



# IWW Newsletter

**An injury to One  
is an injury to All!**

Issue 1  
March 2020

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mae nerth –  
There is power  
in a union!**

IWW Conference 2020  
Cardiff, May 15-16

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## A Note to New Members

The IWW has had a series of reports from new members that their membership packs have arrived torn open and that sometimes badges, and cards were missing. The Royal mail has apologised and explained that the damage was due to faulty machinery. New members with missing badges and membership cards should please get in touch with Jo at:

[membershipadmin@iww.org.uk](mailto:membershipadmin@iww.org.uk)

Welcome to Issue 1 of the new Newsletter. We will do our best to keep you in touch with the most important IWW stories as they come into us. The newsletter depends on branches getting in touch with stories or members taking to their keyboards and writing for us. If you have a story idea or a piece of writing you think we could use, then contact us by email at:

[newsletter@iww.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@iww.org.uk)

## Workplaces - our terrain of struggle

Last summer the Organising Department launched 'Your Job Your Union'. This is an organic and bottom up approach to organising which seeks to encourage and support IWW members in recruiting their colleagues and building a union presence where they work.

Where there are two or more members in a workplace, the union becomes something real and has the potential to make a material difference.

We've had an encouraging response from IWW members and forty eight have approached us asking for support. They are sent an organising starter pack, invited to an organiser training event near where they live, and put in touch with experienced local organisers who are in turn supported by the YJYU organising team.

Workplace organising is what the IWW does. However, to get the IWW to where we want to be, we are going to need a culture change that properly prioritises workplace organising. In our branch, workplace organising is the top item on our monthly agenda, and we discuss this before we go on to business, reports or anything else.

Recently, we've started inviting FWs present at meetings to discuss issues at their own workplaces. This not only gives them a chance to vent, but they have the benefit of advice and support from their FWs and can suggest organising leads. I strongly recommend this to other branches.

[organising@iww.org.uk](mailto:organising@iww.org.uk)

# **Mewn undeb mae nerth There is power in a union!**

**IWW Conference  
2020  
Cardiff,  
May 15-16**

**Croeso i Gaerdydd!**

**It has been a while since the IWW has held Conference in a city, and we're excited to welcome you all to Cardiff!**

The annual Conference is the opportunity for

members from all over the union to come together. It serves some very important administrative functions, and it is also a great opportunity to cement bonds between branches and fellow workers.

Conference is the main democratic body in the IWW. Branches send delegates to Conference to debate motions and confirm changes to the Rule Book, establish new union institutions, or decide the IWW's position on international matters.

It's not all dry business, however! There will be workshops and vibrant breakout sessions on a variety of union issues and organising campaigns. It's a great chance to learn about what's going on throughout the union and to link-up people organising in similar situations.

When all the 'thinking' is done, we'll be holding a party at the Nos Da, featuring the infamous Killdren.

We've also got plans for a chill five-a-side football tournament (weather dependant) to see which is the best branch, so get your teams together.

All members of the IWW are welcome to attend, however, there is a limit to the number of delegates that each branch can send, a ratio of 1 for every 33 members. So please don't register individually; contact your branch secretary expressing interest to go to Conference as a delegate.

**We look forward to welcoming you all to Cymru.**

## **Strength in the Union TEFL Workers Union - Delfin Redundancy Victory**

**The February 2020 victory of TEFL teachers in dispute with the Delfin English School in London demonstrates clearly the gains which can be made by organised workers.**

The outward appearance of "nice management" in the industry is deceptive. Workers experience abuse of their goodwill, being asked to arrive an unpaid quarter of an hour before lessons, having to cover

for absences at short notice, being unpaid for lesson preparation, working zero hours contracts and having no sick pay.

Pay is low in TEFL and there



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are periods every year when teachers' hours are cut. Managers are paid the same regardless of the calendar.

It's a precarious industry for workers, and in places like London it can be impossible to meet rents or get a mortgage. Two years ago the Delfin teachers began to organise to fight for improved conditions. Using tactics like a work to rule over preparation time they made the company take notice of their demands. What arose was no less than a programme for an improved TEFL industry both for workers and students. Delfin didn't share this opinion.

Disciplinary action followed, and IWW reps were present at every hearing. The company hired a so-called "mediator" apparently with the intention of intimidating workers. At this stage the company made concessions, but in late 2019 began to run down its London operation, citing market conditions and rising rents. On December 20th, 2019, after they had left work, all of the teaching staff were told that they had been made

redundant. For those teachers who had not worked for Delfin for two years or more, and for the two teachers who had left prior to the redundancy notice, there would be no redundancy pay at all.

There followed a highly organised TEFL Workers Union campaign to secure an enhanced redundancy package. Support came from both the London EFL community and IWW branches around the UK. There were pickets both of Delfin and their business partners, protests outside the agency which provided scab labour, and social media activism including negative Google reviews. Language schools are vulnerable to highly visible social media criticism.

The situation moved very quickly to resolution with this energetic campaign in place. Redundancy payments were agreed, including for the two workers who had left Delfin earlier.

The workers involved have all found new jobs, in some cases

thanks to networking during the campaign, and in an industry which is barely unionised, confidence has been built and valuable organisational lessons learned.

### More Here:

[iww.org.uk/news/tefl](http://iww.org.uk/news/tefl)

[www.facebook.com/teflworkers/](https://www.facebook.com/teflworkers/)

[www.iww.org.uk/tefl-workers-union](http://www.iww.org.uk/tefl-workers-union)

### And a musical/ talk interlude:

[www.mixcloud.com/ThreadsRadio/threads-outreach-presents-the-industrial-workers-of-the-world/](http://www.mixcloud.com/ThreadsRadio/threads-outreach-presents-the-industrial-workers-of-the-world/)



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# Strange Brew –

## Dismissal and Blacklisting in the Micro-Brewing Industry

**Micro-breweries are all the rage, but small companies which seem to care for their workers can quickly change with investment and plans to grow. Workers have no control over such developments.**

In November last year a supervisor at a London micro-brewery was sacked without warning. He was a popular worker with a reputation for standing up for his colleagues, always achieved work targets and was willing to put in extra time to complete jobs. Management however saw him as too vocal and too much on the side of the shop floor.

According to a worker still at the firm, before the new investment from a much larger concern, the company had been very different, but the practice now is to try to buy goodwill with extra-contractual perks, for example a monthly “free lunch”.

It was five minutes after having been invited to the

next of these that the supervisor was called in for a “catch-up” meeting. The letter on the desk was his termination of contract. No reasons for the sacking were given at the meeting.

A petition was started by the workers which resulted in people being called into individual meetings and some were pressured into removing their names from the petition.

On his way home the sacked worker was called by an IWW member who worked at the brewery to ask him to join the union and fight for justice. A social media campaign was started which did become somewhat divisive with the staff subject to management pressure.

The sacked worker quickly found another job at a similar operation, but here the story takes a turn for the worse. Having signed his new contract and on his first morning, he was called into see the manager and questioned about the circumstances of departure from his previous job. He was told that someone from there had been in touch

and that his new contract was being terminated as well.

This looks to have been classic blacklisting of a worker for union activity. The IWW organised a fundraising campaign to help the FW through hard times. More than £1400 was raised in the UK and from abroad.

For organisers there are clearly lessons to be learned about the timing and impact of social media campaigns. But meanwhile, at the expanding micro-brewery, union organisation is increasing in response to changing conditions and management pressure.

Recruitment is ongoing there, as is Union involvement in disputes over sick pay and conditions. Shows of solidarity and organisation bring workers together and lay the foundations for further advances.

[https://  
www.gofundme.com/f/  
support-a-blacklisted-  
brewery-worker](https://www.gofundme.com/f/support-a-blacklisted-brewery-worker)



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