

Stockholm metro: The sacking of the chairman of the branch An appeal for support - Connex Employees plan for actions

November 18th has been declared a day of protest against the anti-union policy of Connex in general and against the sacking of Per Johansson in particular. We are appealing for your solidarity.

On September 27th, his employer, Connex Sweden, fired Per Johansson, chairman of the Stockholm metro drivers' branch of SEKO, the Swedish union of Service and Communication Employees. The reason for this was Johansson's alleged disloyalty to the company and his alleged rudeness towards his "fellow employees" (probably referring to his bosses). Connex maintains that the sacking is in no way related to Johansson's role as chairman. The members of his union and other unions think otherwise.

Under Johansson's chairmanship the union has gained considerable ground in questions concerning wages and working hours. The immediate cause for his dismissal, however, is probably his focus on safety and working environment. Together with the elected safety controllers the union has put its finger on several sore spots. The safety controllers have used their power to stop the traffic on three different occasions after severe incidents. Insufficient measures having been taken to remedy the ills, Johansson has gone public. In all likelihood this constitutes his "disloyalty".

Since the sacking of Johansson the metro drivers' branch has convened meetings for its enraged members at least once a week to discuss measures. In Sweden trade unions are tied up by collective labour contracts, and bound by peace obligation. This makes it impossible for SEKO to call for a strike in support of Johansson. Nevertheless, the metro drivers went into action on the morning of October 6th. The Stockholm metro came very close to a complete standstill. At nine o'clock, the traffic was resumed. On the same day a demonstration was staged in front of the main office of Connex Sweden.

The metro drivers' branch has continually taken many actions, putting pressure on Connex to reemploy Per Johansson. One of those actions was the big demonstration on the 20th of October where about 2000 members showed their support for Per. Connex employees in Stockholm are planning for actions the 18th of November, including a large demonstration, a local demonstration on the 7th of November, and other actions.

The metro drivers' branch and SEKO enjoy the unanimous support of the other trade unions of Sweden. Petition lists are being circulated, calling for the reemployment of Johansson. Thousands of leaflets have been distributed. A poster campaign is going on with the motto "We refuse to keep silent!" The national leadership of SEKO is investigating the possibility of a political strike for the freedom of speech. The ITF is exerting pressure on Connex internationally.

Fellow workers all over the world, at the 18th of November a huge demonstration will take place in Sweden; we are calling for your support on this day. You can support us this day by demonstrating or by taking other actions in front of Connex offices or any other office that represents the mother company Veolia, the owner of Connex, Onyx, Dalkia, Veolia Water and others. In case there is no representative of any of the above-mentioned companies in the country you live in, you can still show your support by demonstrating in front of the Swedish embassy.

An urgent call for the unions that have not yet sent their petition lists to do so as soon as possible.

P.S. We need if it's possible, pictures from your actions. Send them to us by mail, so we can show your solidarity actions to our members and the workers in Stockholm's metro.

For the board of the Stockholm metro drivers' branch
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Vice-chairman

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