

Highlight Women Workers at the Front Line of Sustainable Solutions



The Women Workers Summit 2009 was organised by CAW on 9th - 10th December 2009 in Bangkok. Participants of the summit released a statement demanding a change in our economic system to improve women workers' situation. In the statement, it was concluded that today's global financial crisis has its roots in capitalist greed, patriarchy, imperialism, neo-colonialism, fundamentalism and militarisation, but Asian government responses to the crisis do not address these root causes. Women workers raised seven demands to Asian governments: 1) Job creation and sustainable livelihoods in urban and rural economies that provide long term employment for women and men; production that is not profit driven but

meets human needs; 2) Protection of the right to decent work, self-organisation, democratic decision-making and workers' empowerment including skills upgrading; 3) Recognition of informal workers as workers and protection of their rights; 4) Increased public investment in social infrastructure such as education, health and child care; end privatisation and commercialisation of basic services; 5) Implementation of comprehensive land reform and investment in sustainable agriculture, comprehensive land reform and food sovereignty where women are owners, managers, developers of land and other productive resources; 6) An end to war and conflicts in Asia and the building of genuine peace through the substantial participation of women in peace building; 7) Elimination of all kinds of gender discrimination.

[More details](#)

FORMAL ECONOMY

SACOM Released Report on Chinese Toy Workers

The Students and Scholars against Corporate Misbehaviour (SACOM) recently reported the situation of Chinese toy workers based on an investigation in two Hong Kong operated toy factories in China. Excessive and unpaid overtime remains the biggest problem. Most workers have to work 11-14 hours a day. A woman worker complained that she was forced to work for 28 hours continuously. One factory withheld the wages of workers for up to 45 days on regular basis. Moreover, none of the workers has been given copies of their employment contracts; neither do the factories pay for their social insurance.

[More Details](#)

Philippines: Workers Facing Criminal Charge for Striking



Eighteen workers were arrested after staging a strike demanding minimum wages and against illegal dismissal of union members, non-payment of holiday leaves and night shift compensation in 2007.

The Karnation Industries and Export, Inc. in Rizal Philippines charged workers with padlock-

ing the factory gate and serious illegal detention. While incarcerated, many workers had contracted infectious disease due to the conditions in jail. Fourteen workers were later allowed to post bail and were released temporarily. The rest are awaiting for the court to reconsider the granting of bail since November 2009. Women WISE³ conducted an interview with the workers. See the interview online here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=klrePrWKXQg>

[More Details](#)

TRADE AND LABOUR

Unions in Taiwan Fears China Trade Deal Could Cost Jobs

Unions in Taiwan say they fear there could be huge job losses if a proposed free trade agreement is signed with mainland China. Talks on the deal are scheduled in January between senior officials from Beijing and Taipei. The last round of talks in 2008 sparked violent protests, and the issue continues to divide Taiwan's citizens along political and business lines.

Su Yi Chih, deputy secretary general of the National Federation of Bank Employees Union, said in an interview that they are concerned that firms from Mainland China will occupy the smaller and medium enterprises in Taiwan, and eventually these companies will hire cheaper and probably high qualified personnel from home causing more job losses in Taiwan. The union also worried that small local banks might not be able to compete with huge Chinese banks, whose existing customer bases is bigger than the entire Taiwanese population.

[More Details](#)

US Think Tank Admits NAFTA Failed Mexico

A study by Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, an influential Washington, DC-based think tank, found that in the period since the NAFTA went into effect in 1994, Mexico's annual per capital growth rate has been slow and job growth has been weak, with net losses in agriculture and manufacturing (except for the export-oriented Maquiladora sector). Contrary to the projections of neo-liberal economists, NAFTA did not increase investment—foreign investment increases were more than offset by decreases in domestic investment. US has made Mexico excessively dependent on it as an export market with more than 85% of Mexican exports going to the United States.

[More Details](#)

MIGRATION AND LABOUR

Migrant Workers in Macao Call to Revoke Anti-Migrant Provisions

Around 450 migrant workers mostly from Indonesia and the Philippines celebrated the International Migrants Day in Macau through cultural presentations and speeches on December 20 at the Three Lamps Park. The activity was organized by the Macau Migrants Rights Network (MMRN). During the gathering, provisions of Macau's new labour law such as the six-month re-entry ban for migrant workers and levying on their employers were criticised. There is lack of laws to regulate placement agencies, which added to the vulnerability of migrant workers.

[More Details](#)

Over 300 Migrant Workers Celebrated International Migration Day in Thailand

More than 300 migrant workers gathered to celebrate the International Migrant's Day organised by civil society groups at Buddha Satan, Chiang Mai. In the gathering, the governor of Chiang Mai acknowledged the contribution of migrant workers saying "migrant workers have been making significant contribution to the economic growth both in sending and receiving countries". He addressed the importance of the protection of the rights of migrant workers and access to information and education. APWLD, as part of the organiser, raised awareness on the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) General Recommendation No. 26 on women migrant workers on the occasion of CEDAW's 30th anniversary. The Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD) called for the Thai government to ratify the international convention on migrant workers.

[More Details](#)

RIGHTS IN CONFLICT AND SUPPRESSION

2009: At Least Four Labour Activists Murdered in the Philippines

2009 remains a dangerous year for workers in the Philippines. Four unionists, workers and advocates were murdered, one tortured to death, five were abducted and remain missing. Amidst these intensified attacks, 51,000 workers were displaced at the onset of global financial crisis, their salaries were frozen, benefits were cut and work hours extended for those who were fortunate to have jobs.

The Center for Trade Union and Human Rights (CTUHR) documented 270 new cases of human rights violations- a 23% increase compared to 218 in 2008. One hundred twelve or 41.4% of these violations are civil and political rights in nature that affected 1,509 workers. More than 51, 521 workers from 88 companies, primarily from Southern Tagalog and Cebu were displaced from October 2008 to October 2009 due to global economic crisis. Unemployment rose to 7.6%. As early as March 2009, more than 60, 000 workers were affected while wages and benefits of workers continue to be compromised.

[More Details](#)

Updates on Huang Qingnan's Case in China

It has been two years since China labour activist Huang Qingnan almost lost his leg in an assault on 20 November 2007. The court sentenced the assaulters and the landowner who paid and organised the attack 4-5 years in prison. Huang's injury was recognised by the local authorities, but he was only entitled to about ninety thousand CNY (app.13 thousand US dollars) as medical expenses. The disability compensation, cost on disability-aid tools, living subsidies and psychological damages compensation were missing. Two years gone by, news has it that two of the criminals were to be released, while Huang's medical expenses remained unpaid. Police and unknown persons have often harassed and tried to intimidate Huang himself and employees of Dagongzhe Migrant Workers Centre. Workers Empowerment, a group in Hong Kong who had been fighting for justice for Huang, called for continuous support from the international community.

[More Details](#)

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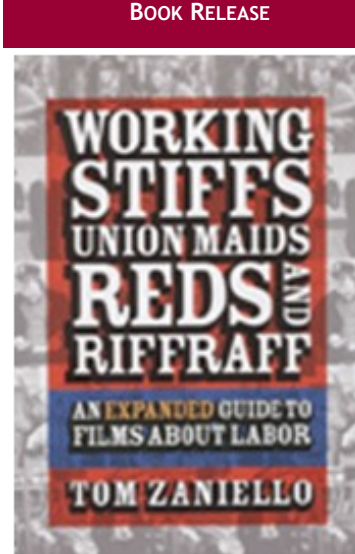
LAUNCH OF INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 100 YEARS



Nearly three hundred women workers from twenty countries in Asia, Latin America and Europe participated in the launch of 100 years of International Women's Day (IWD 100) during Women Workers Summit in Bangkok on 10th December 2009. The launch was organised by CAW, Homenet- Thailand, Foundation for Child Development (FCD) and Women's Foundation, which called for year-long events that pay tribute to women workers struggles all over the world. Besides cultural performances and street drama, women workers marched for about one hour with placards and costumes to raise public awareness on IWD. During the launch, workers also presented a statement from the Women Workers' Summit to representatives of the Thai Labour Ministry, Commission on Human Rights and the ILO. These representatives responded that they will support the protection of migrant and domestic workers in Thailand.

[More Details](#)

BOOK RELEASE



Working Stiffs, Union Maids, Reds, and Riffraff

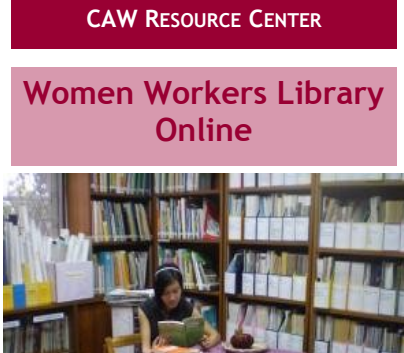
Tom Zaniello

This wonderful book is an encyclopaedic guide to 350 labour films from around the world. It describes all the films in detail and tells you how to access them. Fiction and nonfiction, the films are about unions, labor history, working-class life, political movements, and the struggle between labor and capital. Each entry includes critical commentary, production data, cast list, suggested related films, and annotated references to books and Web sites for further reading.

This most recent edition, published in 2003, addresses both historical and contemporary films and features documentaries and hard-to-find information about agitprop and union-financed films.

CAW RESOURCE CENTER

Women Workers Library Online



Committee for Asian Women invite you to visit our Women Workers Library online at www.womenworkerslibrary.org. This is the only feminist labour resource centre in Asia. The library has its unique feminist labour cataloguing system developed by generations of CAW staff based on the International Standard Bibliographic Description (ISBD). It has now more than 3,000 items including books, magazines, reports and other materials (i.e. campaign posters, leaflets and brochures). The number is growing every day. The library does not lend out books currently but it is possible to visit our office or email us to enquire how to access the books.

ABOUT CAW

Committee for Asian Women (CAW) is a regional network of 46 women workers groups in 14 Asian countries that aims to empower women workers to protect, advocate, and advance their rights. CAW is part of the global movement advocating workers' rights for over 30 years.

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