

# No to the amendment of Germany's Postal Act! Build action committees independent of the Verdi union!

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With the amendment of the Postal Act, the German federal government is preparing a massive deterioration of workers' working conditions. But the protest on Monday organised by the trade union Verdi is not meant to repel these attacks. The union has long been working behind the scenes to push through restructuring in close collaboration with management at Deutsche Post. It already proved this in February when it stalled the strike at the post office and then imposed severe real-wage losses on the workers.

The Postal Act regulates the framework conditions for postal and parcel services in Germany. It could set minimum standards regarding wages and working conditions for all licensed companies and so put an end to the outrageous exploitative conditions in parcels delivery in particular. For example, lower working hours, higher minimum wages and maximum parcel weights for one-person handling could be set, to which all companies would have to adhere. This would also require the introduction of a licensing requirement for companies in the parcels sector, which so far only exists for letters.

But the government is planning the exact opposite of this. It wants to use the move to digitalisation and from letters to parcels to abolish the last regulations and intensify exploitation. There is no draft of the law yet, but in the key points released in January of this year, the Ministry of Economics already stated that the licensing requirement in the letters sector makes "market access for letter service providers" more difficult. The intention is to establish a uniform digital procedure and "reduce unnecessary barriers to market entry." In addition, "competition is to be strengthened" in the letters sector, and here in particular for small

consignments.

What this deregulation means can be clearly observed in parcels delivery. Without any regulation, employees of sub- and sub-sub-contractors are exploited to the hilt. Piecework, no minimum wage or sick pay, and personal liability for accidents or parking violations are ubiquitous. Many employees are forced to work overtime and risk ruining their health. These criminal working conditions are now to be extended further.

When Verdi complains about these working conditions, it is pure hypocrisy. The works council representatives and union functionaries were involved in the privatisation and deregulation of postal services from the beginning and have earned handsomely from it themselves. There are ten Verdi representatives on the supervisory board of Deutsche Post alone, who collectively receive more than one million euros a year.

Verdi is now continuing this policy. It has only called on Deutsche Post workers to demonstrate on Monday—and not those of the other logistics companies—and has also coordinated the protest very closely with management. The union's demands essentially follow the management line. Criticism does not focus on the catastrophic working conditions, but on the threat to the competitive advantages of Deutsche Post. Verdi is against greater transparency in the setting of prices by the postal service and against restrictions for postal subcontractors.

Verdi's justification is that Deutsche Post secures jobs through collective agreements and is therefore allowed to charge higher prices. In fact, every additional euro earned goes into the pockets of investors. For the past business year, Deutsche Post reported a record profit (EBIT) of 8.4 billion euros.

This profit is generated on the backs of the workers. In no other German company is the gap between managers' salaries and workers' average income as high as at Deutsche Post. Five years ago, Deutsche Post boss Frank Appel earned 232 times as much as an average postal worker, who with an entry-level monthly salary of €2,500 earns just 61 percent of the average salary of full-time employees in Germany—and this with a constantly increasing workload.

Verdi itself enforces these exploitative conditions against the workers. In February, when postal workers voted by an 86 percent majority in favour of strike action and against a contract that meant severe cuts in real wages, the union bureaucrats ignored this ballot and put the wage cuts to the vote again with a few cosmetic changes. The result is an almost intolerable situation for postal workers.

This wages' robbery, and the further deteriorations now coming through the Postal Act, are part of wider attacks on all workers. There have also been settlements in the public sector and in the metal-working industries that are far below the increase in consumer prices. In the auto industry, for example, the move to electric vehicles is being used as a pretext to destroy tens of thousands of jobs.

In addition, there are to be the most severe cuts in health, education, and housing in the history of post-war Germany. The budgets in these areas are being slashed to finance the horrendous rearmament spending and the proxy war against Russia in Ukraine. War abroad goes hand in hand with class war at home. Verdi explicitly backed this pro-war course at its congress in September and made clear it fully supports the government's attacks.

To stop the amendment of the postal law and to enforce the rights of all logistics workers, the workers at Deutsche Post and all other logistics companies must unite in rank-and-file action committees independent of the unions. Such committees are committed to the grassroots and must take the fight against the inhuman working conditions into their own hands. We call on all logistics workers to join the Postal Action Committee. Send a Whatsapp message to +491633378340 and register below.

In the field of logistics, it is clear that the needs of the workers, and also customers, are incompatible with the profit principle of capitalism. While efficient logistics

require a comprehensive infrastructure and the greatest possible planning, the postal market is split into countless individual companies that offset the resulting inefficiencies by exploiting workers all the more brutally. More and more deliverers are ringing the same doorbell on the same day and working under increasingly precarious conditions.

Rational planning requires the expropriation of the big logistics corporations and their democratic control by the workers. Only when the power of the banks and corporations is broken can the needs of the people take centre stage, and only then can the development of war be stopped, and a catastrophe prevented. The Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei (Socialist Equality Party) is fighting for this socialist perspective in the European elections. If you are a registered voter in Germany, please sign up to enable us to participate.



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