

# For an all-out strike at Berlin local transit operator BVG: Don't be fooled by the Verdi union!

Transport Workers Action Committee  
17 April 2025

Fellow transit workers,

The latest negotiations result hardly differs from the previous arbitration proposal, which was an outrageous sham, and is miles away from our original demands. Nevertheless, the Verdi trade union is setting its entire bureaucratic apparatus in motion to push through this sell-out.

Acting completely undemocratically, Verdi officials are overriding the decision of the members. In a ballot on 4 April, 95.4 percent voted in favour of an indefinite all-out strike. However, Verdi refuses to recognise this vote and organise an all-out strike.

Instead, chief negotiator Jeremy Arndt, his henchman Manuel von Stubenrauch and their cohorts are spreading mendacious propaganda in articles, video statements and online meetings in order to whitewash the outcome of the negotiations. No distortion of the facts is too crude for them.

They adopt the arguments of the BVG management, the Berlin Senate (state executive) and the federal government. They claim that in view of the austerity measures announced by the Senate and the coalition agreement struck by the Christian Democrats (CDU/CSU) and Social Democrats (SPD) to form the next federal government, the outcome of the negotiations must be accepted. They warn of the consequences of a rejection and claim a full strike would not bring any improvement but would “jeopardise what has been achieved.”

This makes two things clear. First, the Verdi leadership and its apparatus of officials are on the opposite side, i.e., on the side of the BVG, the Senate and the federal government.

It is no coincidence that Arndt and other officials sit on the BVG supervisory board and are members of the governing parties. Verdi collects membership dues from

the workers, but acts completely against our interests. Verdi is orientated towards the economic interests of BVG and the political requirements of the Senate and government.

The second conclusion that must be drawn from the Verdi campaign against an all-out strike is to build up the rank-and-file Transport Workers Action Committee!

We oppose the union lackeys of the BVG board in the negotiating committee based on a fundamentally different principle: Our needs as workers stand higher than the profit interests of management and their political backers. We are the ones who maintain local public transport under extremely difficult working conditions.

Our demand for €750 more per month plus an increase in shift allowances is meant seriously. After Verdi has forced us into one bad contract after another for years, and the losses in real wages are continuing in the face of rapid price increases, it is time to draw the line. Our original demand is the lower limit to stop the loss of real wages and must be implemented.

That is why we, as an action committee, firmly oppose Verdi's propaganda lies.

The first lie is that Verdi is presenting the current ballot on the negotiations result as a strike vote, inferring that even if well over 50 percent of members vote against this but a minority of 25 percent vote in favour, it will be deemed that the pay offer has been accepted.

The fact is that a ballot already took place on 4 April in which an overwhelming majority voted in favour of an indefinite all-out strike. At the time, it was stated that the result of the ballot would take effect if the arbitration proposal was rejected at the end of the negotiations.

Now we are being led to believe that the arbitration proposal must be rejected once again by a 75 percent “feedback” vote in order to legitimise a strike. This is a

sleight of hand. In reality, the strike ballot has already taken place and the current “feedback” vote is one in which a simple majority decides.

In other words: If over 50 percent of members vote against the result now on the table, it is rejected, and Verdi is obliged to initiate the all-out strike that has already been decided.

In addition, the modalities of the current ballot and the control over the counting of the votes are being kept completely in the dark.

In his video justifying all this, Jeremy Arndt gives three main reasons why he is in favour of accepting arbitration and the final outcome of the negotiations.

His first argument is that an all-out strike would be fraught with great uncertainty “in a situation where it is clear, partly because of the new coalition agreement [to form the next government], that the country has less funding available.”

But what is the new coalition agreement? It is the prelude to enormous attacks on the entire working class in order to finance an insane rearmament programme. The argument that one cannot mount an all-out strike “because the country has fewer finances at its disposal” means subordinating workers to war preparations and social cuts.

In fact, the programme of the new coalition is a compelling reason to go on all-out strike and mobilise broad support from all those who are already under attack, or will soon be.

Arndt’s second argument is that the costs of the contract totalling €140 million had not yet been “fully financed” at BVG. Later, von Stubenrauch expanded on this and spoke about the announcement of severe cost-cutting measures and an “absolute need to economise on the part of the state of Berlin.”

But this is also an argument not against, but in favour of strike action. Social resources must be radically redistributed, and this time taken from those at the top and given to those at the bottom. Those who have been enriching themselves without restraint for decades must be made to pay.

The third argument is that what we are currently experiencing “all over, is companies throwing employees out the door because they have to file for insolvency.” But this only proves that our poor conditions at BVG are part of a broader attack on the entire working class.

Against the backdrop of the wave of mass redundancies, a general strike must be the starting point to unite and mobilise all those threatened and affected by mass redundancies.

But for this to happen, the straitjacket of the Verdi apparatus must be broken and the agreed all-out strike enforced.

A look at the agreement in the public sector and at Deutsche Post makes it clear what Verdi has in mind for us too. Verdi has agreed to a miserable real wage reduction for the 170,000 postal workers. With a 24-month contract term, there is to be a pay freeze for the first three months this year, then a two percent increase from April and a further three percent from April 2026. Although a clear majority of 54 percent voted against it, Verdi signed the agreement.

Arndt & Co. want to repeat exactly the same thing at BVG.

It is therefore necessary to break through Verdi’s control and enforce an indefinite strike. To achieve this, the establishment of the Transport Workers Action Committee is now of the utmost importance.

In November’s election campaign for the BVG Staff Council, we wrote:

We are running in these elections to build new fighting structures that will enable us, rank-and-file transport workers, to intervene directly in workplace disputes.

Our goal is to develop the great strength and power that we have as workers. We want to strengthen the self-confidence of those who keep the city and the country moving. We are not supplicants or beggars. We have rights!

And we know that a joint struggle of all transport workers would paralyze the capital in no time and receive great support from the population.

The organisation of the Transport Workers Action Committee is the first important step towards preparing an indefinite strike to enforce our demands.

- Stop the Verdi sell-out!

- Enforce the all-out strike that has already been decided!

- Get in touch with the Transport Workers Action Committee!

*Send a Whatsapp message to +49 01748402566, and follow us on Facebook, Instagram and Tiktok.*



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

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