

Open Letter to SOAS Management

SOAS is using old tactics of trade union victimisation: the SOAS community says hands off our Union reps, hands off the cleaners!

We, the signatories, write to express our grave concern over the repression and victimisation of trade union activists at SOAS, particularly Consuelo Moreno and Lenin Escudero, long-standing and respected trade union representatives. Two other colleagues who have been part of the collective struggle of formerly outsourced migrant workers' face suspension on trumped up accusations. They were among the first outsourced workers to unionise in the UK and lead a successful campaign to end outsourcing at their institution, giving birth to numerous similar campaigns across the country.

Consuelo's representative cannot provide additional information at this stage, but has stated that in their opinion the charges reek of anti-worker, anti-trade union, and anti-migrant sentiments. These actions fit right in with SOAS management's long history of trade union victimisation and repression against the migrant cleaners' movement, most notably when it colluded with a private outsourcing company and UK Border Agency to stage an immigration raid in the Lucas Lecture Theatre on the 12th June 2009. The month of June is an infamous trade union victimisation month at SOAS, we don't forget, we don't forgive, and we keep fighting alongside our colleagues, comrades and friends in the cleaning team.

This spate of suspensions and disciplinaries comes at a time when SOAS were trying to restructure the cleaning team, which as always means hours being cut and potential job losses. More agency workers are being employed in an attempt to replace statutory cleaning staff. In effect, SOAS is trying to reintroduce outsourcing.

The in-housing of estates staff, a hard-won victory led by Consuelo and her peers, is now under threat. Without the experienced, committed staff who fought for these rights, the progress made toward dignity, respect, and equality for migrant workers could be undone.

We demand:

- The immediate lifting of all suspensions and the dropping of all disciplinary actions against those in the cleaning team.
- We call for serious consideration in addressing the unresolved grievances of bullying within the cleaning team.
- We demand a firm commitment to limit the use of agency workers and renew in writing SOAS' commitment to keep all estates' staff, including cleaners, in-house as full members of the SOAS staff community.

In solidarity,
La lucha continúa

Signatories:

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