

Say No to Ole Wolff's Retaliation against the workplace Union in Yantai!



On September 12, 2008 four HK groups protested against Ole Wolff (Asia) Ltd at its office

Ole Wolff (Asia) Ltd is a Hong Kong registered company with its headquarters in Denmark. In 2005, it registered a subsidiary, Ole Wolff (Yantai) Electronics Co. Ltd in Yantai City, Shandong Province.

In early 2006 the company was found to have violated labour laws by not providing labour contracts for their employees, and paying its workers below the legal minimum wage. The workers filed a complaint with the local labour bureau and when nothing happened they went on strike and founded a workplace union to defend themselves. In other words, a workplace union was born out of the workers struggle by the workers themselves - a rare thing in China. The response from the company was the dismissal of six workers representatives and the forcing of union officials to resign from the union, despite the fact that the union was officially recognized. Later the company also fired the acting Chairperson of the union. In 2007, the union brought the company to court over the dismissals and won. The local court ruled the dismissals as illegal and asked for the company to re-instate them. However the company simply ignored the court's verdict. Under the repression of the

company, using various methods of harassment and veiled threats, the workplace union suffered a decline in membership and the dismissed Chairperson and the six dismissed representatives have different degrees of financial difficulties. Some of them have found it hard to get new jobs comparable to their old ones because the company has withheld their employment files.

Despite the harassment, the Ole Wolff Yantai Union continues to stand up for their rights and those of the workers. They also run a blog in the internet to speak to the world. In May 2008 they got the support of the United Federation of Danish workers (3F). The latter pressured the company in various ways, including reporting the case to one of Ole Wolff's major clients, Danfoss, which has now promised to investigate. Domestically, the Ole Wolff Yantai Union continues to press their demands. Below is their most recent four point demand to the company:

1. To reinstate the Acting Chairperson and to compensate her according to law.
2. To reinstate the dismissed six – in accordance with the court's decision and to compensate them according to law. For those who do not wish to go back to work, the company must pay additional compensation.
3. To recognize the official status of the Ole Wolff Yantai Union and to pay union dues as stipulated by law.
4. To act according to the law in its labour management: any substantial changes in production plans which may affect the employment of the employees must first be consulted with the union.

We, the undersigned Hong Kong groups, support the demands of the OW workplace union. Ole Wolff (Asia) Co. Ltd should immediately accept all these legitimate demands.

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