



# Global Nonviolent Action Database

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## Senegalese workers general strike for increased wages, 1945-1946

December 22,  
1945

to: February 7,  
1946

**Country:** Senegal

**Location Description:** *French West Africa*

**Goals:**

To raise workers' wages.

### Methods

**Methods in 1st segment:**

- 097. Protest strike
- 106. Industry strike

**Methods in 2nd segment:**

- 097. Protest strike
- 106. Industry strike

**Methods in 3rd segment:**

- 097. Protest strike
- 106. Industry strike
- 117. General strike

**Methods in 4th segment:**

- 097. Protest strike
- 117. General strike

**Methods in 5th segment:**

- 097. Protest strike
- 117. General strike

**Methods in 6th segment:**

- 097. Protest strike
- 117. General strike

## Classifications

**Classification:**

Change

**Cluster:**

Economic Justice

**Group characterization:**

- Civil Servants
- Commercial Workers
- Port Workers
- Service Sector Workers
- industrial workers
- merchants

## Leaders, partners, allies, elites

**Leaders:**

Union leaders from the different factories, companies, and service shops from West French Africa (Senegal)

**Partners:**

Not known

**External allies:**

Not known

**Involvement of social elites:**

Not known

## Joining/exiting order of social groups

**Groups in 1st Segment:**

- Industrial Workers
- Port Workers

**Groups in 2nd Segment:**

- Commercial Workers

**Groups in 3rd Segment:**

- Civil Servants
- Merchants
- Service Sector Workers

**Groups in 4th Segment:**

**Groups in 5th Segment:**

**Groups in 6th Segment:**

**Segment Length:** *Approximately 8 days*

## Opponent, Opponent Responses, and Violence

### **Opponents:**

French West African administration; the Governor General

### **Nonviolent responses of opponent:**

Not Known

### **Campaigner violence:**

Not Known

### **Repressive Violence:**

Not Known

## Success Outcome

### **Success in achieving specific demands/goals:**

6 points out of 6 points

### **Survival:**

1 point out of 1 points

### **Growth:**

3 points out of 3 points

### **Notes on outcomes:**

The workers won significant wage increases, family allowances for government workers, the recognition of unions, the expansion of wage hierarchies, and bonuses for seniority.

The success of this strike inspired the African railway-men to conduct their own strike in 1947

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Beginning in the year 1944, French West Africa experienced economic difficulties. Prices continued to augment, while salaries remained the same. This was complicated by the fact that insufficient sales (because of the poor salaries) also affected the wages of the workers. Wanting an increase in wages, on December 22, 1945, the workers of the ports of the French Company in the city of Dakar organized a strike. The workers from the printing shops of Dakar and the Senegalese electrical factory in Saint Louis joined in the strike.

Rumors that sales would be carried through with the French franc engendered a strong response from the working community. To counter this action, by mid January, the workers organized a general strike. The strike was to last until all the workers wages were raised.

The Governor General, admitting his incapacity to deal with the events, sought the help from two French delegates of the General Confederation of Labor (CGT). These delegates visited the unions of Thiès and Saint Louis. The objectives of the delegates were to create a united workers union between French and African workers throughout French West Africa as well as to deal with the demands of the African worker.

The general strike lasted three weeks; on February 7 1946, the unions and the delegates reached an agreement. The workers won notable wage increases, government workers received family allowances similar to those received by the top ranks, unions were formally recognized, bonuses were given for seniority, and wage hierarchies were amplified.

This strike empowered workers throughout French West Africa, for it demonstrated the ability that a mass movement had against an imperial administration.

## Research Notes

### Influences:

Influenced the Railway Strike in West French Africa of 1947 (See "French West African railway workers strike for greater benefits, 1947-1948") (2).

### Sources:

Cooper, Frederick. " 'Our Strike': Equality, anticolonial politics and the 1947-1948 railway strike in French West Africa." The Decolonization Reader. Ed. James D. Le Sueur. New York: Routledge, 2003.

Roche, Christian. Le Sénégal à la conquête de son indépendance: 1939-1960: chronique de la vie politique et syndicale, de l'Empire français à l'Indépendance. Paris: Karthala, 2001.

### Additional Notes:

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### Name of researcher, and date dd/mm/yyyy:

Aurora Muñoz, 03/12/2009

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