

Cathay Dragon - Flight Attendant Union Leader Sacked for Expressing Political Views White Terror Looms Over Hong Kong Workplaces

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On 21 August, Cathay Dragon dismissed the chairperson of the Hong Kong Dragon Airlines Flight Attendants Association (HKCTU Affiliate), Ms. Rebecca Sy without providing any reason. Since the beginning of the month, the Civil Aviation Administration of China has already made three requests to Cathay Pacific, the entire civil aviation industry is looming with white horror. Such wave of dismissal, first started at Cathay Pacific, is now expanding to the Airport Authority and Cathay Dragon. As the Chairperson of the trade union, Rebecca is also an opinion leader among her colleagues, her dismissal is a blatant act of suppression from the employer to subdue different opinions. The HKCTU, employees of civil aviation industry, and people of Hong Kong will launch counter actions to demand the immediate reinstatement of Rebecca Sy and urge Cathay Pacific to put an end to all forms of white terror.

Dismissal of union chairperson with no reason

When Rebecca Sy, the chairperson of the Hong Kong Dragon Airlines Flight Attendants Association, was preparing to operate on a flight to Mainland, China on 20 August, her duty was suddenly suspended and was instructed to be redeployed. On the afternoon of 21 August, the company invited Sy to a meeting, while at the meeting, a company representative showed her a social media screenshot and asked whether the account belonged to her. When Sy's answer was affirmative, the company representative immediately announced her dismissal and refused to provide further explanation and reason. Whereas Cathay Dragon has its own disciplinary procedures, the company has not pointed out whether there is any violation of regulations. The company's immediate dismissal of Sy is obviously not in line with the existing procedures. Despite Sy believes that her immediate dismissal appears to be related to her social media messages, the company fails to identify any disciplinary violation. Such is a blatant retaliation and suppression on her participation in the Anti-extradition bill movement, and her capacity as a trade union leader to mobilize her colleagues to participate.



Retaliation on civil aviation industry after the general strike

At the airport rally on 26 July and the general strike on 5 August, a large number of civil aviation industry employees participated. In order to subdue the resistance, the Civil Aviation Administration of China (CAAC) immediately put forward three directives for Cathay Pacific on the grounds of aviation safety reasons to put pressure on the Hong Kong airlines to restrict her employees' rights to freedom of expression and political participation. In addition to Cathay Pacific, the Airport Authority also dismiss employees suspected of participating in the Anti-extradition bill movement. Such dismissals include the arrested pilot, the pilot who encourage Hong Kong people in his in-flight public announcement and now the chairperson of the Dragonair Union. Earlier this month, Cathay Pacific has issued new social media guidelines to all employees asserting such guidelines are to preserve the image of the company. In fact, such guidelines are devised to monitor employees' private social media speeches, and suppress anti-extradition bill related information proliferated by employees. It is a blatant suppression on freedom of speech, and also deprives employees of their right to participate in political activities.



Resist political pressure, Hong Kong people have the right to express their views

After the general strike on 5 August, the issue an aviation safety directives by the CAAC to Cathay Pacific is a blatant violation of the "one country, two systems", as it required Cathay Pacific to ban all staff who "take part in and/or support illegal protests, violent actions and/or overly radical behaviour" from operating in Chinese airspace. However, as granted by the Basic Law, all Hong Kong people have the right to participate in assembly procession. Whether the procession is legal or not, participants are regulated by the laws of Hong Kong and the job securities of the participants themselves should not be affected. It is obvious that the CAAC has used the hands of Cathay Pacific to carry out political persecution on employees who support the anti-extradition bill, by forcefully extending her control over Hong Kong workplaces, the Beijing Government is singlehandedly dismantling the "one country, two systems."

Although the Anti-extradition bill has rumbled on for more than two months, the HKSAR Government headed by Carrie Lam continues to refrain from responding to the five major demands put forward by the public. In order to conceal her autocracy, Carrie Lam proposed a platform for dialogue with all sectors of the society in recent days. But at the same time, the Chinese Government exerts its economic might to put pressure on large enterprises to dismiss employees who participated in the Anti-Extradition bill movement. Along with all Hong Kong citizens, the HKCTU will continue to fight

on and resist white terror.

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