

worse work, worse life

Adecco

The working conditions of people who work on temporary contracts or are hired through intermediaries such as temp agencies tend to be worse than when they have a permanent job in the company. Often their wages are lower, they have no guarantee of work, fewer rights and worse working conditions.

ADECCO, as one of the world's biggest temp agencies, in one of the businesses that profits from ensuring that there is also a fresh and abundant supply of human meat to the bosses who do not want to pay to much or have any real obligations to their workers.

WHAT HAPPENED IN THE ABB FACTORY

The main reason we are here leafletting at ADECCO in Warsaw is that we are protesting against its role in a labour conflict that is taking place in Cordoba, Spain. There, members of our sister union, the CNT, have been on strike since November 28 but have been replaced by workers provided by ADECCO. This is their story.

The workers in question were employed by a company called EULEN, which is another agency providing "temporary workers". They were working in the factory of the multinational ABB doing skilled labour – using cranes, forklifts and other equipment to move heavy transformers and other tasks which can be dangerous if done improperly by inexperienced workers. But these people cannot really be considered "temporary workers". Some have been working for the same company for 10-15 years. Despite this, they had no real job security and worse working conditions than people who would have been employed directly. So the workers from the agency in ABB decided to organize to improve their working conditions and even formed two unions.

As we all know, the real reason that many companies use temporary agencies like EULEN or ADECCO is not because the workers are meant to be TEMPORARY, but because the bosses want to give them worse conditions and fire them any time they like, without taking any responsibility. So our colleagues in the union started to have trouble with the bosses.



One way that companies deal with this type of situation then is to simply change the agency. The same work needs to be done and we see how in Poland, when agencies are changed, sometimes the workers are even transferred to the new service provider – but often on worse conditions. Only when the workforce is really organized can they manage to avoid the worst – but still they are stuck on temporary contracts and are not considered to be employed directly in the place they actually do work.

ABB decided that they would start using ADECCO and hopefully get rid of the workers who had decided to organize themselves and to try to get better working conditions. When the workers found out about this, they decided to go on strike. Since November 28, they have been camped out in front of the factory. They have taken much action, organized meetings, legal cases and protests on both the national and international level. Locally, about 500 people came out to support the strikers in a mass show of solidarity in Cordoba.

Unfortunately ABB responded by hiring strikebreakers, violating their right to strike. On December 31, EULEN fired the majority of the strike committee and on January 11, they fired everyone who had been working at ABB.

All of this constitutes violations of the right to strike.

We are here today, because we condemn ADECCO's role in providing strikebreakers and in opportunistically replacing the staff who had always done their done properly. There is no reason that these people should still not be employed – except for corporate greed.

WE ARE NOT TRASH

This is not the first time we have come here to ADECCO. We are also here because, in general, we object to the increased use of such agencies to lower working conditions and hence the quality of life of millions of workers in this country and around the world.

The ADECCO webpage has many articles boasting about the huge increase in the use of temporary work agencies, but for us, this is nothing to celebrate. Temporary workers typically have fewer benefits and less job security and simply are treated as disposable.

No matter what PR spin they put on it, ADECCO's slogan "better work, better life" is nothing more than an obscene manipulation of the truth.

To all temporary workers reading this, and to all those on trash contracts or who are really employees at our workplace, but forced to be on a civil contract or pretend you are self-employed – this is not right and you cannot spend your whole life waiting for the axe to fall on you. Know your rights, get informed and get organized!

For information on the rights of temporary workers and how to establish your working relationship, consult the downloads section of our site: pracownik.net.pl (Polish)

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