

Goldsmiths Precarious Workers' Bulletin

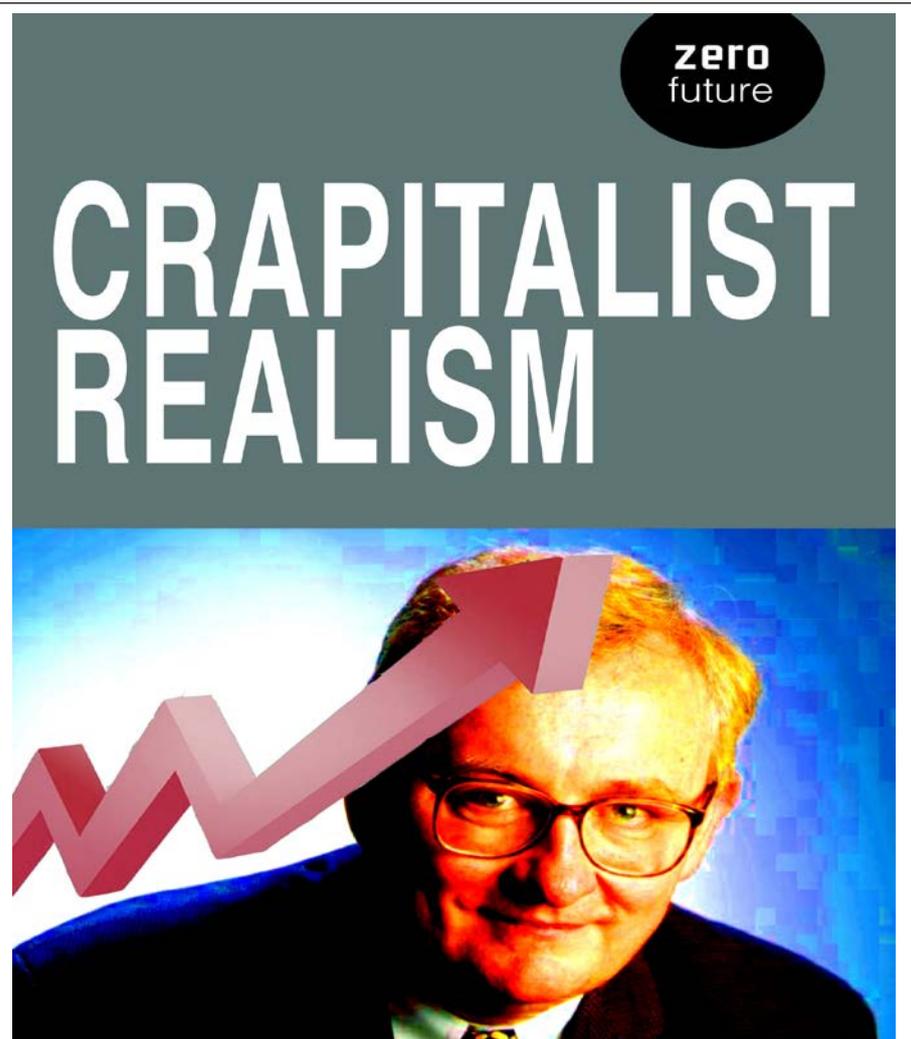
15th Jan 2019

Cleaners' campaign: update

Senior management and UNISON representatives met in the middle of December to begin a formal consultation on the insourcing of cleaning staff. UNISON representatives have informed cleaners that fortnightly meetings will take place between management and UNISON reps from early in the New Year to begin the legal and HR administration of the insourcing process. UNISON and Estates will also be meeting regularly to discuss and design the shift patterns for cleaners. Cleaners have been requested to speak to their UNISON reps to contribute to the design of shift patterns around their needs. A timeframe for the insourcing process will be published following the first meeting, with managers and UNISON claiming to be working toward the 1 May 2019 as the definitive transfer date.

However, in spite of the many complaints that cleaners voiced before the New Year to management, Estates and their UNISON reps about the unbearable working conditions that ISS continue to enforce, nothing has been done to alleviate this situation. The Justice for Cleaners campaign group and a number of cleaners are demanding that management step in before May 1 to address this situation.

We will be pushing for the involvement of cleaners in the insourcing process and offering support where we can.



“Control societies are based on debt rather than enclosure; but there is a way in which the current education system both indebts and encloses students. Pay for your own exploitation, the logic insists – get into debt so you can get the same McJob you could have walked into if you’d left school at sixteen...” Mark Fisher

Back in 2009 when Mark Fisher wrote *Capitalist Realism*, it seemed like there were absolute limits to the exploitation of students. How long could students go on hurling themselves into debt peonage for an education that didn’t even deliver on the careerist incentives to which actual learning had been subordinated? Well since Patrick Loughrey deigned to join Goldsmiths in 2010, following his handsome pay-off from the BBC, he has done pretty well to defy Fisher’s grim diagnoses. Loughrey’s legacy will be to have convinced students that it is reasonable that *they* shoulder the costs of an increasingly top heavy pay hierarchy. Currently art students fundraise throughout the year to subsidise their degree show, informed that it’s good experience for an industry rife with exploitation and precariousness; while in departments such as Social, Therapeutic and Community Studies (STaCS) contact time with teaching staff has been so reduced that students have been forced to pursue formal complaint procedures with their departments and conduct their own teaching in the meantime. With the departure of Loughrey and other of his Senior Management cabal, along with the growing organisational capacity of precarious workers on campus, students have the opportunity to fight back against the capitalist realism which structures their experience of higher education.

Anti-casualisation and the GUCU Ballot

The first meeting of the team reviewing the Associate Lecturer Assimilation Agreement took place on Thursday 13 December. This is a formal group including representatives from HR and UCU anti-casualisation reps together with Pearl Okopu from Finance and David Badger, the business manager for the Music Department.

The AL assimilation agreement was signed off in 2014 and UCU has long had concerns that it was not being implemented fairly and equally across the College. This review will allow GUCU to raise concerns around a number of issues in relation to, for example, the allocation of hours, promotion, recruitment and training affecting both Associate Lecturers and fractional staff. GUCU anti-casualisation reps have been gathering data on how individual departments “operationalise” the Agreement and have found significant discrepancies across departments. GUCU reps are requesting input from AL’s of on whether, for example: You are paid for attending lectures, You were automatically promoted from Grade 6 to Grade 7 after your first year of teaching, You are paid using the correct multiplier for specific roles, Your pay has risen in line with annual increments, Your fraction has been regularly reviewed Please send any information to gucu-admin@gold.ac.uk

It is unclear how the departure of the head of HR, Andy Lamb, will impact the progress of the review. But it has become clear to anti-cas reps that through systemic administrative negligence, casualised academic staff have been underpaid for their work because the assimilation agreement has not been properly enforced by management.

The UCU ballot for Pay and Equality begins today 15 January and will close on February 22. The ballot mandates a commitment to radically transforming employer orthodoxy with regard to casual contracts. This is a crucial opportunity for UCU members who benefitted from the militancy of their junior colleagues during the USS strikes to show solidarity to a campaign that will drastically improve the working conditions of precarious workers, a struggle which will undoubtedly enhance the working lives of all academic staff.

Goldsmiths security staff announce in-housing campaign with IWGB



On Saturday 13 January, Goldsmiths security guards (currently outsourced to CIS Security Ltd and members of the The Independent Workers’ Union of Great Britain Security & Receptionist Branch) voted unanimously to demand to be brought in-house. The workers are seeking the same terms and conditions as their in-house colleagues, which include a workplace pension and equal entitlement to holiday, sick, maternity and paternity pay.

Galvanized by the cleaners’ campaign, the security workers organised themselves quickly, confident that staff and students would support their efforts to improve their working conditions, just as they did with cleaners. Within the space of a few months, security staff had successfully reached membership density with IWGB, showing a fantastic unity of purpose and organisational instincts.

Security staff at Goldsmiths have gone many years without union representation, so it is with great enthusiasm that they welcomed the presence and support of one of the most exciting organisations in the union movement today.

IWGB is a new and dynamic union which represents mainly low paid migrant workers, such as outsourced cleaners and security guards, workers in the so-called “gig economy”, such as bicycle couriers and Uber drivers, and foster care workers. The IWGB specializes in representing sections of the workforce which have traditionally been non-unionised and under-represented. Founded in August of 2012, the IWGB now consists of seven branches. The branches are highly autonomous and lead on campaigning for better pay and conditions. IWGB campaigns are known for being bold, vibrant, loud and effective. From salsa dancing on the picket lines at the University of London to flash occupations of the Tate Modern, public pressure campaigns are the main method used to improve our members’ working lives.

IWGB officials have contacted Goldsmiths management to inform them of the in-housing campaign and CIS to acquire union recognition by the company.

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