

Berlin transport workers support struggle of US rail workers

Berlin Transport Workers Action Committee
23 September 2022

This letter was sent by the Berlin Transport Workers Action Committee to the Railroad Workers Rank-and-File Committee in the United States which is organising workers in opposition to the White House-brokered sellout contract announced last week to block a national strike.

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Dear Colleagues,

We are closely following the reports on the *World Socialist Web Site* about your struggle against the conspiracy of the trade union bureaucracy, company management and Joe Biden's arbitration board, the Presidential Emergency Board (PEB). This conspiracy seeks to annul your right to strike and impose an unacceptable contract.

The extension of the "cooling-off period" over the contract you rejected gives your enemies time to find ways and means to bring you to your knees. In response you must use the time to mobilise fellow workers for the necessary struggle and concretise your demands.

At your meeting last Wednesday you passed resolutions we regard as very important and fully support. They are not only at the centre of your resistance against the sell-out but are also relevant for us, because we face very similar problems:

- The defence of the democratic right to strike and the right of the workforce to vote democratically on proposed contracts;

- A contract agreement that substantially improves our miserable working conditions and raises wages to a level where we can make a living, despite rapidly rising inflation;

- A majority vote of the entire workforce on the contract, which union bureaucrats are not authorised to sign without our approval.

We may be separated by an ocean and thousands of

air miles, and our unions, our companies and our governments may be called something else, but we share the same concerns with you and with colleagues around the world:

How are we to work reasonably under conditions of enormous pressure without endangering ourselves or others? How are we supposed to stay healthy without ending up losing our jobs and incomes?

How are we supposed to support ourselves and our families week after week on such wages when the costs of food, rent, energy and petrol are rising rapidly?

We too face a united front of the unions, management and government that rejects all of our demands for better working conditions, health protection and decent wages.

We must oppose this united front with the united force of the working class. Our form of organisation are the action committees we have created, which work exclusively on a grassroots basis.

Experience has shown the trade unions cannot be reformed. Trade union bureaucrats will betray and sell us out again and again. Nowhere in the world have workers succeeded, via the mechanism of trade unions, in defending the social gains that our parents, grandparents and great-grandparents fought for at huge sacrifice.

For the union bureaucrats, we workers are a commodity to be sold dirt cheap to their respective management. The cheaper they sell us, the higher their princely reward!

In the public transport companies in Berlin, where we transport people to work, school and home 24 hours a day for low wages, the union secretaries in charge receive around 8,000 euros a month.

The public service union Verdi made a nationwide turnover of 488 million euros last year. The union's

strike coffers are bursting because every strike is isolated, strangled and sold out.

Experience has also shown that the union bureaucrats play us off not only against our colleagues in other factories but also against our colleagues in the same industries who work at different sites or in other countries. They try to divide us to ensure we are powerless against our common enemies.

Our action committees can overcome this artificial division. They are organisations by workers for workers. And the internet is our technical tool to overcome the barriers of space, time and information.

You are not only resisting your management and union officials, you are courageously standing up to the political conspiracy of government, union and company.

We stand firmly at your side and will publicise your struggle and experiences among our colleagues. We will inform fellow workers about the importance of your struggle which is also our fight. We are mobilising our colleagues to work together in the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees (IWA-RFC).

No to the sell-out by the unions!

All power and control to the workers in the factories!

With solidarity and militant greetings,

Nihat Pak and Andy Niklaus

Berlin Transport Workers Action Committee

Send in your statements of support to the Railroad Workers Rank-and-File Committee by filling out the form below:



To contact the WSWs and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

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