

DHL Deutsche Post: Verdi overrides member opposition, accepts real wage cuts and job losses for German postal workers

Marianne Arens
4 April 2025

On Monday, the collective bargaining committee of the service trade union Verdi accepted a wage agreement at Germany's postal service that includes a reduction in real wages and job cuts. It thereby defied the vote of its own membership, which had clearly rejected the result.

A membership vote conducted from March 10 to 28 officially showed a rejection rate of 54 percent, and this figure was often significantly higher at larger workplaces. For example, in IPZ1, the postal center at Rhine-Main Airport, just 28 percent voted in favor and 72 percent against. Many Verdi members complained online that they had “not been consulted at all.” Others had to travel to the union headquarters in Frankfurt to cast a vote. One postal worker, a Verdi member, wrote in a Verdi group: “I didn’t vote at all, nobody asked me, and many of my colleagues weren’t asked either.”

The Verdi leadership then arrogantly equated the membership vote with a strike ballot in order to deduce from it that there should be no strike action against the poor result. The Verdi statement said: “According to our statutes, at least 75 percent would have to vote in favor of an indefinite strike in a ballot. That is why the honorary bargaining commission accepted the collective bargaining offer despite the 54 percent rejection in the membership vote.”

The wage agreement is a provocation: it starts with a pay freeze from January to March 2025 and then provides for a clear real wage reduction with a nominal pay increase of 2.0 percent from April. The official inflation rate is 2.3 percent, and workers’ original demand was for seven percent. Wages will not rise by a further three percent until April 2026. Instead of the one-year term called for by the workers, the new agreement has a term of 24 months, which means a two-year commitment not to strike.

Workers demanded urgently needed relief and three additional holidays. All that remains of this in the agreement is just one additional holiday. Stress and workload will increase even further. Just two days after the end of the wage

negotiations, it became known what Verdi Vice-Chairwoman Andrea Kocsis, also Deputy Chairwoman of the DHL Deutsche Post Supervisory Board, undoubtedly already knew: the Group will cut a further 8,000 jobs in the letter and parcel business. Verdi has also given its blessing to this with the agreement.

Anger is widespread in the more than 100 letter and parcel centers and post offices. The nationwide warning strikes have already shown this, as have the comments on the internet over the last few days. Typical comments from postal workers include, “This is fraud,” “I don’t believe it,” “this is ridiculous!!! The whole thing was a pure show, nothing more and nothing less,” and “the result was already known beforehand.” Several wrote that they are resigning their Verdi membership because they have the impression that “nobody listens to us after all.”

This impression is justified: the Verdi leadership around Frank Werneke and Kocsis see their goal as preventing industrial action at all costs. Two years ago, the same Verdi leadership already sabotaged the postal workers, who were ready to strike after 85.9 percent of members voted in favor of a strike to push for a 15 percent wage increase. And once again, the Verdi leadership is pushing through a poor result against its own members in the interests of the management board, supervisory board, shareholders and government.

Verdi is thus enabling the DHL-Deutsche Post management board and the incoming coalition government of Christian Democratic Union/Christian Social Union and Social Democrats under Friedrich Merz that stands behind it to push through further harsh attacks on the postal workers in order to finance their insane rearmament policy. The Verdi leadership—like the entire DGB (German Trade Union Federation) leadership—is an integral part of German big business and government; it also actively supports their policy of war and austerity. In order to increase the profits of parasites such as Deutsche Post shareholder BlackRock, today’s DHL Group is being further dismantled, profitable

parts such as e-commerce are being outsourced and the cost-intensive letter and parcel service is being further cut back.

The Verdi committees and networks throughout the company are taking on the task of binding the postal workers hand and foot and forestalling a social uprising. For this reason, it is necessary to break with Verdi and set up independent rank-and-file committees in order to take control out of the hands of the union apparatus. This is why the Deutsche Post Action Committee was set up two years ago. It organizes workers independently of the union bureaucracy and unites them across sectoral and national borders.

Workers cannot accept the agreement at Deutsche Post. It would not only have catastrophic consequences for postal workers, but also serves as a precedent for workers in the public sector and other companies, such as the Berlin public transport operator BVG. Wage disputes are also taking place there, and Verdi is using every trick in the book to push through a sellout agreements.

Over the last few weeks, the union bureaucrats have already done everything they could to carefully keep the strikes separate so as to sabotage a joint movement. Now they want to lead each group of workers to the slaughter individually, starting with the postal workers.

This must not be allowed to happen. Workers in the postal service, local transport and the public sector must withdraw the negotiating mandate from Verdi and organize themselves independently in rank-and-file committees to organize a joint indefinite all-out strike against the real wage cuts and the rearmament drive that the ruling class wants workers to pay for.

These struggles must be linked internationally, because workers face the same problems in every country. In the UK, the Postal Workers Rank-and-File Committee (PWRFC) has taken up the fight against a profit-driven financial oligarchy that has been privatizing the postal service at the expense of workers since 2013. Since then, 20,000 jobs have been cut and employees are facing ever-increasing workloads and stagnating wages. Although British postal workers rejected privatization by 96 percent, the union bureaucracy has managed to systematically cripple, isolate and sell out their opposition.

A week ago, a postal worker from Ontario, Canada, sent a letter to the Postal Workers Action Committee in Germany on behalf of his colleagues, stating: “The global working class is under assault from the ruling class and postal workers are front and center in the firing line.” The letter reported on how the Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW) bowed to a government order that shut down a four-week strike by 55,000 Canada Post workers last winter, ignoring a strike mandate from 95 percent of its members.

Now Canada Post—just like in Germany—is threatened with being dismantled, with what is left of the public service being privatised and deregulated. The Canadian postal worker writes: “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.”

In the US, colleagues at the USPS (United States Postal Service) are currently under particularly vicious attack. The Trump administration has ordered fascist billionaire Elon Musk and his Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) to eliminate tens of thousands of jobs. Last Sunday, March 30, the American Postal Workers Rank-and-File Committee held an online meeting to strategize against this.

Socialist autoworker Will Lehman, who participated in this online meeting, explained the goals of the action committees and their umbrella organization, the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees (IWA-RFC). He explained: “It is about workers having independent power from the trade union bureaucracies, from both capitalist political parties [the Democrats and Republicans in the US], and promoting a network where workers can get together and learn the most valuable lessons of the past. The vast majority of workers who want to fight don’t see a way to fight.”

The Transport Workers Action Committee in Berlin raised the following fundamental question: “Do we workers, who produce everything and provide all services to keep society functioning, have the right to strike to enforce decent wages and reasonable working conditions? Or do the speculators, billionaires and their politicians have the right to keep lowering wages and increasing exploitation in order to increase their profits and finance their rearmament and war policies?” To ask the question is to answer it.

The Deutsche Post Action Committee calls on all employees in the letter and parcel delivery services, sorting and distribution centers and post offices: Get in touch with us by sending a WhatsApp message to the mobile number +49 163-3378 340 or register using the form below!



To contact the WSWs and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact