



Cleaners and Allied Independent Workers Union
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For immediate release

London, UK — 11th November 2021

- **Facebook cleaners plan ‘Cancel Facebook’ protest against excessive workloads**
- **Speakers to include John McDonnell**
- **Cleaners to vote on strike action**
- **Tribunal declines to reinstate dismissed cleaning supervisor**

Facebook's London cleaners are to step up their campaign against excessive workloads and to be brought in house with a major protest on Friday November 26th.

The protest, labelled ‘Cancel Facebook’, is scheduled for 4pm at 10 Brock Street, NW1 3FG. The event will feature samba music, street performers, and a variety of speakers including former Shadow Chancellor of the Exchequer John McDonnell, ADCU General Secretary James Farrar, and Glenroy Watson of the RMT’s London Transport regional council Black Solidarity Committee.

The cleaners have been campaigning since June about increased workloads which are making them exhausted and ill. Their employer, Churchill Cleaning, which took over the Facebook contract in January, has added eight extra floors to the six that used to make up the cleaners' schedule. Churchill has failed to provide any extra resources to meet the increased workload.

Facebook itself has consistently refused to intervene on behalf of its cleaners. The Cleaners and Allied Independent Workers Union, has approached the company on multiple occasions, but it has consistently refused to get involved beyond vague expressions of concern about the wellbeing of its service providers and its intent to foster a respectful and safe working environment. Beyond that, it simply repeats the mantra that these are matters for Churchill and for its facilities management contractor JLL. Despite repeated enquiries from CAIWU, Facebook has declined to comment on the cleaners’ request to be brought in house.

In the absence of any positive progress, the prospect of industrial action grows increasingly likely. CAIWU has already served Churchill with notice of its members' intention to vote about the possibility of strike action, and Christmas Eve has been identified as a probable date for the first of what is likely to be a series of one-day strikes. CAIWU organiser Bruce Coker says that striking is very much a last resort, but that the cleaners feel they've been left with no other choice. 'The campaign has been going on for months now,' said Coker. 'Our members are getting ill from overwork, but Churchill refuses to acknowledge that there's a problem. The cleaners have reached the point where going on strike seems like the only way to make Churchill, JLL and Facebook listen.' Asked the reason behind the 'Cancel Facebook' label for the protest, Coker explained, 'As a society we are becoming very quick to judge and cancel individuals for minor misdemeanours, and platforms like Facebook actively encourage this behaviour by rewarding outrage and engagement. We want to make some noise about the actual harm these companies are causing, not just to members of the public but often to their own workers.'

One former cleaner who won't be taking part in any strike is Guillermo Camacho, the supervisor dismissed last month for allegedly poor performance of his duties. Both CAIWU and Camacho, whose reinstatement case was rejected by the employment tribunal last week, continue to insist that the real reason behind his dismissal was his trade union activities, of which he made no secret. Camacho's unfair dismissal case is scheduled to be heard by the tribunal in the new year, by when his former colleagues are hoping their campaign will have resulted in a return to tolerable workloads at Brock Street.

Protest: Friday November 26th, 4pm | 10 Brock Street, London NW1 3FG

END

About CAIWU: The Cleaners & Allied Independent Workers Union is a registered trade union representing over a thousand workers mainly in London's cleaning industry. We believe that every human being is entitled to dignity and respect in the workplace, and it is our mission to help our members fight for this basic right, along with others like fair pay, terms and work conditions.

Notes to editor:

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