

## BDZ BEGINS LAYOFFS



A number of workers for the Bulgarian State Railways (BDZ) have been let go from their jobs in exchange for six months worth of salary, according to an announcement made by the management. The workers who are getting this deal total about 200. While this many seem small compared to the 13,000 current workers that are employed by the Bulgarian State Railways, this is only the beginning of a larger set of layoffs that the BDZ is planning in the near future. The company is looking to get rid of about 2,000 of its workers. This represents a little bit more than 1/7th of the total number of workers on the payrolls. The management of the Bulgarian State Railways is hoping to let go of the workers in order to save itself from bankruptcy. The management made an announcement early in November about the planned layoffs. The company, which is state owned, also told the public that it was going to have to reduce the number of trains that run by a significant number. Trains are expected to be reduced by 150 by January of next year. This announcement led the syndicates to declare a strike that is slated to begin on the 24th of November 2011, which may further impact the service trains to the public. These first 200 workers agreed to be laid off first. Of those workers 90 of them were working for BDZ Passenger Services while the remaining 110 were employees of BDZ Freight Services. BDZ Freight Services is the slated for privatization in the future. There has been no word, as of yet, as to whether or not the rest of the 1,800 workers will be leaving voluntarily with the same package as these workers or if they will be let go under less favorable terms. Currently the syndicates, which function the same way a union would in the United States, have been working for a new collective labor contract with the railway. The union is against the privatization of the rail system. This is due in part to the fact that the BDZ Freight Services, the only section of the railway that is currently showing a profit, is the section that is slated for privatization. The union had previously threatened a general strike in October of this year. They decided to call it off when the negotiations with the government continued to show promise. In March of this year the workers did go on a strike. That strike made the government yield to the pressure, though that is far from a guarantee that it will work a second time. Vladimir Vladimirov, the head of the BDZ Board had this to say about the situation to local reporters, "We've got two options. We are either laying off 2 000 employees, or we are going towards bankruptcy, and then all 13 000 employees will lose their jobs." In order to help make up the short fall there will also be an increase in the cost of train tickets. Depending on the line the tickets will increase in price between 9% and 15% by the 1st of December.

<https://blog.granted.com/>