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The syndicalist SAC union in Sweden has over the last few months been campaigning for fair wages for undocumented immigrants, resulting in thousands of pounds in unpaid wages being paid to migrant workers.

The increasing organisation of undocumented immigrants within the syndicalist union SAC have led to more and more blockades to force the payment of unpaid wages, mainly from employment agencies in the restaurant, cleaning, hotel and building industry. Millions of Swedish Kronor in unpaid wages have been won by the SAC. Because these companies and their customers don't want to attract attention to their exploitation of undocumented immigrants, in most cases the mere threat of a union blockade has been enough to get the wages paid.

Parallel to this defensive work, the SAC have started organising a list of workplaces where employers are only allowed to employ members from the syndicalist register, working as a closed shop for illegal immigrant workers, setting wages, six-hour-workdays and democratically electing bosses on the workplaces. At the moment the workplaces on the list are those who are paying untaxed wages for illegal immigrants, exchange students and asylum seekers but the aim is to organise in a similar way amongst all forms of precarious labour.

The register has been dominated by illegal Latin American workers, but after the recent victories the SAC hopes for a breakthrough in organising amongst the growing amount of undocumented Indian/Pakistan workers in Sweden.

But at the Pakistani restaurant Lilla Karachi in Stockholm, the employers tried to set their foot down. The restaurant rejected demands on 80,000 Kronor (Â£6,150) untaxed wage for a union member and a longer blockade was begun. Since the restaurant is in the same neighbourhood as the Swedish right wing government parties Moderaterna and Centerpartiet, it was soon filled daily with 'solidarity eaters' specifically eating their to break the blockade. Leading right wing politicians, led by the daily paper Svenska Dagbladets editorial Maria Abrahamsson, were ranting on blogs and in media, calling the blockade an 'mafia tactic' and comparing the SAC with biker groups Hell's Angels and Bandidos. They have also demanded that police should arrest all the union activists involved and that union rights allowing blockades to be launched be repealed.

After two months of daily blockades, and the SAC paper Arbetarens explaining that Lilla Karachi owners have threatened the SAC member's family in Pakistan, don't pay the minimum wage in their deal with the social democratic union and have used a fake book-keeper as a witness of innocence in media, the opinion finally shifted and a lot of the right wing politicians officially regretted their 'solidarity eating'. After a couple of weeks with hardly any evening customers, the Lilla Karachi restaurant agreed to pay out the wage.

The SAC has also started a conflict against McDonalds who have used an employment agency with undocumented immigrants for an hourly pay-rate of 33 Kronor (Â£2.50) while the union deal is 90 Kronor (Â£6.90). The same right wing politicians called it mafia behaviour but McDonald's paid the salaries after only a week of conflict.

So far, the syndicalist register has been dominated by undocumented Latin American workers, however, its hoped that these two victories will be a breakthrough for the SAC in organising Undocumented South Asian workers in Sweden.

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See also: <http://www.sac.se/en/>