

6,000 US DHL workers authorize nationwide strike action

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Roughly 6,000 workers at international logistics corporation DHL voted by 96 percent to authorize strike action earlier this month. The contract for members of the Teamsters in 16 states expires with DHL Express on March 31.

This is the latest in a growing list of worker struggles against the company, which employs 600,000 people across the globe.

In 2021, UK truck drivers authorized strike action against poverty wages after the company offered a pitiful one percent pay increase. In 2022, 70 delivery drivers struck against DHL contractor Northeast Transportation Services in Pawtucket, Rhode Island. Workers were pepper sprayed on the picket line by police and five were arrested. In 2023, 1,100 DHL workers struck for 11 days at the Global Superhub at Cincinnati Airport, and thousands of workers struck for one day at the German mail carrier Deutsche Post, which is operated by DHL.

Last year, the Verdi union in Germany pushed through a sellout contract at Deutsche Post which cuts wages after inflation. 2025 also saw a three week strike by 2,100 Canadian DHL workers and a strike by DHL workers at Halle/Leipzig Airport in Germany.

DHL, like many other logistics companies has been shifting its operations as a response to the coronavirus pandemic. A rapid increase in package volume prompted an expansion in operations that could not be sustained. When volumes began to return to pre-pandemic levels, companies like DHL sought to re-balance their books at the expense of workers with sub-inflation pay raises and layoffs.

In 2025, DHL announced the layoff of 8,000 workers in Germany and over the past several years it has laid off hundreds in the US. This came as revenue fell for

DHL from \$84.2 billion in 2024 to \$82.9 billion in 2025.

However, the reduction in revenue is not a simple sign of economic distress. DHL actually increased its profit by 3.7 percent to over \$6.1 billion in 2025, overcoming revenue losses from trade tensions with the United States.

These figures expose any claim from management that they cannot afford to pay more for worker pay, conditions and benefits.

DHL employees are incredibly underpaid, with warehouse workers making between \$33,000 to \$48,000 on average according to hiring website Glassdoor. These pay rates are similar to the poverty wages offered to part-time workers at UPS, where workers demanded starting pay increases to \$25 per hour during contract talks in 2023. Instead, the Teamsters pushed through a contract which is now being used to lay off tens of thousands as the company implements automation in its facilities as part of its “Network of the Future.”

Just as at UPS, the Teamsters in 2023 declared a great victory for striking workers at Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport, with 22.5 percent wage increases over five years. But that only brought wages up to \$27.21 at the base rate. The MIT Living Wage Calculator estimates the living wage in Cincinnati for two working parents with two children at \$27.72 an hour.

Today DHL Express workers face an even more intransigent union bureaucracy in bed with management. Since becoming Teamsters President, Sean O'Brien has overseen the sellout of UPS and the subsequent elimination of nearly 100,000 jobs there, the destruction of 22,000 jobs at Yellow Inc., and the sabotage of Teamster members' participation in the

Minneapolis general strike against ICE occupation.

O'Brien in particular has positioned himself as an ally of the billionaire fascist President Trump. He spoke at the Republican National Convention in 2024, has boasted of speaking to Trump multiple times a month and has endorsed Markwayne Mullin to head the Department of Homeland Security, whom he had previously challenged to a fist fight during a Congressional hearing.

This is an expression of the pro-capitalist orientation of the union apparatus. O'Brien is working to market himself and the Teamsters as a useful ally to Trump through their ability to control strikes and suppress the class struggle.

These conditions facing DHL workers raises the necessity for an independent struggle. To oppose the sellout at UPS workers formed the UPS Workers Rank-and-File Committee to expose the sell out and organize opposition. DHL workers must take up a similar struggle to build their own leadership, organized through rank-and-file committees in every workplace.

Such a movement must seek to mobilize the strongest tool DHL workers have: the international scale of DHL. DHL operates in over 220 countries worldwide with hundreds of thousands of employees facing similar issues to win better pay and conditions. This level of globalization lays the ground for a powerful international movement of the working class to win their demands.



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