

“I and many of my coworkers support the Deutsche Post Postal Workers Action Committee”

Canada Post worker supports German colleagues’ struggle against wage and job cuts

Daniel Berkley
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The following statement was sent to the World Socialist Web Site by Daniel Berkley, a leading member of the Postal Workers Rank-and-File Committee (Canada), in response to a statement issued by the Deutsche Post Action Committee earlier this month. That statement called on Deutsche Post workers to reject a proposed contract endorsed by the Verdi union that will slash workers’ real wages and allow management to eliminate 8,000 postal worker jobs this year. To contact the PWRFC, fill out the form below or email canadapostworkersrfc@gmail.com.

Greetings from Ontario, Canada. My name is Daniel Berkley, and I am a rural postal worker. I and many of my coworkers support the Deutsche Post Postal Workers Action Committee. The global working class is under assault from the ruling class and postal workers are front and center in the firing line.

I read your committee’s statement earlier this month and felt that the attacks you’re facing, including 8,000 job cuts and a cut in real wages, sound just like what we’re going through here.

I was among the 55,000 Canada Post workers who were on strike for a full month ending in mid-December last year. The Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW), rejecting a 95 percent strike mandate from its members, collaborated with the government to prematurely halt our strike. The union played a key role in isolating our strike from other sections of workers, allowing the government to step in and legalize it. To stop our struggle taking on an explicitly political or international form, the labour minister in Canada’s Liberal government issued an authoritarian order, based on a cooked-up reinterpretation of the Canada Labour Code, to force us back to work without even so much as a vote in parliament.

As all this was going on, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau was forced to resign, despite the help he received from the unions to suppress our strike. This shows that if we had taken control of our strike out of the bureaucracy’s hands and fought to broaden it to other sections of workers—all of whom are facing similar attacks—we could have pushed company management and their backers in the unstable Liberal government onto the back foot in the struggle for our demands. We struck for job security and wage increases after years of stagnant wages, demands that would have found strong support throughout the working class.

Trudeau’s replacement, former central banker Mark Carney, was chosen by just over 100,000 members of the governing big business Liberal Party without any popular vote. Here in North America, the capitalist oligarchy is openly taking over governments and dictating policy to further swell their fortunes. US President Donald Trump, is threatening to annex Canada, while he eviscerates the rights of immigrants and all working people in America.

The attacks on democracy and our working conditions portend major attacks on workers around the globe and across all industries. The ruling classes across Europe and North America are soaking up profits while the economy transitions towards a total war economy. The tariffs Trump has initiated against Canada and other countries aim to bring manufacturing industries key for war production back to the US, and offload America’s crisis onto its rivals. They have nothing to do with defending American workers, who, like workers across North America, will end up paying more for goods and losing their jobs due to reduced exports if the trade war intensifies.

Your statement pointed to the Verdi union’s

involvement in so-called “concerted action,” where the government, bosses, and union heads meet behind closed doors to determine how much to cut your wages and what other attacks to carry through in order to fund German rearmament. The same collaboration between the bosses, government ministers, and union bureaucrats takes place here. CUPW recently joined the Canada-US Trade Council, which includes representatives from the main union federations and the biggest employer groups, and works hand-in-glove with the federal government and its own corporatist, tripartite Advisory Council on Canada-US relations.

At one of these meetings, CUPW President Jan Simpson even sat down to discuss a “united” trade-war policy with Labour Minister Steve MacKinnon, the same man who ordered an end to our strike! The Council is helping plan Canadian capitalism’s response to Trump’s barrage of tariff threats and actions. The union leaders tell us that we can defend our jobs and conditions by supporting “our own” capitalists in “Team Canada.” They are blocking us from uniting with our working class brothers and sisters in the US who are suffering under Trump’s drive to establish a dictatorship and the trade war just as much as we are. At the same time, they are providing political support and cover for “Team Canada’s” plans to gut our rights, cut our wages, and privatize our public services so that the workers, not Canadian capitalism, pay for the trade war.

Whatever remains of the concessions made to the working class in an earlier period are now on the chopping block. One expression of this is the ruling elite’s drive to reduce postal workers in Canada to Amazon-style gig-workers and privatize all the profitable parts of Canada Post Corporation. The CUPW acknowledged last week that the Committee on Internal Trade, a body that oversees the Canada Free Trade Agreement (CFTA) that governs trade between Canada’s provinces, is seeking “to remove the federal exception for the exclusive privilege from the CFTA.” What this would mean in practice is that Canada Post would no longer have the “exclusive privilege” to deliver letter-mail across the country. Private courier firms that pay workers far less and grant them few to no rights and benefits will undercut us, especially in urban areas where mail can be delivered cheaply.

CUPW is collaborating with the government and company management to bring this about. Our union is trying to cover up this reality, telling us in a statement that “what has happened with postal deregulation around the

world in the last two decades is not necessarily indicative of what would happen in Canada today.” The reasons given for this wild claim include bad “timing,” “geography, climate,” and “the environmental impacts of delivering the mail.” The unions have given up on the working class so completely that they consider us all imbeciles who will believe any lie that they dish out!

The forward march of technology must stop being misused to make billionaires richer and more destructive war machines. We must fight for technology to be placed under the control of the working class, so we can use it for the benefit of all! Automation is sequencing our mail, and AI is dynamically adjusting our routes day-to-day in Canada Post. These significant increases in efficiency could be used to reduce our workload with no loss in pay, but for that, workers’ control is needed.

I am sure it will come as no surprise to anyone reading this that under the control of Canada Post’s corporate management, these amazing technological advances lead to longer, more difficult and dangerous jobs for the same or lower pay.

We set up the Postal Workers Rank-and-File Committee (PWRFC) prior to our strike last year to fight for rank-and-file workers to take control of our contract struggle. We postal workers deliver mail, parcels and admail every single day, and we postal workers are discovering our social power. If we break from the nationalism and corporatism of the unions, we have a real opportunity to organize with other sections of workers and lead an international working class revolt against capitalist exploitation and war, and spearhead the fight for better jobs and living conditions in Canada, United States, Mexico, Germany and beyond.

Workers of the world unite! In solidarity,
Daniel Berkley



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