

New declaration of principles for Swedish syndicalists?

The Umeå Local of SAC, Rasmus Hästbacka

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A proposal from the Umeå Local of SAC. First, a draft was made by the union member Rasmus Hästbacka and discussed at a national seminar on ideology. Then, a refined version was decided by the Umeå Local and submitted to the 2022 SAC Congress. After minor modifications, the text was adopted.

The current Declaration of principles has two shortcomings: the language is unnecessarily complicated and the requirements for membership are unclear. It should be made clear that the SAC is a popular movement with low thresholds, not a group only for super active and convinced activists. We want the Congress to adopt a new and clear Declaration of principles without changing the syndicalist message. The text should be no longer than an A4 page, so that our colleagues can easily read the text at work and become members immediately.

We suggest

– **that** the Congress adopt the following text:

1. **Syndicalism is an international trade union movement.** In Sweden, the movement is represented primarily by the *Central Organization of Workers in Sweden* (SAC). This Declaration of principles expresses the current approach and aspirations of SAC. The text will therefore need to change as the organizing work through our union and the surrounding society develop.
2. **SAC holds that trade unions have a dual function.** In the short term, the struggle through unions is about enforcing immediate improvements in living conditions: higher wages, reduced stress, shorter working hours, an end to sexual harassment, better balance between work and leisure time/family, etc. In the long term, trade unions are tools for democratizing workplaces and thereby building equal societies. The production of goods and services must be managed by us who do the work. The production must also be radically changed in order to be adapted to human needs and the framework of the ecosystem.
3. **The democratic guiding star of SAC is that everyone affected by decisions should have the right to influence decisions.** By building member-run unions, employees can develop the collective strength and competence to introduce staff-driven workplaces in all industries. SAC believes that the only legitimate management is the management that workers have elected, that follows directives from the shop floor and that can be recalled immediately from below.
4. **At each workplace where there are at least three syndicalists, an operating section can be formed.** Such a section is a local union for all occupations except the bosses. Our sections practice self-determination in local affairs and direct democracy. Syndicalists can also form cross-union groups for all employees except bosses. Such groups can be supported by trade unions or function as an independent collaboration between colleagues.
5. **Syndicalists put the common interests of the work force first.** Syndicalists promote cross-union cohesion between all employees. The long-term purpose of building operating sections and cross-union cooperation is for the working population to take over the operation of the economy as a whole.

6. **SAC regards direct action as the means to change workplaces and society at large.** Direct action is action without representatives, carried out by the workers concerned themselves: strikes, blockades, slow-down actions, work-to-rule, etc.
7. **Democracy in the workplace means that the concentration of economic power is dissolved.** The long-term vision of SAC is that the concentration of political power in state and supranational bodies should be dissolved as well. Power must be brought down to the people. Just as every workplace should be governed by the staff, so too should every community be governed by the population.
8. **Democracy in the workplace is a necessary precondition for a classless society, but not a sufficient condition for an equal society.** An equal society presupposes that the social hierarchies based on gender, ethnicity, religion, sexuality and functional variation are also abolished. SAC conducts labour struggles with a feminist and anti-racist perspective. This perspective is a prerequisite for building union solidarity and, in the long run, introducing an equal society.
9. **SAC is an organization for the working class as a whole.** All employees except the bosses are welcome as members. The requirement for membership is that you respect the union democracy, act in solidarity at work and respect the union's independence from all religious and political organizations. Everyone who is not a wage earner is also welcome as a member. In our class organization, all members are important, from the most active to the least active.
10. **Syndicalists build a militant international trade union movement.** Such a movement opens a historic opportunity to introduce equal societies around the world. Thus, a libertarian socialism will be realized. This is the alternative to both "state socialism" of the former Soviet Union and the global capitalism of today. Our vision is nothing less than a world of free and equal people.

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