

Threads

Newsletter of the Clean Clothes Campaign

Number 27 Spring 2009



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CCCs in Action

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Interview with Bilge Seckin
and more...

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The Clean Clothes Campaign (CCC) is dedicated to improving working conditions and supporting the empowerment of workers in the global garment and sportswear industries. Since 1989, the CCC has worked with trade unions, NGOs and workers across the globe to help ensure that the fundamental rights of workers are respected. We educate and mobilise consumers, lobby companies and governments, and offer direct solidarity support to workers as they fight for their rights and demand better working conditions.

Editorial

With the release of our new report, *Cashing In: Giant retailers, purchasing practices, and working conditions in the garment industry*, the Clean

Clothes Campaign takes aim at a new breed of clothing retailers, the giant supermarkets. Clothing is just one of the huge range of products on the shelves at Carrefour, Tesco, Aldi, Lidl and Walmart, but their massive scale has made them key players in the fight for justice and better working conditions in the garment industry.

The *Cashing In* report marks the launch of the CCC's Better Bargain campaign which lays out a path for giant retailers to improve implementation of labour standards. It also aims to raise awareness among the Giant's vast army of consumers: 25,000,000 people shop at Carrefour every day and shoppers in the UK spend one out of every seven pounds at Tesco. The CCC asks them to demand a better bargain from the giant retailers so they can be assured that their purchases are produced in dignity and freedom.

Poverty wages and precarious employment characterise the giant retailers' supply chains – problems also familiar to the millions of migrant workers in the garment industry. In March, the CCC teamed up with research organisation SOMO to hold a consultation meeting in Malaysia to discuss migrant worker issues. The research reveals that common problems faced by garment workers worldwide are compounded for migrants. The threat of deportation and arrest is added to other barriers to worker organising. Money owed to recruitment agencies, brokers or traffickers means that migrants need to earn not only enough money to survive, but also to pay back their debts. All garment workers have the right to earn a living wage – one that meets their basic needs and those of their families within a regular work week. In the coming months, the Better Bargain campaign will draw attention to this fundamental fact,

urging companies and governments to support initiatives like the Asian Floor Wage.

And we will continue to support those who defend those workers who claim their right to demand decent and fair working conditions. The CCC is pleased to be a beneficiary of Europe Aid's Human Rights Defenders program, enabling us to share the stories and support the struggle of courageous women like Emine Arslan, who has now protested outside the DESA leather factory in Turkey for a year to demand her job back. In Emine's own words, "If I receive [solidarity] support, I can continue". ✂



The Better Bargain campaign targets Lidl and other giant retailers.

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CCCs in Action



'Where Can I Buy Clean Clothes?'

This is probably the most common question that the CCC hears. So the Dutch and Belgian CCCs have sought to provide some answers – and in some imaginative ways. To help consumers learn more about brands and retailers and what they're doing – or not doing – to ensure that labour rights are respected, the Dutch CCC developed 'Modepoly', a Monopoly-like game focused on ethical fashion.

Modepoly uses four criteria to measure a company's commitment to protecting labour rights in its supply chain: participation in a multi-stakeholder initiative; support for a living wage; transparency; and independent monitoring and verification of working conditions. The Dutch CCC conducted its own survey and supplemented it with research made available by the international consumer organization, ICRT.

Through the on-line version of the game, players can send a message directly to **Continued on next page >**

'Flash Mob' for Fair Wear

At the end of an international Play Fair activist meeting in Berlin, over forty activists took their message directly to Puma and Adidas with a 'Flash Mob' action at the companies' concept stores.

The activists posed as interested shoppers before engaging in a bit of theatre, like biting into a sports shoe and fighting over a t-shirt. Then, on a signal, the activists chanted in unison, "Play fair for workers – Pay fair wages". Shoppers and passersby showed their support for the appeal by applauding, while the store manager reluctantly accepted a pile of protest postcards. In a few minutes, it was over.

A 'Flash Mob' only takes minutes to organise through sms or email, and is intended to be quick and provocative. Flash Mobs first appeared in the U.S. in 2003. In a lobby of a New Yorker Hotel 150 people suddenly clapped hands for fifteen seconds without apparent reason. This kind of action 'art' is meant to provoke, irritate or inspire people. The German CCC Play Fair action, with its goal of social change, is known more specifically as a 'Smart Mob'.

Whatever its name, it works. The action generated media interest and put the message of workers' rights in the minds of consumer and companies. ✂

www.sauberekleidung.de



Flash Mob' action outside Adidas store in Berlin.



a company to ask about the efforts the company is making to ensure that working conditions are adequately monitored. They can also inquire whether workers' freedoms are protected and whether they can support themselves on their wages.

Meanwhile, with its report *We Want Clean Clothes!*, CCC Belgium offers an overview of 33 companies and their performance on respecting labour standards in their supply chains. There is no 'good' list or 'bad' list; rather the report offers a nuanced evaluation intended to educate consumers and inspire companies to do better. There is also discussion of trends in the industry, such as the surprising fact that every company now has a code of conduct.

The most common weakness among the companies was their lack of engagement with workers themselves, and the lack of transparency and information available to consumers. *We Want Clean Clothes!* is available in both Flemish and French. ✂

- www.modepoly.org
- www.schonekieren.be
- www.vetementspropres.be



CCC Norway action card on living wage.

Norway Focuses on Living Wage

Many companies publicise the fact that they pay the legal minimum wage. But do consumers know that minimum wages in garment-producing countries are not enough to survive on?

This basic question formed the basis of CCC Norway's living wage project research on some 25 retailers from Sweden, Denmark, Spain and Norway. The results of the research were clear: little effort is made by these retailers to ensure that workers earn a decent living.

The retailers, which included H&M, Lindex, Dressmann and Bestseller, make up the bulk of the Norwegian market. Since none of the companies are willing to reveal their price policies, the Norwegian CCC had to figure out another way to get the debate started.

So it looked at a combination of information: companies' wage policies as formulated in their codes of conduct; their turnover and profit; the countries they source from; and the minimum wage in those countries. Its subsequent report, *Not Much to Live From*, calls on companies to support a living wage.

The report received very good press coverage and kicked off a campaign which features an e-card action, discussions with trade unions and other organisations, follow-up on the retailers, street actions, speeches and input on the National Strategy on Decent Work Agenda.

Throughout the year, the Norwegian CCC will continue to put pressure on brands and retailers to take a more sustainable approach to business, and to make a living wage part of the political debate. ✂

www.reneklær.no

CCCs in Action

From her home in Bulgaria, Snejana Radeva sews the upper part of shoes destined for Europe.



Swedish Footwear Industry Lags Behind

A recent report from the Swedish CCC, Rena Kläder, shows that the footwear industry is loaded with the same human rights and environmental problems seen in the garment industry. Despite this fact, few shoe companies on the Swedish market themselves manage to attain the ethical requirements that they demand of their suppliers.

The German-based purchasing organisation ANWR, whose membership includes many minor Swedish shoe shops and whose own labels include Crispin, Lino Moda and Sidewalk, stands out as the biggest laggard. ANWR does not take responsibility for working conditions and the environmental impact of its contract suppliers. Its ethical requirements apply only to suppliers producing for its own labels and cover only the prohibition of exploitation, slave-like conditions or forced labour, exploitation of prisoners, danger to the health of children, and use of certain hazardous chemicals. These standards fall far short of internationally recognised labour standards.

In addition to ANWR, companies reviewed in the report include the five other major players in Swedish footwear: Eurosko, Vagabond, Nilson Group,

Scorett and Ecco. The Eurosko Group includes Skokanonen and Wedins and the Nilson Group includes Din Sko, Jern, Skopunkten, Nilson and Radical Sports.

The report presents the major problems in the footwear industry regarding labour and environmental standards: wages that are impossible to live on; extremely long hours; violations of the right to organise in trade unions and bargain collectively; harassment; and child labour. Moreover, the use of hazardous chemicals during different stages of footwear production poses a major environmental problem and a major health hazard to workers. Chemicals that remain in finished shoes can also be dangerous for those who wear them. The biggest flaw identified in the report is the companies' insufficient monitoring of suppliers. Scorett, Vagabond and Eurosko conduct no social audits on

working conditions or the environment in their supplier factories. Nilson Group makes its own inspections of direct suppliers, but working hours and wages are not included. Ecco makes no unannounced audits and does not meet with workers outside the workplace. None of the companies works with trade unions or non-profit organizations in the follow-up or have an environmental certification for their production.

The report recommends that all shoe companies focus on trade union rights, develop complaint mechanisms and sustainable audits, and sign a global framework agreement with the ITGLWF. They should also pay a living wage, improve the environment and the working environment, and offer transparency. ✂

www.renaklader.org

A consultation meeting in Malaysia moves CCC forward in the development of a strategy to support the growing number of migrant garment workers.

Garment Workers on the Move

The garment industries of Malaysia, Thailand and Taiwan have long depended on the use of migrant workers from neighbouring countries such as Indonesia, Burma, and the Philippines. More recently, new garment factories set up in the Middle East, especially in Jordan and Egypt, have been drawing migrants from China, Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka and elsewhere.

Migrant workers are also increasingly found in the garment industries of Europe, the US, and Australia. Brands and retailers depend on tight turnaround times and low transport costs for their 'fast fashion' lines, so they are now sourcing this production closer to their main consumer markets. But they still want it at the low prices they pay in Asia or Africa, so their suppliers commonly employ migrant workers.

Many migrants are desperate for better wages since they can barely sustain

themselves as it is and also have to pay off debts to family members, recruitment agencies, labour brokers, or traffickers. They face particular challenges in speaking out or organising for better conditions. Many cannot work legally due to strict asylum or immigration policies and those who have entered the country legally risk losing their legal status if they are fired. Migrant workers often live in constant fear of arrest or deportation; many don't even dare leave the factory or dormitory.

Even so, many migrant workers do take action. Burmese refugees working in garment factories on the Thai border are involved in taking legal cases and regularly go on strike. In Mauritius, migrants from China, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka have taken industrial action for better pay and conditions. Some brands and retailers have already had to deal with problems associated with the exploitation of migrants by their suppliers. Yet few have developed

meaningful programmes to systematically address such issues in their supply chains.

To find out what the CCC can do to address the specific issues of migrant workers, it joined forces with the Dutch-based research organisation SOMO to organise a consultation seminar in Malaysia in late March 2009. Those present came from trade unions, labour NGOs, and migrants' support groups from ten Asia-Pacific countries.

The meeting pointed up the need for stronger networking and cooperation between organisations supporting migrant workers in both the country of origin and the destination. Unions need to make more efforts to include migrant workers in their organising strategies, and to challenge the artificial divides between migrant and local workers. Companies need to develop a more strategic approach to the monitoring and remediation of issues concerning migrant workers. Finally, governments need to prioritise the protection of migrant workers' rights rather than the enforcement of immigration policies that contribute to migrants' marginalisation and exploitation. ✂



Participants at CCC consultation meeting on migrants.

There is a clear role for the CCC in working with these networks, and raising awareness among consumers and brands/retailers in Europe. A discussion paper outlining the key areas of concern for migrant garment workers, an overview of different stakeholders' activities, and an outline of possible strategies to support them will be available soon.



Belgian CCC includes 'clean clothes' on its shopping list.

Better Bargain

Spotlight on Giant Retailers

With the release of a new report, ***Cashing In***, the CCC's Better Bargain campaign calls on leading discount retailers to take a lead on labour rights.

At a time of global economic crisis, giant discount retailers like Tesco, Carrefour, Aldi, Lidl and Walmart are among the only companies still increasing their profits and market shares – and they're becoming increasingly influential players in the garment market. The Giants' size and price-breaking approach make them leaders in the global race to the bottom on working conditions.

More and more people buy their clothes in giant retail shops where they also shop for food and basic household items. These retailers are expanding their garment product lines with extremely low-priced clothes. How is it possible that those big retailers are seeing massive profits and increased market share in the garment sector? The answer is simple: because the workers in their supply chains face increasing poverty, appalling conditions, and serious workers' rights violations.

Cashing In Report Released

On February 10, 2009 the CCC released *Cashing In: Giant retailers, purchasing practices, and working conditions in the garment industry*, a report focused on the world's five biggest retailers: Walmart, Tesco, Carrefour, Aldi and Lidl. It draws on interviews with 440 workers at thirty different workplaces in Thailand, India, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka.

The title of the report summarises the finding that big retailers, rather than lifting workers out of poverty, are “cashing in” on it. Women and their families are subsidising the profits of giant retailers through bad conditions, poor terms of employment, and poverty wages. The full report is available in English, French and German, and additional translations are forthcoming.

The release of the report marked the beginning of the Better Bargain campaign aimed at making the giant retailers take responsibility for labour conditions and the impact of their purchasing practices in their supply chains. The report generated in-depth news articles in several countries including the UK and Germany, and in the Netherlands Members of Parliament brought questions to the Government as a result of the report's findings.

In response to the media attention, all of the companies have now publicly responded to the report. Notably, all the companies mentioned their involvement in a unilateral, business-driven initiative – the Business Social Compliance Initiative (BSCI) in the cases of Aldi and Lidl, and the Global Social Compliance

Programme (GSCP) in the cases of Tesco, Walmart, and Carrefour – as evidence of one way they are addressing working conditions in their supply chains. (See page 15 for a summary of the CCC's new publication about the GSCP.) The Clean Clothes Campaign will follow-up on their responses in the coming weeks.

On Sale Now: Worker's Rights

The release of the report was accompanied by public actions in Belgium and Germany. Activists from the Clean Clothes Campaign in Brugge directed consumers' attention towards workers' rights violations in Aldi's supply chain. Meanwhile, CCC Belgium South launched a campaign website featuring imitation advertisements that highlight the problem of low wages, forced overtime and insecurity that garment workers face. The German CCC continued to focus its attention on Aldi, and in December it hosted two Bangladeshi workers for a speaker tour.

Better Bargain campaign activities will continue through the year with public events, activist trainings, and workshops on such issues such as the Asian Floor Wage campaign (AFW). And planning is underway for the Better Bargain action week, in combination with the official launch of the Asian Floor Wage campaign in early October. ✂

For news about the campaign and materials or to find out how to get involved, see www.cleanclothes.org.

Better Bargain – the Basics

The aim of the Better Bargain campaign is to improve working conditions in the garment supply chains of the giant retailers. The CCC is pushing Giants to:

- **Improve labour standards implementation** in their supply chains, increase action on code compliance and join credible multi-stakeholder initiatives.
- **Make sure that all workers throughout their supply chains are paid a living wage** and support living wage initiatives such as the Asian Floor Wage Campaign (asianfloorwage.org)
- **Improve purchasing practices and support regulation** where possible.
- **Increase transparency** by disclosing their production countries and suppliers to help foster improvements of labour conditions.

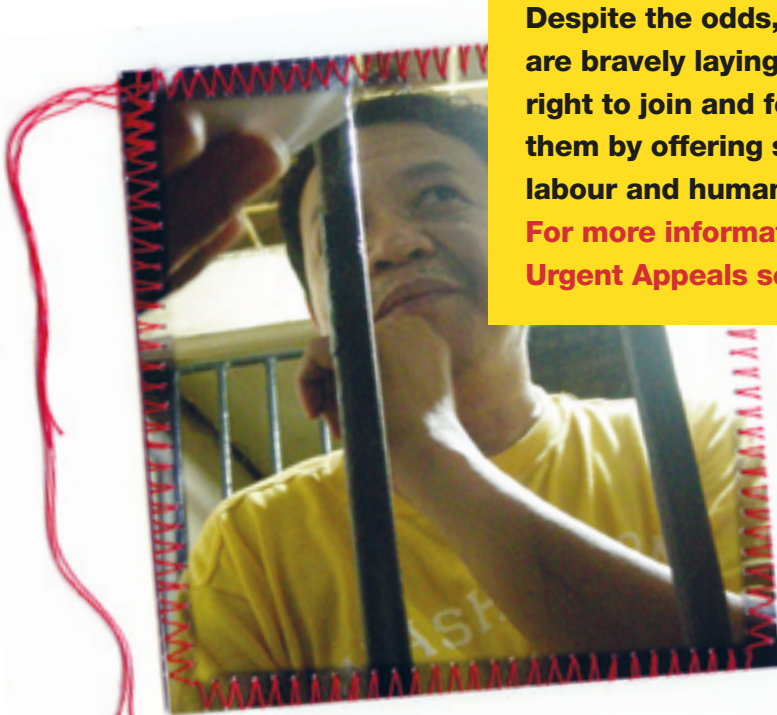
The Better Bargain campaign also seeks to:

- **Support worker organising** and worker solidarity throughout the Giants' supply and retail chains.
- **Encourage consumers** to take sustainability and respect for workers' rights into account and change their consumption patterns.
- **Secure passage and implementation of labour legislation** in both producer and consumer countries to ensure that giant retailers respect workers' rights throughout their supply chains.
- **Build alliances** with human rights, development and environmental campaigns that are also targeting the giant retailers so as to maximise our effectiveness.

Urgent Appeals

Despite the odds, garment workers across the globe are bravely laying claim to their rights, including the right to join and form a union. The CCC supports them by offering solidarity support in urgent cases of labour and human rights violations.

For more information and to take action, go to the Urgent Appeals section of www.cleanclothes.org.



Philippine Labour Lawyer Faces New Round of Charges

Within a week of being released from prison, Philippine labour lawyer Atty. Remigio D. Saladero Jr. and five other labour and human rights activists faced another round of trumped-up charges of murder. Saladero was freed on February 5, 2009 when the regional trial court in Mindoro, Philippines ruled that proper legal procedures were not followed. Along with 66 other labour and human rights activists, the six had been charged with multiple murder and attempted murder in a New People's Army ambush in Mindoro in 2006.

The new case against them involves the July 29, 2008 killing of Ricky Garmino, a member of the para-military group Civilian Auxiliary Forces Geographical Unit (CAFGU) in Rizal. Evidence that the charges are trumped-up is clear: witnesses in the Garmino case allegedly recognised 64 of the 72 labour and human rights activists in the Mindoro case and named them in exactly the same order as in the Mindoro case files.

Saladero and his group of lawyers have filed a petition for protection against

unlawful acts of public officials with the Supreme Court.

Please take action today by calling on the Philippine government and Employers Confederation of the Philippines (ECOP) to stop the persecution of labour and human rights activists; invite the ILO to do a full independent investigation into the human rights violations in the Philippines; and drop the criminal charges against labour and human rights advocates, activists and organisers in both the Mindoro and Garmino cases. ✂

Union Leaders Denied Jobs at Adidas Suppliers

After receiving more than 3000 letters from CCC activists across Europe and Australia, Adidas has made an effort to find re-employment for former workers from PT Spotec and PT Dong Joe, two Indonesian suppliers that were shut down in November 2006. Of 10,500 workers, 1,285 have found jobs with Ching Luh, which took over production at the former PT Spotec factory.

Although this is promising news, about 900 workers are still waiting for their applications to be processed; this includes seven leaders from the SBGTS union who filed their applications in time.

Similarly, about thirty union members formerly employed at Adidas supplier PT Panarub have been seeking re-employment since being unfairly dismissed in October 2005. International campaigning by the CCC and others resulted in a reasonable severance pay-out for these workers, but there is evidence that they may now be blacklisted.

The CCC is asking Adidas to commit to a transparent hiring process and to ensure that these union officials are given a fair chance to find new jobs. ✂

Speaker Tour Highlights Violations at Prada Supplier

Emine Arslan, a worker from a Turkish factory that supplies Prada and other luxury brands, toured several European countries in March to share her story of union repression and exploitation. Ms. Arslan was joined on the tour by Deri Is union organiser Nuran Gulenc and Bilge Seckin of the Women’s Rights at Work Association (see Partner Profile, pages 12).



Bilge Seckin, Emine Arslan and Nuran Gulenc (left to right) with activists from the CCC in France.

Fed up with long hours, low wages and appalling conditions, Ermine Arslan and hundreds of workers at Turkish leather manufacturer DESA decided to join the Turkish leather workers’ union, Deri Is, in 2008. Ms. Arslan had been a valued worker for eight years, but when the company realised she was supporting the union, in one day she received two warnings and was fired. She persisted by filing a court case, demonstrating outside the factory, refusing bribes, and enduring the attempted kidnapping of her daughter.

Court rulings have thus far affirmed that Ms. Arslan and the other workers were illegally dismissed as a result of union activity. The court ruled that they should either be reinstated or properly compensated. DESA has appealed these findings. Meanwhile, the factories’ buyers, including its biggest client Prada, have failed to respond adequately to well-documented abuse of freedom of association by their supplier. The CCC is calling on supporters to write to Prada to insist on Ms. Arslans’ reinstatement

and to ensure respect for international labour standards.

Excerpt from an interview with Emine Arslan during her visit with CCC Spain:

“One of the main problems was overtime. We were working excessive overtime, for instance two days and one night without interruption, without going home... We were sleeping under the

desk on cardboard for an hour on some mornings... We would go home without enough energy to take a bath.

After my dismissal I started to wait in front of the factory with my union. I just demanded reinstatement. Two days after they called me inside the factory. They said they would pay me €4,000... But they said at the same time that they would ‘meet my friends in the factory’. This means they will fire my friends who I led to register with the union. I recognised that and I refused. I knew that if I took the money they would fire 300 more workers...

They called the police because I was still waiting outside the factory... They brought six buses full of policemen. In each bus there were fifty policemen for a total of two people: me and the person from the union.” ✂



Partner Profile

Bilge Seckin

From Women's Rights at Work Association / Çalışan Kadının İnsan Hakları Derneği Turkey

Bilge Seckin helped found the Women's Rights at Work Association in Turkey in 2004. She recently visited Italy, France and Spain at the invitation of the CCC to raise awareness about union repression in the DESA leather factory (see page 11).

How did you get involved in labour rights?

We formed an NGO, Women's Rights at Work, in 2004. We started to work on women's rights, especially for women working in the textile sector. It was a meeting with CCC people that inspired us to establish the association.

You mean the NGO was founded after a CCC meeting?

Yes. We realised that there is a lot of possibility for international work, with codes of conduct and so on. We got in touch with unions to try to understand what was happening.

With the DESA case you've worked closely with the Deri Is union.

I got involved with Deri Is and they hired me as an international specialist. But I found that I prefer to work with the union, not for the union. It wasn't easy for me to work within the union, because they have their own structure.

You think it's different from an NGO structure?

I think you can be more critical in an NGO, which contributes to the struggle. NGOs and especially women's groups bring a gender point of view. We can inspire unions and we can usually establish a better relationship with the public. Unions have to sit at the table with employers - they have to sit and talk to them and they usually can't explain their ideas in front of the public openly. But as an NGO you can do that. We can just be critical, but that doesn't work for unions.

Are there particular challenges you face in Turkey?

We have very bad labour laws. We face several big problems: overtime, low wages, violation of freedom of association. But if we have good regulation of freedom of association, then the other problems can be worked out.

Is the main issue the law itself or is it lack of enforcement?

One of the main problems is that a union has to have ten per cent of a sector before it can sign a collective agreement. We also have to have union membership of 50% plus one at a



workplace. Workers are usually fired before the threshold is reached. Factory owners just say “Reach that number and the union can come”, but it’s not possible to get there. And when the labour court decides in favour of workers who are dismissed for supporting a union, the owner is not required to reinstate them; they just have to pay compensation. It is such a long process – it takes months or years of struggle and even if you win there may be no union at the end of it all.

What are some of the challenges you see facing women workers in particular?

It’s not easy to begin to get them organised, but once they do get organised they never quit, as you see in the DESA case. Women like Emine...these are hard-working women and they tried to deal with their supervisor as good workers. But after that, when they saw that there was no way out, they found the union. They found us. When they were fired, they decided to stand outside the factory. They said, “We have to stay here and fight for our rights”. Most of their family members are very critical. Some of the women were criticised by their husbands and are now divorced. Fathers also criticise their daughters.

What was your experience during the speaker tour?

With the CCC people we felt like we were with people who understand better than our own friends. We are speaking different languages but we understand each other. Emine is very happy to see that people around the world are supporting the case and she is pleased to have the chance to tell her story.

What are your plans for the future?

I have a dream that we can establish an urgent solidarity network in Turkey. We have many NGOs and unions and people who are struggling for something like labour rights, women’s rights, environmental justice. But we have to do this struggle together. We can struggle together for Emine. ✂

News

From the Global Network

ECCJ to Launch New Campaign on Corporate Justice

The European Coalition for Corporate Justice (ECCJ) is set to launch a three-year campaign to establish a stronger legal framework governing how EU companies operate overseas and in certain EU countries. The ECCJ represents over 250 civil society organisations from 16 European countries, including CCC, Oxfam, Greenpeace, and Friends of the Earth.

The new campaign aims to clarify and improve the reach of the European legislation governing liability of EU companies for social and environmental abuses committed by their subsidiaries or in operations where they have significant influence, such as their supply chain. The campaign wants to improve access to justice for victims of abuses, and to increase transparency by introducing mandatory social and environmental reporting for companies. It also wants more clarity about corporate contact with public officials.

The campaign is planning a speaker tour and photographic exhibition to bring the European public firsthand accounts of the dramatic impact of irresponsible corporate behaviour in India, South Africa and Colombia. It hopes to collect at least 100,000 signatures asking for meaningful policy changes. ✂

www.corporatejustice.org

New Investigation into Chea Vichea Murder Case

After nearly five years in prison, two innocent men convicted of killing Chea Vichea, president of the Free Trade Union of the Workers of the Kingdom of Cambodia (FTUWKC), have been provisionally released from prison pending a retrial.



Born Samnang and Sok Samoeun were tried and sentenced to twenty years in prison shortly after Vichea's murder in 2004. But the Special Representative of the United Nations' Secretary General for Human Rights in Cambodia denounced the investigation and court hearings as lacking any credibility. Investigations by local NGOs revealed that the two had alibis and were not near the crime scene. In its decision on December 31, 2008, the Cambodian Supreme Court cited unclear evidence and called for a new investigation into the case. The decision marks the first step toward bringing the real perpetrators to justice.

Yet the lack of progress on two other cases of assassination of FTUWKC leaders suggests that continued pressure is necessary. On February 18,

2009 the Court of Appeal upheld the conviction of Thach Saveth who was sentenced to 15 years in prison by the Phnom Penh Municipal Court for the murder of FTUWKC steering committee member and local union president Ros Sovannareth in 2004. Local human rights groups and his lawyer condemned the decision, pointing out that Thach Saveth was arrested by the same district police officers who framed Born Samnang and Sok Samoeun. Meanwhile, there is no reported progress in the investigation of the 2007 murder of local union president Hy Vuthy. The FTUWKC recently issued a detailed report, *FTUWKC: Killings, Violation, Intimidation and Discrimination*, which covers the period 2004-2008. ✂

www.ftuwkc.org

New Resources

Update on Global Social Compliance Programme

*Clean Clothes Campaign,
December 2008*

The Global Social Compliance Programme (GSCP) is an initiative developed by the world's largest retailers, including Tesco, Walmart and Carrefour. In this update, the CCC challenges the credibility and legitimacy of the GSCP's approach, including its lack of stakeholder participation and complaint mechanisms.

Transparency Report II: Have Hong Kong Garment Companies Improved their Reporting on Labour Standards?

Oxfam Hong Kong, 2009

This report follows up on the first Transparency Report in 2006, rating 26 Hong Kong garment companies, including Li & Fung, Esprit, and Esquel, on their reporting of labour standards in their supply chains. The report aims to promote best practice management of supply chain labour standards by assessing companies' performance according to 19 standard criteria across five categories: Governance and Risk Management, Code of Conduct, Stakeholder Engagement, Management, as well as Auditing and Reporting.

Fabricado por Mujeres: Género, la Industria de la Confección Global y el Movimiento por los Derechos de las Trabajadoras

*Campaña Ropa Limpia España /
Clean Clothes Campaign, 2008
Translated by Aída Regidor Matey,
María Peón Espiña y Ana Mato*

The Spanish translation of *Made by Women* (Clean Clothes Campaign, 2005) provides a series of profiles on women workers, activists, and organisations committed to justice in the garment industry. It looks at such issues as informal work and the feminisation of migration, underscoring why gender should be a key concern for labour rights advocates.

Guest Column



June Hartley

Advocacy and Information Officer for Women Working Worldwide

I have worked with the CCC since joining the ITGLWF–Africa Region in 2001. I felt privileged to build on my own experience of working with women over many years in South Africa. Women workers work hard, long hours in unhealthy conditions. Yet their earnings cannot provide them with basic needs. Instead they are sexually, physically and verbally abused. The work environment is harsh and alienating.

Women workers are said to constitute 80% of the workforce in EPZs [Export Processing Zones]. It is no coincidence that this feminisation of work is about cost cutting, and women have been made a key component of a super exploitative system. They bear a disproportionate burden, are less valued, and are accorded little more respect than the machines they operate.

CCC therefore needs to strengthen its gender focus in all aspects. Gender policies must be developed to strengthen the battle against gender discrimination. Understanding the role of gender in the struggle for women workers will bring all workers closer and, crucially, make them stronger. The marginalisation of women should be addressed, through inclusive and participatory action, based on a true gender consciousness.

Women need to be supported in their journey to realise their voices to speak out for themselves. The end result will be women workers gathering their strength, empowering themselves. Such strength and empowerment is in itself the source of future victories. ✂

Looking Ahead



CCC on the Bookshelf

In 2006 journalist and photographer Liesbeth Sluiter decided to write a book about the Clean Clothes Campaign because its “international reach and ‘light’ organisational model fascinated me”. When the CCC gave her the green light and the UK’s Pluto Press agreed to publish it, Sluiter set about interviewing dozens of people and making her way through piles of archival material to find those little gems that make the story of the CCC come alive.

The fruits of her labour, *Clean Clothes: A Movement to End Sweatshops*, will appear in November this year. The book charts the history of the garment industry’s globalisation and, in its wake, the rise of the Clean Clothes Campaign. Sluiter concludes that in the last twenty years, the CCC network has been successful in raising awareness on labour right violations in the garment industry and in promoting corporate social responsibility, but there is a lot of work to be done to actually improve conditions on the work floor. She fears that the current financial crisis may pose an extra challenge in that regard.

But it’s a challenge that the CCC should be able to take on, according to Sluiter. What she has learned from writing the book is that the network’s flexible and organic way of organising is a successful model for this type of work, enabling the CCC to respond effectively to developments. The enthusiasm, knowledge and hands-on mentality of the people involved infuse the network with an ‘enormous spirit’. One area the CCC could improve on, she says, is communicating effectively through the use of images. High-quality visuals illustrating the issues that the CCC is working on could go a long way in bringing home the message.

Available from the CCC in November 2009:

Clean Clothes: A Movement to End Sweatshops
By Liesbeth Sluiter, Pluto Press, 270 pages
(including illustrations)
