

VareseNews

“We’re not slaves.” The protest by employees of the cooperatives at Malpensa

Pubblicato: Martedì 9 Dicembre 2014

"We're not *sclavi*." This was no mistake, because Ndiaye is a French-speaking Senegalese man, and he was adapting French word "esclave". The others around him, mostly Moroccans and Pakistanis, nodded while they were protesting outside the Varese offices of the Italian social security institute, **INPS**. They are the members-employees of a number of cooperatives which operate in the sector of **logistics at Malpensa Airport**, where the continual transferring of contracts from one company to another, is putting the **severance pay, salaries and health insurance fund** at risk. In the case of Ndiaye and his colleagues, who earn **€1400 a month, the arrears range from €3000 to €5000**. "We're members only when there's money to pay out, not when there's money to receive," the worker commented ironically.

However, the latest surprise concerns social security cushions, because the employees of **S.L.T.M., a cooperative** that works on request from **Alha Airport SpA in Cargo City**, have seen sums of money withheld from their pay slips, with the following explanation: "rec. social security payments". In effect, the cooperative has asked its employees to pay sums of money **in order to recover the special redundancy fund payments**, which were apparently more than what was due. **Antonio Ferrari**, the **Secretary of the independent trade unions, COBAS**, explained, "We've come to the offices of INPS, because we're facing a serious anomaly; the company can't take the place of INPS and ask the employees for that money, because it has no right to do so. Since when has the company been a money collector on behalf of INPS? But what adds insult to injury is the fact that the sums the company is trying to recover were never received by the employees, as INPS never paid them."

Essentially, the employees of the cooperative had sums deducted from their pay packets that they had never received. Furthermore, according to the trade union, **undue** deductions were made on some employees, for "**sickness pay above what was right**", a matter over which there is a current dispute.

Ferrari continued, "We acknowledge that the INPS director **Minerva** not only listened to us, but also assured us a quick answer, because on the issues raised, there is already an open question, with conditions. The system of cooperatives is harmful; in the past, we always reported dubious situations."

Ferrari's reference is to **an investigation for fraud and tax evasion**, which began in 2012, following a report by the **Joint Base Committees**, and which was carried out by the **Italian Finance Police**, which involved two cargo logistics and services cooperatives at Malpensa Airport.

The **members-employees** still have one weapon to resolve their problems: the right to vote at an assembly, which will be decisive when the budget has to be approved. They swear they are going to fight, but there are those who are more sceptical. "The problem will be got around," **Gaspere Mauro**, a COBAS representative, concluded, "by bringing in another cooperative."

And only those that fall in line will have the job.”

Redazione VareseNews

redazione@varesenews.it