

# HAMMER TO FALL

## Harder Times Ahead for Chinese Civil Society

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We are pleased to announce the second issue of *Made in China*. In this issue, we open with a series of **Briefs** that provide an overview of notable stories that have taken place over the past three months. In the last quarter, one of the most important developments for Chinese civil society is the passing of the Law on the Management of Foreign NGOs' Activities within Mainland China on 28 April. Although a draft released early last year had received extensive domestic and international criticism, the Law was passed with only minor revisions. What we previously described as a sword of Damocles looming over Chinese civil society has now become reality.

To contextualise the language of the Law and shed light on its possible implications, we have compiled **The Foreign NGOs Management Law: A Compendium**. While the new legislation indeed helps to clarify what is a substantial grey area in the Chinese legal system, the specific terms of the Law have grave implications not only for international NGOs operating in China, but also for the whole of Chinese civil society. This is especially true for those organisations that operate in politically sensitive fields such as labour and human rights.

In the China Columns section, we present three articles. In **Walmart Workers in China: A Breakthrough in the Chinese Labour Movement**, Anita Chan highlights the historical importance of the recent struggles of Walmart workers in China. In **Chinese Workers and the Law: Misplaced Trust?**, Ivan Franceschini reflects on the 'rights awakening' of Chinese workers, challenging some widely held assumptions. Following up on the tribulations facing state workers in China that we out-

lined in the last issue, **Laying Off Responsibility: Microcredit, Entrepreneurship, and China's Industrial Retrenchment** by Nicholas Loubere offers an analysis of the political and ideological implications of resorting to microcredit to promote entrepreneurial activity among laid-off workers.

The arbitrary detention of rights advocates and lawyers over the last year has renewed interest in re-evaluating the meaning of the discourse of the rule of law promoted by the Chinese authorities. This issue includes a forum, **Interpreting the Rule of Law in China: A Discussion**, edited by Elisa Nesossi with contributions from legal experts Joshua Rosenzweig, Ewan Smith, and Sue Trevaskes. This discussion puts the concept of the rule of law in China in a wider historical and political perspective, and deconstructs its multiple dimensions and specificities.

Finally, in the Academic Watch section, we introduce **China on Strike**, a new book on the struggles of Chinese workers, through a conversation with one of the co-editors Eli Friedman.

This journal is hosted by *Chinoiresie.info*, a collective blog edited by young scholars and dedicated to the analysis of Chinese society. If you would like to contribute a piece of writing, you can contact us at [madeinchina@chinoiresie.info](mailto:madeinchina@chinoiresie.info). If you would like to receive this journal regularly by email, you can subscribe at this link: [www.chinoiresie.info/madeinchina](http://www.chinoiresie.info/madeinchina). We welcome any feedback and we hope you will consider sharing this journal with your friends and colleagues.

The Editors,  
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