

Paving the way for the Class Compromise: Constructing Consensus Identity in the Early Swedish Trade Unions

Jenny Jansson, phd candidate
Statsvetenskapliga institutionen
Uppsala universitet
Box 514
751 20 Uppsala
+46 (0)18 471 33 31
Jenny.Jansson@statsvet.uu.se

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Abstract

Most research on the Basic Agreement between the LO and the SAF that was closed in *Saltsjöbaden* in 1938 has dealt with the elites of the organizations and their road towards consensus and cooperation. I claim that the success of the agreement cannot be fully understood without integrating the grass roots in the analysis, an aspect that has been largely ignored. The grass roots could easily have overthrown the agreement through strikes but instead the Agreement gained support among the members. I argue that the LO constructed a collective identity compatible with this new relationship to capital, and by doing that the organization could implement the consensus spirit on the grass root level and discipline the members. A systematic in-depth analysis of the trade union educational material clearly shows that the LO constructed an identity of the organization that mirrored the new relation between labour and capital. The trade union member was a true reformist person that put a lot of value in following rules adopted democratically by the organization and the LO was a constantly growing politically important force. The employers were depicted as close friends to the workers while the political right because of their attempts to meddle in the labour market through legislation was an enemy. Another enemy was the SAC, the syndicalists that were demonized as irresponsible and irrational, an organization without clear goals; the SAC was everything the LO was not. The Basic Agreement and the identity politics pursued by the LO are not only important components for explaining the development of the Swedish model, they also reflect the formation of the Swedish labour movement into one strong, centralized, cohesive actor that came to play an important role in the development of the Swedish welfare state.

The Puzzling Class Compromise

Class compromises are important for the construction of welfare states.¹ However, a prerequisite for class compromises to succeed is unitary class organizations. Previous research on the subject of class compromises has treated the parties as cohesive actors with strongly disciplined members assuming that the elites' actions are well established among the members.² But members can rebel. This problem is particularly difficult for the unions that have an internal leftist opposition which makes it harder for them to form a strong cohesive organizational identity.

There are different theories on what creates cohesive strong trade unions. Among economic historians the technical development has been the driving force of class formation; once the structural class was formed, the workers realized that they were a class with a common interest.³ Others state that the class identity cannot "just appear". The leaders of trade unions play an active and crucial role in shaping unity in trade unions and creating an organizational identity.⁴ This paper focuses on the latter theory and examines the role of the leaders of the Swedish Trade Union Confederation, the LO, in the organization's identity formation process in the 1920s and 1930s.

The case of Sweden is particularly interesting since the Swedish case is the prototype of successful class compromises and was manifested in the Basic Agreement at Saltsjöbaden in 1938, the start of the Swedish model with ensuing labour market peace.⁵

But the Basic Agreement has also been interpreted as the labour movement's surrender to capitalism; the LO gave up the idea of enforcing socialism to cooperate with capital.⁶ From a strict class-conflict perspective the Basic Agreement was class betrayal. The dominant strategy until 1938 had been to maximize the wage claims and squeeze out as much as possible from capital without considering the effects on capital or the societal economy.⁷ Thus, the attitude towards cross-class cooperation especially among the left wing within the LO was

¹ Swenson (2004) - Korpi (1980).

² Johansson (1989), Korpi (1980), Rothstein (2004)

³ Johansson (1989), Stråth (1982)

⁴ Mills (1948), Offe and Wiesenenthal (1980)

⁵ Korpi (1980) - Swenson (1991) - Rothstein (2004) - Johansson (1989) - Magnusson (1997) - Gråbacke (2002)

⁶ Norborg (1997), s. 148, Trägårdh (2000), s. 17.

⁷ Johansson and Magnusson (1998), p. 38 f. - Johansson (1989), p. 91 f.

negative. The syndicalists and the communists were relatively strong movements at the time with supporters in some of the most influential trade unions like the Metal Workers' Union.⁸ The relation between the LO and the left organizations was tense.⁹ At the same time, the affiliates and the members had withdrawn power from the central organization after the failure of the general strike in 1909, making it even more difficult for the umbrella organization to cease control over the members and the affiliates.¹⁰

Yet the LO managed to implement the Basic Agreement successfully. Despite vast research on the area of the Basic Agreement there is still a black-box; why did the *membership* accept the class compromise? My suggestion is that it was done through identity politics, deliberate attempts to manage the membership's perceptions of the organization by establishing an organizational identity that downplayed the class rhetoric and redefined the employers from being enemies to becoming allies. This was done through the trade union educations in the 1920s and the 1930s. By doing that the LO opened up for a closer cooperation with capital. Adding the largely ignored variables membership and identity formation to the analysis of the Basic Agreement can deepen our understanding of the Agreement as well as class compromises in general.

In order to find out if identity politics can lighten up the black box of understanding the class compromise, we have to examine the image of the organization that the LO constructed and presumably tried to impose on the members. *The aim of this paper is to examine the organizational identity constructed by the LO during the 1920s and 1930s.* This will be done through studying how the self-image was defined and how capital was framed in the trade union education material, used in the internal educations for trade union members.

⁸Johansson (1989), p. 87 f. - Schüllerqvist (1992), - Korpi (1980), p. 108 ff. – Kennerström (1974), p. 16 ff. - Casparsson (1966), pp. 229-235.

⁹ LO Cirkulär 618 6 november 1928 - Fackföreningsrörelsen, No 1, 1921.

¹⁰ Hadenius (1976) - Swenson (1989), s. 44. - Metall avd 179 - Träarbetarförbundet avd 152

Understanding the Historical Compromise

The Basic Agreement was one of several agreements between workers and employers regarding labour market peace in Sweden. The negotiations at *Saltsjöbaden* started in 1936 and were completed with the labour market peace agreement, the Basic Agreement in 1938.¹¹

Common explanations to the historical compromise

The historical compromise is a well studied subject but research on the Basic Agreement has mainly focused on the elites in the LO and the SAF.¹² The Swedish sociologist Walter Korpi explains the Basic Agreement as a result of rational actors bargaining process¹³ and the Swedish economic historian Anders L. Johansson argue that the labour market parties came to understand that they had mutual interests hence they were able to unite.¹⁴ Bo Rothstein, Swedish political scientist, describes the agreement as a result of a long trust building process; through institutions, set up by the state the labour market parties were forced to work together and mutual trust was slowly built up which enabled the agreement.¹⁵ However, these researchers only examine the elites in the organizations leaving the members out and assuming discipline within the LO.

A rational agreement is not enough to fully understand the compromise; the consent of the grass root level was another key factor for the success of the agreement for three reasons. Firstly, the LO was risking to lose members because of their employer friendly approach, especially among the left wing of the organization. Secondly, and even more important, if the grass roots had not accepted the agreement the likelihood that it would have been successful is very low. The aim of the agreement was to control and restrain the wild cat strikes thus; if the members hadn't been satisfied with the new policy, they could easily have prevented the implementation of the agreement, by continuing striking.¹⁶ Thirdly, to enter the Basic agreement without support from below would not only have put the LO in an awkward

¹¹ Johansson (1989), p. 391.

¹² Ibid. - Korpi (1980) - Swenson (1989) - Swenson (1991) - Rothstein (2004).

¹³ Korpi (1980), p. 97 ff, 118 ff.

¹⁴ Johansson (1989), p. 22., 391.

¹⁵ Rothstein (2004), s. 272-281.

¹⁶ For the development of the strike level see Tegle (2000), p. 165 ff.

position on the labour market, losing credibility with the employers and maybe even force the state to intervene, the LO's position among their own affiliates and members would have weakened considerably, a situation the LO wanted to avoid considering the outcome of the general strike in 1909. Therefore, to understand the class compromise the grass roots should be included in the analysis. This study will fill this gap.

Grass root studies of the workers and class formation

There are several grass root studies on trade union members and they mainly concern class formation processes and class consciousness in the labour movement from the first decades of the 20th century.¹⁷ However, very few make the connection between class compromise and class formation. This connection should be done because class formation helps create a cohesive organization which in turn can help us understand the success of class compromises.

The main explanation for class formation among historians is structural; particularly the technical development has been regarded as the driving force in the class formation process either because technical developments like the assembly line technique downplayed the importance of the “know how” among the workers and that made the workers interchangeable, thus a class in itself¹⁸ or because skilled labour developed class consciousness as a reaction to unskilled labour and the new technology.¹⁹

The major problem of the structural explanation of class formation is that class formation “just happens” as a result of changes in the production. The production structure certainly plays an important role as prerequisites for structural classes but why that necessarily leads to class consciousness is unclear. Marx noted in his study of the French peasantry that a structural class not automatically becomes a cohesive actor with a strong collective identity; the French peasantry in the 19th century constituted a class *in* itself but not *for* itself because the peasantry was not conscious about their class belonging.²⁰

Identity Politics - the driving force of class formation?

What drives class formation? Class formation is according to the American sociologist Eric Olin Wright the process “(...) of collectively organized social forces within class structures in

¹⁷ Magnusson (1996) - Blomberg (1995) - Bengtsson (2006)

¹⁸ Johansson (1989), p. 89. - Isacson (1987)

¹⁹ Magnusson (1996), p. 215 ff.

²⁰ Marx (2001) - Marx (1981), p. 186.

pursuit of class interests.”²¹ In other words: when a class starts to act as one cohesive actor. This requires a process of class consciousness when the members of the class realize that they have common interests, when they realize *what they are*.²² Marx defined this process as the transformation from being a class *in itself* to becoming a class *for itself*.²³ If we focus on *realizing what one is* we can easier grasp the concept of class formation. A process when a group of individuals realizes what they are is a social identity formation process. Social identities are the individual’s perceived group belongings. Social identities emphasize the perceived “out-group” and the “in-group”; the collective of individuals in the organization forms an in-group, whereas individuals outside the organization become out-groups. The urge to belong to a group is very strong among human beings and Tajfel shows that individuals choose to belong to a group if they can.²⁴

My thesis is that class formation can occur as a result of deliberate attempts from the leaders of class organizations to create a collective identity in trade unions. Thus, the driving force of class formation is not only technical developments but also rational actors. Mills and Offe and Wiesenenthal suggest that the leaders of trade unions should construct a collective identity.²⁵ The American sociologist C. Wright Mills stated that the union leaders not only need to be rebels against other groups (employers) but they also have the task of managing rebellions within the movement.²⁶ Swenson states “Their [trade unions] leaders do not just find working-class unity, they have to make it.”²⁷ One cannot expect to go out and find unity among workers, unity must be formed actively. Further, because the leaders are in the position of managing the members’ self-perception, they can also influence *how* the members perceive the organization. In our case it was crucial for the LO that the members perceived the organization as a peaceful, negotiation consensus-seeking organization.

Can social identities be managed? Many organizational identity theorists define identity as something that occurs in the interaction between members and leaders, when leaders and members negotiate on what the organization is.²⁸ Therefore, it is difficult for the management to affect the organizational identity simply because organizational identity does not exist

²¹ Wright (1997), p. 379.

²² Magnusson (1996), p. 26 f. - Wright (1997), p. 379.

²³ Marx (1981), p. 186.

²⁴ Tajfel and Turner (2004)- Elsbach and Bhattacharya (2001) - Taylor and Whittier (1992), p. 122.

²⁵ Swenson (1989), s. 1. - Offe and Wiesenenthal (1980) - Mills (1948).

²⁶ Mills (1948), p. 8 f.

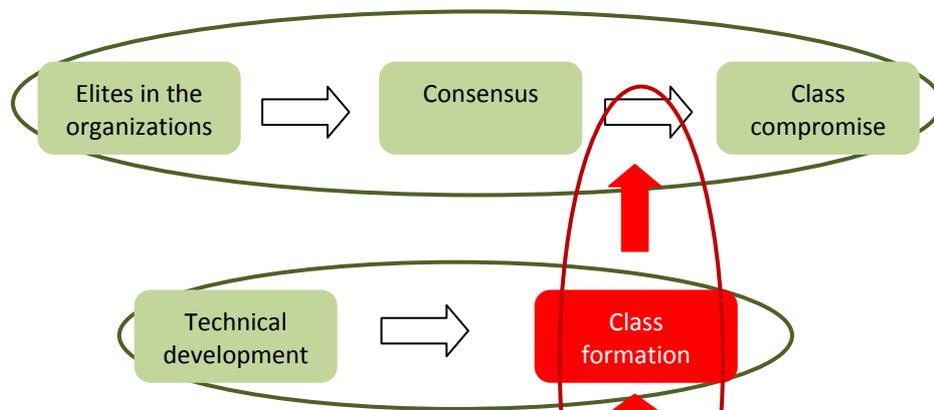
²⁷ Swenson (1989), p. 1.

²⁸ Amodeo (2005), Hatch and Schultz (1997), Hatch and Schultz (2002)

among the leaders only, it occurs in the interaction between leaders and members.²⁹ Research on managing members' perceptions of the organization is deficient within the field of business studies. In the end, the debate boils down to whether or not humans can manage discourses and use them strategically to reach certain goals. Fairclough suggests that an actor can exercise power through strategically choose what discourse to use. How a problem or a phenomenon is formulated affects how it will be treated.³⁰ My point of departure lay close to Fairclough's.

The figure below illustrates the theories and my hypothesis.

Explanations to Class Compromises



Explanations to Class Formation



My hypothesis; how class formation and class compromises are interrelated

²⁹ Hatch and Schultz (1997)

³⁰ Fairclough (1989)

Constructing Identity

Why should we believe that identity matters? Within the field of new social movement the identity formation in the movement is given an important role for the group solidarity, identity is the very foundation and goal of the movement in many social movements.³¹ Within organizational identity theory, the importance of identity and how much effort the management puts into identity formation processes becomes clear.³² Research shows that identity has a huge impact on how organizations act; examples are the cases of LEGO in the 1990s and McDonalds.³³

On an individual level, research suggests that individuals' positive identification with an organization increases the likelihood of a long term commitment to the organization; identification is therefore not only something positive for the individual but also positive and useful for the organization.³⁴ If the members strongly identifies with the organization, they will be more committed to their work, which in turn increases the capacity of the firm.³⁵ van Knippenberg and Ellemers suggest that members engage themselves deeply in the organization because the individual makes the organization's goals to her or his own, the collective's interest becomes the self-interest.³⁶ Finally, identity matters even more for voluntary organizations. Voluntary organizations are more dependent on keeping their members and at same time the members are less prone to stay in an organization when the cost of being a member increases. In business organizations the members are employed and therefore to a greater extent *dependent* on the organization for surviving. Hence if a member doesn't identify with its organization, she might not leave the organization simple because she needs the wage. That is not the case in trade unions. Therefore the incentives to keep the identity formation process alive are greater among voluntary organizations.

³¹ Pichardo (1997), Stryker (2000).

³² Ravasi and Schultz (2006) - Schultz and Hatch (2003).

³³ Botterill and Kline (2007), Schultz and Hatch (2003) - Ravasi and Schultz (2006)

³⁴ Elsbach and Bhattacharya (2001), Mael and Ashforth (1992), Mael and Ashforth (1995).

³⁵ Alvesson (1990). Ashforth and Mael (1989), Tyler and Blader (2001).

³⁶ van Knippenberg and Ellemers (2003), s. 30 ff.

Defining Identity

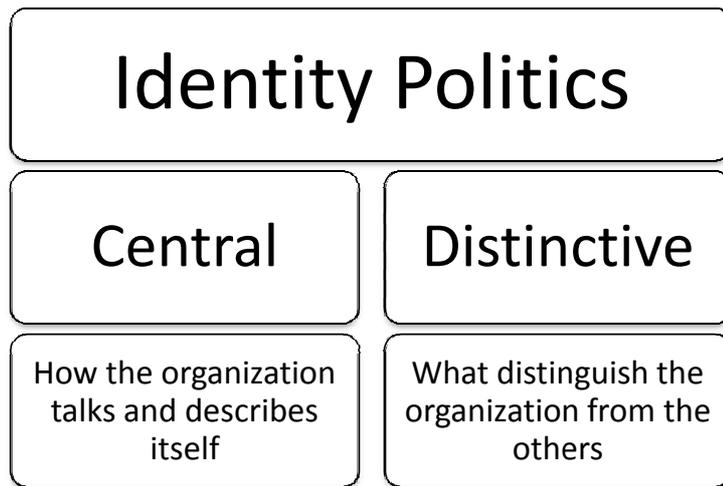
To examine what features the identity politics had, what message was communicated to the grass roots, we need to decide what organizational identity consist of and how we can measure it.

This study leans against the classic definition by Albert and Whetten: organizational identity is the collective understandings of what is *central*, *distinctive* and *durable* in an organization.³⁷ These identity criteria are influenced by social identity theory. My primarily interest is not to study organizational identity as the interplay between members and leaders of the organization, as the theory originally was meant to capture, but the content of the image management or identity politics that the leaders imposed on the members. Thus, identity politics is *the deliberate attempts to manage the members' perception of what the organization is*. The content of the identity politics is best measured by focusing on the broad concepts of centrality and distinctiveness; centrality is the essential features that were very central in the self-image the LO constructed. The distinctiveness criterion emphasizes what separates the group from other groups. Group identity is built upon a sense of who is belonging to the group and who is not; hence by looking at how the others are described it is possible to say what “we” are identifying ourselves from and what “we” are not. Research has even shown that the motive for some individuals for organize themselves steams from a wish to be separated from a particular group.³⁸

Finally, the concept of durability is left out. The aspect of durability is very important in identity formation but I am examining identity politics, which makes the durability criteria somewhat irrelevant. If there are features that occur at several points of time it indicates that the organization's leaders had the same view or strategy during a time period, it does not necessary say anything about the identity that the leaders tried to impose on the members.

³⁷ Albert and Whetten (2004)

³⁸ Elsbach and Bhattacharya (2001)



Figur 1 Illustration of the Identity Politics

How to measure central and distinctive

How do we measure centrality and distinctiveness? How do we know what is central and distinctive for the organization? My suggestion is an analysis built around the concepts *history, properties and action*, i.e. the central and distinctive features of an organization can be captured if we focus on where “we” come from, what “we” are and how “we” act. These concepts should be interpreted as arenas where we can find the central and distinctive features of the organization.

History defines where the organization comes from. Writing history is a selective process; the entire history of the organization can never be written, chosen parts can. Therefore we can assume that the descriptions of the organization’s history are central to the organization. The historical consciousness can be a component in a person’s identity; by stressing certain elements in the history of the organization, members can perceive the organization in a certain way.³⁹ The educational material focuses on the development of the trade unions and contains long descriptions of the organization’s history and how it developed. The analysis category “history” focuses on how the organization describes its own history and development.

While history focuses on development of the organization, ***properties*** focuses on what the organization is. The core of identity politics is of course to define itself and to describe the organization in a certain way. *How* the organization describes itself, so called identity claims

³⁹ Linderborg (2001), pp. 1 f., 31 ff.

are very important.⁴⁰ The definitions of the organization and the properties ascribed to the organization are central features. Distinctive features are properties that separate them from other organizations.

The properties that are ascribed to the organization also guide the *action* of the organization. The main reason for putting focus on action is the disciplining element that identity politics has. Disciplining can be done either through reality claims or by explicitly expressed exhortations on how trade unions and particularly trade union members *should be and should act*. Descriptions on how the members should act are “objectively” right ways to act for a trade union member. The analysis can, thus, be developed by examining how the LO describes the action of the trade unions and off course, “the others” and how trade unions and their members should act.

	Central	Distinctive
<i>History</i>	How is the history of “the self” described? How has the organization developed?	How did the organization develop compared to or in relation to others? How did others develop?
<i>Properties</i>	What properties are used to describe the own organization?	What are the properties of the other? What properties separate them from other organizations or parties?
<i>Action</i>	How does the trade union act? How should the members act?	How do the others act? How is that different from how the self acts?

Figur 2 Operationalization of Identity Politics

Material – the LO’s Educational System

To test my hypothesis we need to turn to a material that was widely spread, that was controlled by the LO and that had enough authority that it actually caught the workers’ interest. The educational material from the trade union educations and the journal *Fackföreningsrörelsen* meets these criteria.

⁴⁰Whetten and Mackey (2002)

Education as means for identity politics

In 1912 the ABF *Arbetarnas Bildningsförbund* (the Workers' Educational Association) was founded and ever since evening classes, lectures and study circles had been used to educate the membership in subjects like "trade union studies" and "history of labour movement".⁴¹ The educational material from the 1920s and the 1930s will be used in this study. Educations constitute a perfect opportunity for the leaders of the organization to manage the image the members have of the organization. One of the explicitly expressed aims of the trade union education was to discipline and educate active trade union members in trade unionism and agitation skills,⁴² but that is not the only reason to use it. Courses on trade unionism constitute good opportunities to plant ideas of "who we are" into active members on the grass root level. Research on other voluntary organizations in Sweden shows that the idea that the organization should educate their members existed in the organizations. Through education one could make the tie between the individual member and the organization stronger.⁴³ There are reasons to believe that the members took the educations seriously; the economic historian Maths Isacson shows in his study of Hedemora Verkstäder that the "old" union politics containing syndicalist methods like obstruction and strikes that had led to so many conflicts was abandoned after the union members had attended the study circle course.⁴⁴ This certainly shows the importance of trade union educations and their effects on the workers' perceptions of the employers, a step towards the consensus model.

The affiliates had during many years recognized the lacking education among their members as a problem for the unions but the real breakthrough for the study circles and the trade union educations came after the adoption of the eight-hour day in 1919 that gave the workers more spare time.⁴⁵ The study circles increased rapidly and reached the masses. It is clear that the educations were very important to the LO.⁴⁶ The number of participants increased continuously during the period. The biggest course arranged by ABF and the LO during the 1920s and 1930s was 'Trade Union Studies'.⁴⁷

The material that is used in this study has been picked from the syllabus for Trade Union Studies and the journal *Fackföreningsrörelsen* (Trade Unionism). The literature

⁴¹ ABF Verksamhetsberättelser

⁴² Landsorganisationen (1926), p. 400.

⁴³ Strömberg (2006), s. 116 f.

⁴⁴ Isacson (1987)

⁴⁵ Wallander (1982), p. 37 ff.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 37 ff. - Metall avd 179 . The sections always accounted for study activities even though there had not been any activities. - Landsorganisationens verksamhetsberättelse 1921, p. 38 f.

⁴⁷ ABF 1912-1938.

recommended in the syllabus consisted of articles, booklets and some books. The main course book was Sigfrid Hansson's text book *Den svenska fackföreningsrörelsen* (The Swedish Trade Unionism).⁴⁸ The book was published in several different editions, the first one from 1923 and the last one in 1938. By using an objective writing style one can guess, he made an impact on the reader.

Can we assume that the material written by Hansson represents the general trends in the educational material from this period, and above all, was Hansson representative for the LO? Sigfrid Hansson was the brother of the social democratic leader Per-Albin Hansson and he wrote a lot of the educational material as well as articles for journals.⁴⁹ It appears as if Hansson had few opponents. He was the editor of *Fackföreningsrörelsen* from the start in 1920, and as the editor he wrote weekly analysis of recent events, thus he was in a very favourable position to spread his interpretations of the reality. He was appointed commissioner of the board of the school at Brunnsvik 1924, he became the educational leader of the LO educations at Brunnsvik 1929 and he became the chairman of the board of ABF 1928. He also wrote the history of many of the affiliates and he wrote the memorial of LO's first twenty-five years.⁵⁰ He wrote several of the booklets in *Landsorganisationens skriftserie*, a series of publications on issues important to the LO. In other words he was in a key position in the educational system. It is unlikely that he would have gotten into that position unless the top of the LO supported him, thus my point of departure is that his writing represents the view of the top-leaders of the LO, but the question needs to be further examined.

⁴⁸ LO Cirkulär 429 11 oktober 1923.

⁴⁹ Hansson (1927b)

⁵⁰ Svenskt biografiskt lexikon

Constructing Identity of Early Trade Union Members

Central Features of the Self

The first part of the analysis will focus on what is central for the organization, i.e. how they pictured themselves in the educational material.

The History of the LO

The educational material emphasizes above all three things in the description of the organization's history and development; first, trade unionism has a long tradition in Sweden, second, the LO has become stronger and stronger over time and third, the LO has never been a socialistic organization, reformism has been the leading star.

The very first trade unions in Sweden emanated from the guild system.⁵¹ The skilled craftsmen from the guild had a strong tradition of organizing themselves that they brought with them into the new form of organization.⁵² The legacy from the guild system is emphasized by the LO particularly in the early editions of *Den svenska fackföreningsrörelsen*, in the latter edition negative sides of the guild system occur and Hansson ends with stressing the supremacy of trade unions.⁵³ Obviously the LO wished to be an organization with long traditions, which also was a way of distancing themselves from the syndicalists who, as we shall see, were framed as a very new organization.

Another characteristic feature of the organization's history was the never ending growth. It had just grown stronger and stronger over time.⁵⁴ The organization had transformed from a small rather toothless organization to a powerful, respected and by the political right feared organization. The mobilization of workers had paid off; after several decades of struggling, the LO was an organization that no one could ignore in labour market

⁵¹ The guild system was abolished in 1846.

⁵² Hansson (1923), p. 27 f., 35 f. - Fackföreningsrörelsen, No 47, 20 november 1924.

⁵³ Hansson (1938), p. 18 f.- Hansson (1923), p. 37 ff.

⁵⁴ Hansson (1926a), p. 3. - Hansson (1923), p. 206. - Fackföreningsrörelsen, No 51, 18 december 1930a.

issues.⁵⁵ In the material, the early trade unions are pictured as humble actors, inferior to the employers. But, because of the increasing number of members, the trade unions had become an important force in the society.⁵⁶

Ideologically, Hansson describes the development of the organization as a journey from a liberal organization to a social democratic organization with a short stop in socialism.⁵⁷ Trade unionism had not a socialistic organization from the beginning. The process of forming a coherent trade union is described as a struggle between liberal ideas and socialist ideas advocated by social democrats in the end of the 19th century. The struggle was won by Social democrats.⁵⁸ It is clear that the LO wanted to avoid giving the labour movement a “socialistic” history, which could be a way of distancing themselves from the syndicalists with whom they were competing over members. By choosing the reformist path for the organization they had moved away from “true socialism”, so it would be rather easy for the syndicalists to criticize them for moving away from their origins. But if socialism never was their origin the argument would fall. Finally, if the LO had the goal to improve the relation to capital, this was probably the best way to go. Thus, a central feature of the organizational identity that is visible in the description of the organization’s history is social democracy and reformism. This feature becomes more important over time.

Properties

Hansson describes the LO as an organization of “democratic centralism”. Democracy was the most important principle for trade unionism according to the material.⁵⁹ Democracy was not hard to legitimize but it was harder to find support for the centralization of the organization among the members and therefore a clear connection between centralism and democracy was made. Because of the growing membership rates more and more affiliates were founded and eventually it became necessary to centralize the organization. The centralization did however not affect the democracy, if any it made it work better.⁶⁰ Centralism had been developed through the democratic system in the trade unions. Therefore it was a development of

⁵⁵ Hansson (1923), pp. 206-216, 224 f. - Hansson (1926a), p. 3. - Hansson (1929), p. 13 f. - Hansson (1938), p. 252-256, 261 - Fackföreningsrörelsen, No 27, 3 juli 1930c.

⁵⁶ Hansson (1923), p. 148. - Hansson (1926a), p. 3.

⁵⁷ Hansson (1926b), p. 419.

⁵⁸ Hansson (1923), p. 23 ff. - Hansson (1938), p. 18, 25 ff. - Hansson (1932), p. 8 ff.

⁵⁹ Hansson (1923), p. 78.

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 77. - Hansson (1938), pp. 110, 115 ff. - Fackföreningsrörelsen, No 39, 28 september 1922c., p. 313 f.

democracy.⁶¹ Opponents against the centralistic system were, according to the material, young, radical persons without sufficient knowledge of the importance of centralism and with a “primitive idea of what democracy was”.⁶² These uneducated members had not understood that the centralistic system was a *natural development* of the workers’ and the employers’ organizations. Once these persons mature they would come to realize the supremacy of centralism.⁶³ Centralism is a significant feature of the “old trade unions” as oppose to the new ones, i.e. the syndicalists.⁶⁴ Centralism and democracy are well described in the material from both 1923 and 1938.

In the history of the LO we learned that the organization never had been a socialistic organization but had developed to a social democratic organization.⁶⁵ Hence an important property of the organization was reformism. The organization had always had a close relationship to the party but the organization was not the same thing as the party and a trade union member did not have to be a party member.⁶⁶ The strong connection to the party made the organization a reformist trade union.⁶⁷ The reformism was an important feature of LO and it plays a central role in the LO’s presentation of the organization in the educational material.

The organization was also characterized as a responsible organization. It was important to emphasize that the LO did not do anything to threaten the societal order; when the LO entered a conflict they did that effectively without putting anyone else at risk. They took responsibility for the maintenance of all the necessary societal functions during strikes.⁶⁸ The educational material stated already in 1923 that the LO could make sure that the so called third party was not affected by labour market conflicts. They were willing to take responsibility for preventing the society from suffering because of labour market conflicts. Responsibility also shows up in the descriptions of collective agreements; the labour market parties were responsible parties that could take responsibility for labour market peace during a collective agreement.⁶⁹ Stressing that the organization was a responsible actor was a way of distancing itself from the syndicalists, as we shall see below. Not only are the workers framed as

⁶¹ Hansson (1923), p. 83 f.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 83.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 83 f.

⁶⁴ Hansson (1938), p. 96.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 293 ff. - Hansson (1935), p. 40 ff. - Hansson (1923), p. 276 f. - Hansson (1926b)

⁶⁶ Hansson (1923), p. 282-285. - Hansson (1928), p. 18 ff. - Hansson (1929-34), p. 25 f. - Fackföreningsrörelsen, No 1, 1921.

⁶⁷ Hansson (1923), p. 186. - Fackföreningsrörelsen, No 27, 3 juli 1930c.

⁶⁸ Hansson (1923), p. 232 f.

⁶⁹ Hansson (1938), p. 254 f.

responsible, so are the employers. Further, the educational material stresses the importance of leaving labour market issues in the hands of the labour market parties; the state should *not* interfere, it neither has the knowledge nor the capacity to do that.⁷⁰ Once again the labour market parties are capable and willing to take responsibility over labour market issues. The LO was framed as an organization that could and should take responsibility over labour market issues. The emphasis on the shared interest between employers and workers and the possibilities of negotiations solutions downplays the class conflict and opens up for a negotiation culture. The state is not capable of guaranteeing the workers the highest possible standard of living and the employers the lowest possible wages. Therefore legislation to create labour market peace was inappropriate not to say impossible.⁷¹ The proposals to legislate only showed the ignorance of the political right. The same formulations occur in both the first edition from 1923 and the one from 1938.

Action – How the trade union member should act

How should the trade union member act? According to the educational material the trade union member is responsible, loyal to the organization and proud of being part of the movement. A good member should also pay membership fee on time and contribute to the union through volunteering, sacrificing time for the union.⁷² A member of the LO should have a certain level of education so that he understands how the trade union work. Lack of education could for instance lead to the delusion that centralism had a negative effect on workers' influence on the labour market.⁷³ The connection to the properties of the organization is clear; the organization is a democratic and centralized organization, therefore the members should act in accordance to those properties. Hansson stated in 1926 that “(...) the minority is always obliged to subordinate oneself to the majority.”⁷⁴ There should be majority decisions and once a decision in the union is made, it should be followed, thus LO advocated a rule of law. Without respecting and abiding the charter and the rules adopted by the congress, the entire democratic system and the organization could fall apart.⁷⁵ Further, the good trade union member would never act on his own initiative, but let the union decide

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 265 - Fackföreningsrörelsen, No 1, 1936c. - Fackföreningsrörelsen, No 9, 1936a. - Fackföreningsrörelsen, No 13, 1936b..

⁷¹ Hansson (1938), p. 265

⁷² Hansson (1926a), p. 3 ff.

⁷³ Hansson (1923), p 83.

⁷⁴ Hansson (1926a), p. 33 f.

⁷⁵ Hansson (1923), p. 83. - Hansson (1926a), p. 6. - Hansson (1929-34), p. 24.

which measures to take in a certain situation.⁷⁶ This was again a way of stressing the difference between the syndicalists who advocated more power to the grass roots and the LO. It also has a disciplining message; you should do as you are told to. The very basis of the “social organization” was, according to Hansson solidarity and the willingness to make sacrifices for the collective.⁷⁷ This in turn meant that the trade union member would give up some of his autonomy but he would gain equality on the labour market, something liberalism failed to materialize,⁷⁸ and his personality would develop.⁷⁹

Now let us turn to the actions of the organization. The organization was a proponent of negotiation solutions, conflicts should be solved through negotiations. The educational material states that Swedish trade unions always had tried to accomplish negotiations with the employers regarding voluntary agreements on working conditions; the use of the strike weapon was the last resort after fruitless attempts to negotiate with the employers.⁸⁰ It was never in the interest of the LO to go on strike, the LO wanted to negotiate.⁸¹ On this particular point we can see a minor change over time in the educational material. In 1923 the employers are blamed for the number of strikes while in 1938 the material states that the organizations always tried to negotiate as a first step to solve a conflict but that strategy had not always worked hence the number of work stoppages.⁸² Both workers and employers had however come to realize that work stoppages were damaging for both parties and the solution was negotiations.

One way of decreasing the number of conflicts was according to Hansson collective agreements for the whole work force, i.e. national agreements, which were very desirable.⁸³ Even though the national agreements originally emanated from the employers, both employers and workers, according to Hansson, agreed that it would be better and save a lot of time if general issues were written down in national agreements because the system would become more predictable.⁸⁴ The educational material stresses the importance of labour market peace during a collective agreement; once an agreement has been closed, work stoppages should not

⁷⁶ Hansson (1926a), p. 6.

⁷⁷ *Arbetare och arbetsgivare i Sverige åo, dock förmodligen 1938. Arbetaren i fackföreningen och arbetsföretaget.* 281030 intalat på grammofonskiva.

⁷⁸ Hansson (1930b), p. 55 ff.

⁷⁹ *Fackföreningsrörelsen*, No 9 februari 1922b.

⁸⁰ Hansson (1923), p. 148 f. - Hansson (1927a), p. 186 f.

⁸¹ Hansson (1923), p. 149 f. - Hansson (1929-34), p. 29 ff.

⁸² Hansson (1938), p. 165.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 257. - *Fackföreningsrörelsen*, No 1, 1936c.

⁸⁴ Hansson (1923), p. 248. - Hansson (1938), p. 257

take place. Not only should members follow adopted rules and agreements the whole organization and the affiliates should do that.⁸⁵

	The Self
<i>History</i>	Growing, strong organization, long tradition, never a socialistic organization but had gone from liberal to social democratic, have matured
<i>Properties</i>	Centralistic, democratic, reformist, responsible, old mature organization, feared by the political right
<i>Action</i>	Respect and follow adopted rules, act responsibly (pay membership fee on time), willing to make sacrifices for the organization (be an active member), negotiate instead of strikes

Figur 3 Summary of the central features of the self

⁸⁵ Hansson (1938), p. 252 ff.

Distinctive features – description of the others

After the analysis of the self we move on to examine how the LO framed “others”. By doing this we can decide how the LO positioned themselves to other relevant groups and there are several candidates; firstly, the LO had to distance themselves from other trade unions and left movements like the syndicalists. Secondly, they distinguished themselves from capital, i.e. the employers and the political right.

The Syndicalists

The syndicalists competed with the LO over members particularly in some of the affiliates, therefore it was necessary to distance themselves from the syndicalists. The syndicalists’ organization, SAC, was formed in 1910 by disenchanted LO members after the disappointment over the LO’s way of managing the strike in 1909.⁸⁶ The syndicalists had major impact on trade unionism during the first decades of the 20th century. They constituted the only real leftist challenge to the LO. In 1920 their membership rates constituted 12 percentages of that of the LO. The syndicalists built their powers on trade unions; according to the syndicalists class struggle should not rely on parliamentarian institutions for power and influence but should work through trade unions on grass root level.⁸⁷ The centralization tendencies in the LO were considered to be the wrong way of achieving the workers’ goals. To give the central organization more power and remove the freedom to go on strikes from the grass root level was class betrayal (the syndicalists still classify this as class betrayal⁸⁸).

History

In the educational material SAC is described as the “new trade unions” as oppose to the old trade unions, i.e. the LO.⁸⁹ It becomes clear that the LO was an old organization with traditions, traditions that may infuse trust in the members, while the syndicalists were “the

⁸⁶ Casparsson (1951), p. 353 ff.

⁸⁷ Korpi (1980), p. 108 ff. - Casparsson (1951), p. 353 ff.

⁸⁸ <http://www.sac.se/index.php//Om-SAC/Historik/Arbetarrörelsens-historia/1942-LO-ändras-sina-stadgar> 2008-11-10

⁸⁹ Hansson (1938), p. 96. - Hansson (1923), p. 74., 84 f.

new ones”, which mirrors LO’s attempts to distance themselves from the syndicalists. It makes the syndicalists look young, inexperienced and unorganized.

Properties - The demonization of the Syndicalists

The SAC were pictured as a very illogical and irrational organization with a strange organizational structure. They were everything the LO was not. The syndicalists were described as an organization with a very complicated organizational structure, particularly in comparison to the LO. Their aim was to have a decentralized organization, a system that would reinforce the local level. But ideally, there should not be several trade unions; all workers should be united in the same organization.⁹⁰ Even though the syndicalists were “new” and therefore one would expect them to represent new trends, the old trade unions had adjusted to changes in the industrial structure while the syndicalists did not show any interest in developing their organization in accordance to structural changes.⁹¹ They did not show that maturity.

Despite their aim of keeping the powers to the local level they established a central organization, which made them rather inconsistent.⁹² There are several other examples where the syndicalists are pictured as irrational. For example, one minute the syndicalists attacked the reformist trade unions for establishing collective agreements, the next minute they established own agreements.⁹³ Further, they condemned the economic assistance system for strikes. However, the syndicalists eventually had to establish own strike assistance.⁹⁴

Decentralism is another very central feature of SAC. Giving the local level more room of manoeuvre was called federalism⁹⁵ as oppose to centralism, the characteristic feature of LO. The decentralized and federal system was the reason for the chaotic appearance of the organizational structure. The SAC was described as if they had no control over their members and that in turn had very negative effects on LO members, who were well-behaved, responsible hard working people that followed the rules and respected other organizations.⁹⁶ Once again, the comparison between the centralized and the decentralized system is a way to

⁹⁰ Hansson (1923), pp. 71 - Hansson (1938), p. 92.

⁹¹ Hansson (1923), pp. 71, 74, 106. - Hansson (1938), p. 92 ff.

⁹² Hansson (1923), pp. 74. - Hansson (1938), p. 92 ff. - Fackföreningsrörelsen, No 31, 3 augusti 1922a. - Fackföreningsrörelsen, No 39, 28 september 1922c., p. 313 ff.

⁹³ Hansson (1923), p. 255 f. - Hansson (1938), p. 218-221.

⁹⁴ Hansson (1923), p. 106. - Hansson (1938), p. 143.

⁹⁵ Hansson (1923), pp. 85, 87. - Fackföreningsrörelsen, No 31, 3 augusti 1922a..

⁹⁶ Hansson (1926a), p. 34.

distance the LO from SAC. Even though it is not explicitly written in the educational material, the reader gets the impression that it would be very difficult to combine the decentralized system with democracy.⁹⁷

Actions of the Syndicalists

One of the most characteristic features of the syndicalists was their methods. They believed that strikes, sabotage and obstruction were the only methods in the struggle against capital and these methods would eventually lead to the defeat of capital. A state hostile, revolutionary, non-parliamentarian class struggle based on trade unions was the best way to reach this goal. Therefore they were sceptic to the parliamentary reformist work, that kind of methods could make the workers lose track of the revolution.⁹⁸ The syndicalists and their supporters within the LO within LO were usually young, radical trade union members. They were easily affected by the syndicalists' terminology and believed in overthrowing the private capitalistic society through general strikes.⁹⁹ The difference between the organizations once again becomes very clear. The syndicalists acted irresponsibly and would go on strikes any time without considering the consequences for other groups. They acted ruthlessly and would put pressure on other groups, like LO members, to go on sympathy strikes for them.¹⁰⁰ The misuse of sympathy means was a strategy from SAC to create chaos to make the "reformist" organizations look bad.¹⁰¹ The sympathy strikes created confusion among the LO members regarding the meaning of solidarity and it shows how self-centred the syndicalists were.

Employers and the political right

Moving on to capital, the archenemy of the working class, we find two different actors: the political right and the employers. During the economic crisis in the beginning of 1930s there was no cooperation between the parties. In 1936 relation changed and the negotiations of *Saltsjöbaden* began.¹⁰² Employers and the political right as in the right parties in the parliament are treated as different parties in the educational material.

⁹⁷ Hansson (1923), p. 84-87.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 290 f., 185 f.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 184 f.

¹⁰⁰ Hansson (1926a), pp. 22, 29 f, 35-40.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

¹⁰² Johansson (1989), p. 391 ff.

The Political Right

The LO's relation to the political right is described as a long struggle against the right's attempts to put constraints on the labour movement through legislation and thereby strengthen the employers. The first step was the Åkarp's law that made it illegal to prevent strike-breakers from working during a strike and several other attempts to introduce restrictions on the right of association followed but without success.¹⁰³

Hansson's long description of how the political right tried to reduce the trade unions' powers through legislation does not contain anything on the employers. One would have expected that some blame for the legislations was directed at the employers, after all the chairman of Swedish Employers' Organization was member of parliament for the right party so it would have been easy to treat the employers as a part of the political right to create a strong class identity, as for example Casparsson does.¹⁰⁴ The material is permeated with criticism against the right party, while the employers are left out.¹⁰⁵

History of the Employers

The description of how the employers had developed is characterized by improvement. The employers had behaved badly in the past but their way of treating the workers had improved, they had grown closer to the workers. Employers had used strike-breakers to fight the trade unions in the past; they had even tried to organize the strike-breakers in so called yellow organizations.¹⁰⁶ The yellow organizations were framed as an alternative to the reformist trade unions but they never became strong and powerful organizations. Their harmful effects on the LO had diminished as the solidarity in the working class had grown stronger.¹⁰⁷ Hansson tries to explain the existence of strike-breakers in the past by stressing that the organizations, both workers' and employers' organizations, were not as developed or powerful as they were in the beginning of the 1920s. The major problem was the unorganized workers and the unorganized employers; they made it hard for the organizations to establish rules acceptable

¹⁰³ Hansson (1923), pp. 203, 207. - Hansson (1938), p. 248-252.

¹⁰⁴ Casparsson (1931) Ragnar Casparsson was a journalist working at *Socialdemokraten* and in his articles a different picture of the employers occurs. He uses class rhetoric a lot and describes the relationship between the LO and the employers as a class struggle.

¹⁰⁵ Fackföreningsrörelsen, No 36, 4 september 1930a. - Fackföreningsrörelsen, No 43, 23 oktober 1930b. - Fackföreningsrörelsen, No 13, 1936b.

¹⁰⁶ Hansson (1923), p. 224. - Fackföreningsrörelsen, No 27, 3 juli 1930c.

¹⁰⁷ Hansson (1923), p. 224 ff.

for both parties.¹⁰⁸ It appears as if there were a few individual employers and workers that refused to follow the agreements settled between the organizations. This takes away part of the blame from the employers' organization. Further, apparently there had been employers that had tried to harm the trade unions and this were probably the most severe actions that employers ever had taken towards workers, but the trade unions had overcome these attempts. The description of the attack on the trade unions through the use of strike-breakers could have been used to create a "we against them" opinion within the LO but the educational material is very objective. Most of these incidents happened in the past, which also signals that this behaviour is how the employers *used to* be, not how they are.

Trade unions had always cherished labour market peace. The primary goal had been to make changes and improving the conditions for their members through negotiations. The employers on the other hand had not always been accommodating. They had tried to prevent the workers from organizing themselves and this hostile attitude towards the workers had led to the use of work stoppages.¹⁰⁹ This had also changed over time,¹¹⁰ which indicates some degree of maturity among the employers.

However, despite the organizations' strive to negotiate and find peaceful solutions to conflicts, the number of work stoppages had increased over time. Hansson tries to explain that by the growth of the organizations (i.e. not only is trade unionism getting stronger but the same applies to the employers' organization) had turned the organizations into "struggling organizations". When the organizations became stronger they were tempted to use that strength in conflicts.¹¹¹ The description of the relation between employers and workers in the past is particularly interesting since the Swedish labour market had been characterized by labour market conflicts for many years and the number of work stoppages had steadily increased.¹¹² Yet the struggle is absent in the description of the labour market parties relation in the past. It is obvious that Hansson tries to avoid to demonize the employers when he talks about work stoppages; work stoppages is an effect of growing membership rates and the growing strength of the organizations not an effect of the class conflict. The number of strikes and lockouts are reported but there are very few comments or interpretation of these figures.¹¹³

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., p. 223 f. -

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 148 f. -Fackföreningsrörelsen, No 27, 3 juli 1930c.

¹¹⁰ Hansson (1923), p. 150.

¹¹¹ Ibid., p. 152.

¹¹² Tegel (2000), p. 165 ff.

¹¹³ Hansson (1923), p. 162 ff.

Properties and Action of the Employers

How was the employers depicted in the course material? One would expect a consensus seeking description, if the syndicalists as well as the political right (but for different reasons) were demonized as the enemy the employers should be so to speak be a friend of the trade unions.

And the similarities between trade unions and employers' organizations are emphasized in the material; they are both voluntary organizations¹¹⁴ and they have the same legal grounds,¹¹⁵ the idea that the organizational system in Sweden was built upon law was central,¹¹⁶ both workers and employers were anxious to preserve the labour market peace during a collective agreement,¹¹⁷ both organizations wished to find negotiation solutions to labour market conflicts¹¹⁸ and finally the legislation on labour market issues was only codifying a custom created by workers' and employers' organizations.¹¹⁹

But the description of the employers was not only positive. The educational material describes how employers had established black lists over former employees that were trade union members. The black lists aimed at making it difficult for these workers to get new jobs. Some affiliates had approached the employers' organizations on this matter because it was a violation of the collective national agreements between the two organizations,¹²⁰ (once again, one should follow the adopted agreements). This can be interpreted as the employers not being trustworthy. On the other hand the event that is described happened in 1914, far back in time so it could be interpreted as ancient history. The description is as far as possible "objective"; there were no disparaging description or any bitterness.

The shared interests of employers and workers are obvious. Even on issues where the political right had tried to delimit the powers of trade unions for instance through legislation attempts the employers and the workers could find common grounds, making the political right look like irrational actors.¹²¹ Further, as already stated, both organizations wanted to keep the state away from the labour market. The state was not competent enough to legislate on

¹¹⁴ Hansson (1938), p. 247 f.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., p. 247 f.

¹¹⁶ Hansson (1923), p. 261 f.

¹¹⁷ Hansson (1938), p. 252-256, 257. - Fackföreningsrörelsen, No 27, 3 juli 1930c. - Fackföreningsrörelsen, No 1, 1936c.

¹¹⁸ Fackföreningsrörelsen, No 13, 1936b.

¹¹⁹ Hansson (1938), p. 247

¹²⁰ Hansson (1923), p. 193 f. - Hansson (1938), p. 197 ff.

¹²¹ Hansson (1938), 261 f.

labour market issues to secure labour market peace; the labour market parties had that competence and the will to make it work. Therefore they should be trusted with that task.¹²²

This draws a differentiating line between the political right and the employers. The employers and the political right did not have the same interests. But the employers and the trade unions had shared interests, namely the importance of the right of associations and to keep the state out of the labour market. By separating the political right from the employers it was possible to combine the support for the social democratic party and to cooperate with the employers because employers and the political right were different actors, thus cooperating with the employers was not the same as supporting the political right. If they had been seen as the same actor it would have been very difficult to suggest cooperation with the employers.

¹²² Ibid., p. 265 - Fackföreningsrörelsen, No 1, 1936c. - Fackföreningsrörelsen, No 9, 1936a. - Fackföreningsrörelsen, No 13, 1936b.

Conclusions - What we are and what we're not

If we sum up the analysis, we get this figure:

	The Self	The Syndicalists	The Employers
<i>History; Development of the organization</i>	Growing, strong organization, long tradition, gone from liberal to social democratic, have matured	New movement, lacking history, developed to become an unorganized organization	Old like LO, growing, has become more and more union friendly, have matured
<i>Properties; description of the self and the other</i>	Centralistic, democratic, reformist, responsible, old mature organization, feared by the political right	Inconsistent, decentralized, complex, immature, inexperienced	Responsible, same legal grounds as the LO, fairly trustworthy
<i>Action; how the self and the other act and should act</i>	Respect and follow adopted rules, be responsible (pay membership fee on time, be an active member), i.e. show discipline, societal responsibility	Irresponsible, selfish, disrespectful to adopted rules, irrational	Takes responsibility for the labour market

Figur 4 The Results

Central features

After analyzing the material it becomes clear that the features central to the LO were “strong and growing with power resources”, the worker was not a humble servant anymore. Another very central feature of the organization was the rule of law. The members should obey whatever rules that been accepted by the organization otherwise the democracy would not work; the centralized system demanded obedience. Finally, the willingness to take

responsibility for labour market peace is also a central feature. The faith in making labour market work through negotiations with the employers without legislation is a notable feature of the self image in the material. There were no doubts that the labour market parties could make it work. The absence of any socialist or Marxist related class identity marks the reformist path. The members of the LO was above all trade union members.

Surprisingly, solidarity is almost absent. Hansson wrote a booklet that was used in the study circles on the issue of solidarity; the aim was to prove that helping syndicalists through sympathy-strikes was not an act of solidarity, but in the main course book solidarity is not discussed. This might seem a bit odd, but on the other hand it was probably difficult to discuss the principles of solidarity and at the same time argue that it did not apply to the syndicalists workers.

Distinctive features

What becomes clear after studying the material (although not surprising) is the emphasis on the common interests with the employers. The material makes a distinction between the political right and the employers, which opens up for cooperation between workers and employers without being “unfaithful” to social democracy. If this material actually did have an impact on the grass roots it is not difficult to see why the Basic Agreement was accepted. The educational material basically encourages the readers to welcome a closer cooperation with the employers.

Further, the material is very accurate when it comes to the matter of what LO is not, i.e. distinctiveness. The material focuses more on what the LO is not, than what it is, which makes the component distinctive very important to the construction of a collective identity in the material. The demonization of the syndicalists was meant to scare the members from joining or helping the syndicalists, which mirrors the struggle to make trade unionism one cohesive actor during this time period and how the reformist trade unions did their best to crush the leftist trade unions. Another noteworthy remark is the changing terminology when Hansson is describing the leftist enemy; suddenly words like “class struggle”, “struggle methods”, “oppression”, “working class” and “revolutionary” occur.¹²³ The use of class rhetoric concepts is almost absent in *Den svenska fackföreningsrörelsen* but the few times class rhetoric appears is when the syndicalists were described, not the employers. One could else expect that this type of terminology was used to create a class identity which could have been a powerful

¹²³ Hansson (1923), pp. 85, 149, 185 ff., 291 f.

tool to use for mobilizing the membership. But if the LO had chosen to build a collective identity on class identity it would have been difficult to approach the employers. Instead the syndicalists became the slightly irrational and ignorant revolutionary party. Often the words or concepts with class rhetoric connotations were put in-between quotation marks in a very condescending way, the message communicated to the reader was: the syndicalists were a *so called* revolutionary organization trying to conduct a *so called* class struggle. Reading between the lines one could easily interpret the syndicalists as wannabes that were not to be taken seriously. This is also probably what the LO wanted to communicate to the members; joining the syndicalists would be joining a meaningless struggle. Staying in the LO, on the other hand implied being part of a strong growing organization with power resources and a promising future.

Finally, one cannot help wondering what happened to the communists. There are very little written on the communists in the educational material. One explanation could be that the communists did not have their own trade unions, thus they were members of LO affiliates. The syndicalists on the other hand had their own trade unions, and hence constituted a clear target and competition to the LO. Demonizing communists would actually be criticizing LO members which in a worst case scenario could push them away from the organization.

Conclusions

After analyzing the educational material it is obvious that the material communicated to the members had a disciplining message. However more research must be done to fully test my hypothesis that the LO conducted identity politics as a way of implementing the consensus-spirit on the grass root level, but the first step of testing the thesis is done; the educational material had a message compatible with the consensus-spirit. Next step will be to examine if the LO had the intentions to manage the members' perception of the organization through the educations and finally we need to examine if the educations had an impact on the membership.

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