

Employees were led to believe the delayed rise would be N14,000 on a monthly wage of N33,000. When the date of the expected rise came, the amount was N3,455, about a 10 percent increase to cover a two-year period.

The union feigned surprise and put the dispute into the hands of the Trade Union Congress (TUC) and management, stating, "Until the TUC and Game Store agree on proper remuneration for us, our protest will continue."

## **African National Congress staff in South Africa work to rule in ongoing pay protest**

Staff employed by South Africa's ruling African National Congress (ANC) in Cape Town went on a go-slow Monday, in protest over continuing pay issues. Planned pickets were impeded by poor weather. Workers are still waiting for wages which should have been paid July 2.

Last month, ANC staff in Johannesburg and other regional offices walked out and picketed in protest over late wages, insurance fund arrears and the lack of a pay increase. ANC officials blamed their ongoing financial problems on the general economic situation and a need to modernise their operations, promising that they are "seized with resolving our financial challenges and will table a way forward in the coming weeks."

## **South African Airways pilots end strike after union capitulation**

Pilots in dispute with the state-owned South African Airways (SAA) voted July 11 to accept a settlement agreement recommended by their

union.

The South African Airways Pilots Association (SAAPA) union members voted 95 percent in favour of a deal, described as "fairish" and "the best deal we are going to get" by SAAPA. Some 290 pilots will be made redundant, leaving 88 to keep their jobs, as part of SAA's business rescue plan, designed to appeal to a consortium of speculators. More than 200 pilots have taken a voluntary severance package.

The pilots, without pay for 15 months, were on strike since April and locked out by SAA's business rescue practitioners since December. They may receive their pay once SAAPA officially ends the strike and the redundancy process begins.

## **Municipal garbage collectors in Cape Town, South Africa in stoppage for permanent jobs**

Over 30 waste collection operatives in Kariega, Cape Town, South Africa refused to work for two days July 8, in solidarity with fellow workers denied permanent contracts.

The 14 casual workers, employed since 2018, had their contracts terminated on June 30. When they discovered that temporary workers at other Cape Town depots were offered permanent employment, they demonstrated outside the municipal depot, chanting and blowing whistles. This developed into a full stoppage and workers closed the gates preventing refuse trucks from entering and leaving.

## **South African workers sacked at Silveray Stationery Company for refusing lie detector test appeal to Labour Court**

Three employees of the Silveray Stationery Company in South Africa are appealing to the Labour Court to have their dismissal overturned. They were sacked when they refused to take a polygraph test after stock went missing at the firm.

The workers took the firm to the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration, which ruled their dismissals were fair. Testimony given at the hearing by a professor of psychology from the University of Cape Town was ignored. He stated polygraph tests are "scientifically unreliable" as they merely measure anxiety, and cannot indicate definitively if a person is lying.

The workers' representative plans to argue before the Labour Court that lie detector tests are prohibited by South Africa's Employment Equity Act, which states, "Psychological testing and other similar assessments of an employee are prohibited unless the test or assessment being used has been scientifically shown to be valid and reliable."

## **Workers in Malawi protest imposition of anti-labour law**

Workers gathered outside the parliament gates from 8 a.m. on July 7, to protest the passage of the Industrial Relations (Amendment) Bill, a new anti-labour bill that severely restricts the right to strike.

The law currently states workers cannot be dismissed by employers for participating in a legal strike. The new law means many strikes will not be legal, so strikers will be sacked.

The Malawi Congress of Trade Unions (MCTU) which called the

protest, made clear their main problem with the new law is how it is being brought in—without consulting them. Deputy director at MCTU, Jessie Ching'oma said that “three parties” must meet as part of any review of labour law: the MCTU, the employers’ organisations and the Ministry of Labour.



To contact the WSWs and the  
Socialist Equality Party visit:

**[wsws.org/contact](https://wsws.org/contact)**