



From March 12-18, the International Workers' Association is holding an international week of support for the "Ryanair Don't Care" campaign. "Ryanair Don't Care" was started by a British man, John Foley after the experience his daughter had as a flight attendant at that airline.

Instead of recruiting and training staff in Britain, it requires potential cabin crew to pay a fee of 3000 euro through an agency for "training". As many as 60 are sacked at one time after this initial training period with up to 200 people a month losing their job. Those who survive the initial training period are put on a 12-month probationary period on a lower rate of pay than normal cabin crew and Ryanair pocket the difference-as much as £20 million per year. Pay in the first year can be as low as 520 Euro after stoppages, such as the 25 Euro charged for the uniform, are deducted.

Working conditions are no better, workers are expected to work 2 standby duties each week, one a Home Standby, lasting 11 hours for no pay, and an 8 hour Airport Standby, for which 30 Euro is paid.

So the "recruitment for termination" pattern is, free unpaid work, maybe then a low-paid job for a while, then somebody will probably replace you. The cabin staff is replaced constantly, discouraging workers' organization of any type.

John's daughter was one of these, who was probably sacked just to be replaced by the next person on "training". She was fired while working. She had flown one-way but the company refused to let her fly back, since she had been fired. Her parents travelled abroad to pick her up. The family was so outraged at this whole situation that John started the campaign to pressure Ryanair to change their practices.



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The cabin crew in Britain are not the only ones with problems. There have been struggles with Ryanair in other countries as well, with other staff. A Belgian union took legal action against Ryanair for having conditions for cabin crew which were illegal in Belgium. Among the problems they noted was lack of sick leave for the crew. Ryanair argues that since their planes are registered in Ireland, everybody working on them, regardless of where they live, are employed or actually work, are subject to Irish labour laws. When the French prosecutor's office charged Ryanair for violating workers rights, also arguing that the conditions were in breach of French law, Ryanair closed its base in France and decided that one thing it should do was regularly change its staff and pilots. Currently it is looking to hire new pilots from SpanAir, an airline which was closed and is trying to force the Irish working conditions on them as well. Among the other costs the Spanish pilots would have to bear is that they would have to pay the cost to renew their licenses every year themselves (6000 euro, usually paid by the airlines), the cost of their uniforms plus their overnight stays if they need to stay in a hotel between flights abroad. Their holiday pay would also be three times lower than they currently receive.

Our colleagues from our sister union in Spain, the CNT-AIT, formed a union in Ryanair in Zaragoza and struggled with the airlines bad working conditions. They exposed how the company was using fraudulent contracting, how workers who were employed full-time were being given part-time contracts. Very quickly after the union was formed, the airline dismissed the union delegate. The comrades started an international campaign and took Ryanair to court. Eight months later, the delegate was reinstated with all back pay. The court also declared that the airline had used illegal contracts.

This just goes to show that it is worth struggling and that international solidarity is very important. That is why we will do our best to speak out against the exploitation at Ryanair and to support people like John Foley who are fighting against such horrible practices.

If you are in the UK, you can give Ryanair a call at +353 1 812 1212.

For more information in English, see the website of our sister union in the UK, Solidarity Federation
www.solfed.org.uk

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