

Aims & Principles and Organisational Basis

By **Syndicalist Workers' Federation**

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Topics: **IWA, UK, statements of principles**

Aims & Principles

THE SYNDICALIST WORKERS' FEDERATION seeks to establish a free society, which will render impossible the growth of a privileged class and the exploitation of man by man. The SWF therefore advocates common ownership and workers' control of the land, industry, and all means of production and distribution, on the basis of voluntary cooperation. In such a society, the wage system, finance, and money shall be abolished, and goods produced and distributed not for profit, but according to human needs.

CLASS STRUGGLE

The interests of the working class and the ruling class are directly opposed. The SWF is based upon the inevitable day-to-day struggle of the workers against those who own and control the means of production and distribution, and will continue that struggle until common ownership and workers' control are achieved.

DIRECT ACTION

Victory in the fight against class domination can only be achieved by the direct action of the workers themselves. The SWF rejects all parliamentary and similar activity as deflecting the workers from the class struggle into paths of class collaboration.

THE STATE

The State in all its forms is the enemy of the workers, and cannot exist within a classless society. The SWF does not, therefore, hope to use the State to achieve the emancipation of the working class; it does not seek to obtain seats in the Cabinet or Parliament. Nor does it desire to build a new State on the ruins of the old. Any attempt, by an allegedly working class party, to create a new State can only result in a new ruling class.

ORGANIZATION

To achieve these aims the workers must organise. They must replace the hundreds of craft and general trade unions by syndicalist industrial unions. As an immediate step to that end, the SWF aids the formation of workers' committees in all factories, mines, offices, shipyards, mills, and other places of work, and their development into industrial unions, federated to an all-national Federation of Labor.

INTERNATIONALISM

The SWF, as a section of the International Working Men's Association, stands firm for international working class solidarity.

Organizational Basis

1. **NAME** The name of the organisation shall be the Syndicalist Workers' Federation.
2. **MEMBERSHIP** Membership shall be open to all who accept the organisation's aims and are prepared to work actively for their realization.
3. **OBJECTS** Objects of the organisation shall be to:
 - a) Take an active part in the struggle for working class solidarity, shorter working hours, immediate wage increases, and improved working conditions; to propagate direct action as the only effective means in this struggle.
 - b) Oppose all attacks on the working class, whatever form they may take, whether by conscription of labour, strike breaking, drives for increased production and longer working hours, wage cuts, or unemployment.

c) Resist the attempts of all political parties and ambitious individuals to gain control or make use of the workers' industrial organisation.

d) Work for the extension of workers' industrial committees into syndicalist unions, federated to a General Confederation of Labour, and to provide the organisational basis for such a development.

4. INTERNATIONAL AFFILIATION To further its aim of international working-class solidarity, the organisation shall be affiliated to the International Working Men's Association.

5. TRADE UNIONS Members shall, with the exception of particular cases, belong to their appropriate trade union and, where possible, become shop stewards and work through the Trades Councils.

6. CONTRIBUTIONS Each member shall pay a minimum weekly subscription of 6d to the National Committee, for the general expenses of the organisation.

7. METHOD OF ORGANIZATION The basic units of organisation shall be the industrial and local groups. Members may belong to both an industrial and local group, but they shall have only one vote within the organisation on national questions.

Local and industrial groups shall be federated into regional organisations.

Where practical, rank-and-file industrial groupings shall be formed.

Local and industrial groups publishing their own literature shall do so under the imprint of their own group.

8. POLICY General policy of the organisation shall be decided by an annual congress. Decisions shall be reached, where possible, by common agreement, reconciling diverse points of view; only where this is not obtainable, majority opinion shall become the decision of the organisation.

9. NATIONAL COMMITTEE To coordinate activities between congresses, a national committee shall be elected. This shall consist of a general secretary, general treasurer, and three other members. This committee shall administer and edit the organisation's national publications, in accordance with the policy laid down by congress.

Members of the national committee shall be subject to immediate recall by any national conference; they shall be replaced after a maximum period of two years in office, but may be re-elected after a further period of six months.

10. CONGRESSES Congresses shall normally take place annually. Special congresses shall be called by the national committee on the demand of at least 25 percent of the aggregate membership.

11. LOCAL REPRESENTATIVES In districts where no local or industrial groups exist, the national committee will, where possible, accept a local representative. This representative shall be responsible to the national committee.

12. FREEDOM OF PRESS Freedom of the press shall be guaranteed by articles in the organisation's press being signed and clearly marked where they do not represent the organisation's policy.

13. REVISION OF ORGANISATIONAL BASIS This organisational basis may be revised by any national congress.

Additional Information

The first section was published in *Direct Action*, Vol. 5 No. 6 (No. 45), September 1950 and was taken from [The Sparrows' Nest Library and Archive](#). That paper notes that the aims and principles were "Adopted by the constitutive conference, at Manchester, August 6, 1950." The second section — the "Organisational Basis", also taken from [Sparrows' Nest](#) — is from what appears to be a membership application, and was "Adopted by the constitutive conference in Manchester on Sunday, August 6, 1950, and amended by the third national conference in Manchester, November 9, 1952."