

# **News from Germany**

## **Zara: Attacks against Works Council Elections**

At the stores of fashion retailer Zara, the current preparations for the next works council elections are not going ahead too smoothly in some places: Zara managers, for instance, oppose to trainings for workers who are members of the electoral bodies, keep bickering about where in the store electoral info for the workers can (or cannot) be displayed, or hold back money needed for sending out election documents - *is this all just harmless, petty squabble?*

Meanwhile, there are many issues in store for the new works councils at the Zara stores, pressing and distressing the workers: warehouse capacities and retail activities are being outsourced, jobs are being cut, permanent staff is being replaced by less-paid temporary workers. Problems with occupational health and safety keep turning up, as do problems with scheduling and working hours - making it hard for workers with families to make ends meet.

In order to be able to address all these problems, the store workers are in severe need of committed, independent works councils who are elected by workers themselves, in a democratic process, without any interference by the employer. Only this kind of process can ever yield a works council that genuinely acts in favour of the workers - *and the workers have a legal right to it!*

So what is Zara doing? Spying on trade union assemblies, throwing stones in the way of works council elections, and trying over again to get rid of committed works council members by conjuring up reasons to fire them. Thus, the company massively violates workers' rights, as well as the rights of their democratically elected works councils.

***Let's not allow Zara to get away with it!***



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