

Berlin transport strike: Workers write to the WSWS about Verdi sell-out

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The calling off of the recent strike by Berlin transport workers and the contents of the contract negotiated by the Verdi (United Services Union) bureaucracy have led to vigorous conflicts between workers and union officials.

A WSWS statement urging workers to reject the deal in the vote to be held May 19-22 was downloaded by a number of Berlin transport authority (BVG) employees and distributed to their fellow workers. For their part, Verdi officials furiously opposed the WSWS statement. We post below some of the letters received by the editorial board.

To the editorial board,

I agree 100 percent with the article. I am a Berlin Transport worker and was on the strike committee. Unfortunately, however, it is not enough that people are angry. I am afraid that the 25 percent vote needed to ratify [the contract] will be reached, because those in the east of the city did not believe in the struggle and individuals on their own are not in a position to be able to change anything.

Please check out this “swine.” I have heard that [Verdi negotiator] Frank Bäsler is soon to become personnel director for the BVG (Underground), is that true? If so, then the good years with Verdi are finished and it is time to fight.

Yours sincerely, Berlin Transport bus driver

I have passed on your PDF file to colleagues.

To whom it may concern,

I read your contributions with great interest, in particular those concerning the BVG, where I am employed as a bus driver.

The truth that you write—and I am convinced that it is the truth—is simply scandalous.

In February of this year, I personally sent two letters to Mr. Bäsler and distributed them as an open letter in my depot in Britz [a Berlin district], as well as

distributing them to many colleagues. I never received an answer.

Keep up the good work!

Re article: Berlin transport workers’ strike: The WSWS editorial board replies to a Verdi shop steward

Bravo, you have addressed things that have annoyed many BVG’ers.

I have (and, hopefully, I wasn’t the only one) sent an answer to the shop steward Rainer Sommer, who vigorously argued against the WSWS article a week ago. Even though I am by no means in agreement with all of your ideas and convictions, one should nevertheless always hear (or read) ALL views on an issue before one forms an opinion. Anyone who just relies on the gutter press (BZ or BILD [tabloid newspapers]) will not be able to see the world correctly, and this also includes the views put forward in the TAZ and foreign press.

I also enclose my answer to Rainer Sommer.

Letter to Verdi shop steward Rainer Sommer

Dear Brother Sommer,

Naturally, this Internet site [WSWS] represents a political tendency that does not appeal to everybody. Nevertheless, the views put forward there are part of a spectrum that one should take note of and listen to, and there a few truths (or pieces of wisdom?) put forward that are not exactly flattering to Verdi.

The fact is, however, that it is hardly possible to conduct a labour struggle in a more clumsy or dilettantish manner than was the case in the recently ended (or should I say interrupted?) BVG dispute. And one can decide for oneself who is the more polemical when one reads your letter...

In the long run, you raised concrete expectations that have now not been fulfilled. How loudly the shop steward councils shouted “8 percent and not a cent less!”—and thereby raised high expectations amongst

workers. Everyone can now work out—even if mathematics is not his strong point—that the days on strike have resulted in more losses than he will ever earn over the next two years—a really “terrific result.”

And when you write that on this Internet site, “partially incorrect statements are made,” then concretise these statements and tell us what they are and what is the “truth” (Verdi = truth).

I hope, by the way, that the strike ballot ends negatively for you because your own behaviour deserves that you be exposed and confront a situation that amounts to conceding the bankruptcy of the Verdi strike leadership. I will also call upon everyone to vote “NO” on the deal. But everyone should decide for themselves, and that also means they should not allow themselves to be influenced by those responsible in Verdi.

BVG shop steward Rainer Sommer had distributed the following statement:

Dear colleagues!

If one lets oneself be taken in by such Trotskyite twaddle, one should nevertheless keep one’s head and read in a critical manner: In the article (independently of its political standpoint), partially incorrect statements are made, which, in my opinion, indicate that the person responsible does not have much idea of our internal workings and also was not involved in the wage negotiations—not even as a “mere striker.”

In my eyes, this article carries out a polemic with demagogic means from a certain political standpoint, which is not exactly helpful in arriving at a rounded-out opinion for the upcoming ballot.

By the way: the late date for the ballot is due amongst other things to the Easter holidays, and aimed at obtaining a higher participation.



To contact the WSWs and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

[wsws.org/contact](https://www.wsws.org/contact)