

DIRECT

Industrial Workers of the World

ACTION

An Injury To One - Is An Injury To All!

TELL THE BRITISH COUNCIL - NO HIDING BEHIND AGENCIES!**JUSTICE FOR MARINA!**

**FIGHTING BACK WITH TEFL WORKERS:
WIDESPREAD PROTESTS AGAINST THE BRITISH COUNCIL TO INCLUDE DUBLIN & BELFAST**

The TEFL Workers' Union is again in dispute with the British Council and their outsourcing agency, Impellam, over the alleged dismissal of a whistleblower. The union alleges that the worker was fired after raising health and safety concerns related to the scheduling system.

Online teacher Marina claims she was sacked after raising concerns that the scheduling system was damaging teachers' mental health.

Online English language teachers at the British Council are employed as agency staff and, so, are not guaranteed hours. Instead, they need to book teaching slots as they become available using an online system.

According to Tom Liebewitz, the chair of the TEFL Workers' Union steering committee:

"Such a system represents the 'Uberfication' of TEFL. Teachers are forced to compete with each other while employers wash their hands of any sense of responsibility or obligation towards their staff."

Teachers have complained that, as hours are released in large blocks, it creates a "feeding frenzy" where workers scramble to

get their share of available slots.

Teachers allege that the scheduling system was used by staff from across a number of different time zones, leading to reports of teachers forced to wake up in the middle of the night to secure hours.

Teachers report losing sleep and suffering from anxiety and stress. Workers also allege that these concerns were regularly raised with management via the online internal communication system, Teams.

For Marina, this was even more daunting as her religious practices meant that she typically refrains from the use of technology on Fridays. She maintains that, as hours could be released any time between Tuesday and Friday, this meant that she had to forgo her religious commitments in order to secure hours.

Workers allege that, when hired, they were promised "a good availability of hours" but that over-hiring meant teachers struggled to secure hours.

According to Marina,

"The good availability of hours that the management promised didn't come true. The hours were often gone within

TEFL WORKERS UNION DEMANDS JUSTICE FOR MARINA!

ten minutes. And the release didn't always follow the time-frames management had promised. So you either had to be really lucky or literally sit at the computer between Wednesday midnight and Friday afternoon."

Marina claims that after she spent months raising her concerns, management finally acted and even implemented some of her ideas for how to improve the scheduling system.

But what seemed like a victory soon turned sour as Marina was then told she was being dismissed for "offensive" communications. She alleges that no formal process took place and that, despite requests, she was not provided with any examples of this offensive communication. It is the position of the union that Marina was dismissed because she raised concerns about how the online scheduling system was impacting the mental health of her and her colleagues. As such, the union maintains that she is afforded whistleblowing protections. The union is demanding reinstatement with back pay.

According to Tom Liebewitz:

"Marina has already filed a claim with ACAS, a first step to an employment tribunal. Yet both the British Council and Impellam have rejected conciliation talks. This is not our first dispute with the BC/Impellam and, as before, we're going to be out in the streets demanding justice. We invite TEFL workers the world over to join us."

The union has also set up a crowdfunder to help support Marina in any legal fees she may incur should her case proceed to an employment tribunal. Please consider making a donation – and asking your local union branch to do the same:

<https://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/p/justice-for-marina>

If you work for the British Council and have any problems at work or would like to get involved in the campaign to support Marina, you can reach the union at tefl@iww.org.uk.

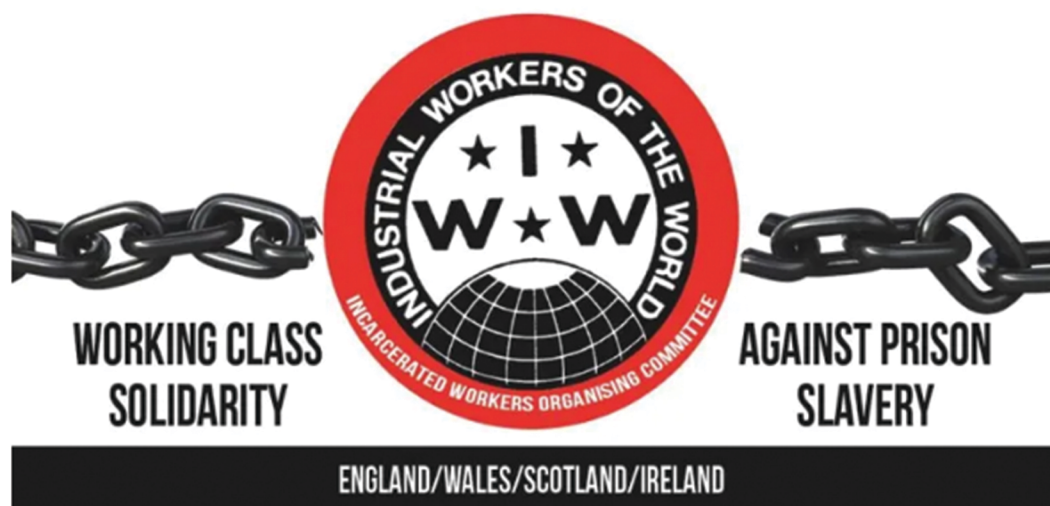
Media enquiries should also be sent to the same address.

Meanwhile the Industrial Workers of the World (Ireland Branch) has said that plans are afoot to hold a number of lunchtime protests on Tuesday 15th August in both Dublin and Belfast to highlight the case and to demand justice for Marina.

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF SOLIDARITY WITH PRISONERS

The Incarcerated Workers Organising Committee will hold a number of actions around the country to mark **International Week of Action with Anarchist Prisoners**. Events will be held in Dublin, Belfast and Derry on **Saturday 26th August**. For further details please email **IWOC Ireland** at:

iwoc.ireland@iww.org.uk



Victory for FW in Dublin!

The IWW Dublin Branch has welcomed a recent victory by a Fellow Worker in the city as a member made us aware that they had been a victim of wage theft.

The Fellow Worker in question had left a job in a Dublin factory and on receiving their final pay packet, noticed that it was €175 less than they had expected.

One of our newly trained IWW representatives emailed the employer and received no response. A second attempt was made and still the employer attempted to stonewall the union. Finally, after receiving notification of our intention to escalate the situation by mobilising our members - the employer gave in and admitted they had failed to pay our Fellow Worker for the hours they had worked on their departure from that workplace.

This is a great win as not only did we force an employer to engage with our demands despite their efforts to ignore the union, we also secured our Fellow Worker's rightful wages in the middle of a Cost of Living Crisis. In addition to this, our newly trained reps got a chance to put their new knowledge into practice and were rewarded for their efforts with a resounding victory.

The IWW Dublin Branch will be running a Rep training specifically for Fellow Worker's in the 26 counties, this coming September and further details are available from the following email address:

training.ireland@iww.org.uk

