

China : An Interview on Jasic & Maoist Labor Activism

Seeing through Muddied Waters, Part 2

Sunday 15 March 2020, by [Basketball](#), [Chuang](#), [Red-Haired Monster](#), [Reignite](#) (Date first published: 23 May 2019).

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*As the second piece in our series on “the Jasic affair,” the past year of state repression against young Maoists and related matters, we’ve translated **an interview with two anonymous “participants in mainland labor struggles”** from the second issue of the new Chinese journal Reignite ([]). (0.1) The issue also contains several other interviews on this topic, including Pun Ngai’s response to critics (0.2) and an interview with China labor scholar Chris Chan (0.3), but we found this one to be the most illuminating, gesturing toward a perspective closer to our own.*

For background see “Part 1: Jasic, Strikes & Unions” (0.4) and “Letters from the July 20th Incident in Pingshan.” (05)

Chuang

A CONVERSATION WITH PARTICIPANTS IN MAINLAND LABOR STRUGGLES : **CRITICIZING THE APPROACH OF STUDENT FACTORY ACTIVISM IN** **RELATION TO JASIC (1)**

ReignitePress.com, 5 June 2019

Interviewees: **Red-Haired Monster** ([]) & **Basketball** ([])

Date of interview: **23 May 2019**

Location: **somewhere in mainland China**

Reignite: Hello! In this interview, we hope to have a comprehensive discussion of the Jasic Movement, clearing up what actually happened.

You have quite a few critiques of the movement, but clearly you don't stand in opposition to it – rather, you critique how the movement was organized, and the concrete choices that were made. Because you have so much experience thinking about and doing organizing, rather than making critiques from outside the labor movement, we hope that you can directly speak on the organizational and strategic issues with this struggle, and respond to other strategic and organizational critiques of the movement.

RED-HAIRED MONSTER

First, we need to clarify the various kinds of Maoists who appeared in the Jasic affair,(2) as well as the students and workers who were influenced by them. It's important to understand the circulation of their ideas, their relationships to each other, and the roles they played in the affair. With this clarified, we can understand the specific characteristics of their organizing methods and the problems with their strategy in this struggle.

From sources already available online, we understand that the groups can be roughly divided as follows:

1. Maoist organizers:

Primarily engaged in work with students, developing core cadres in universities and gaining support from the working masses through practical work in coastal areas.

These organizers are in contact with all types of leftists, and are engaged in long-term on-campus work with students, developing organizations in large cities nationwide.

By leading students in studies of classic theories of Marxist-Leninist-Maoist thought, as well as close reading of CCP history and the history of international student movements, they reanalyze the Cultural Revolution and the Reform and Opening period through a Maoist lens.

At the same time, they encourage students to participate in **practical work for workers' rights on and off campus. In the Jasic affair, this group played a core organizational and leadership role.**

2. Members of underground Maoist parties:

These are **relatively few**. Together with some Maoist organizers, they formulated a set of models for **training workers and mobilizing actions in the Pearl River Delta.**

3. Activist students:

Developed and trained in various universities by Maoist organizers. They were also the primary force behind the later development of the **Jasic Support Group** (集思社) (3) on various campuses and at the factory itself. (4)

4. Maoist workers:

Several worker-activists who were influenced by Maoist organizers.

5. Maoist social activists:

These activists are distinguished by their long-term engagement with inland state-owned enterprise (SOE) workers.

They have broad networks, through which Maoist organizers set up a national network, as well as building contacts with laid-off or retired SOE employees and other social strata.

Understanding student factory activism (工厂) in relation to the Jasic movement from the background of mainland Maoism

***Reignite:** Can you first give us an overall assessment of the Jasic movement, as well as the kind of perspective your assessment is built on?*

BASKETBALL

Between the years 2000 and 2010, some of the people involved in Maoist organizing had begun to feel that, following **the end of the struggle against the restructuring of SOEs**, they could no longer see a direction forward for labor activism or “*doing work with workers*” (工厂) (5) in relation to the employees of SOEs.

At the same time, strikes were proliferating across the Pearl River Delta, and **some Maoists started to redirect their work to focus on the new generations of workers in southern China**. The Jasic affair took place with all of this in the background.

- **From the perspective of the students**, the last ten years have led to an increase in **dissatisfaction** with society and pessimism about the future. Although their actual numbers are quite small, they are **very sincere in their desire to take action and change society**.

- The leftist thought and ideological resources they have been able to access have mostly been focused on what exists in mainstream education, including a hodgepodge of anecdotes, impressions, and commentaries on **China’s 20th century revolutions and the construction of socialism**.

Because these revolutions took place in China and are visible pieces of history, they have been the most persuasive influences for these young people.

- *Beyond that, a number of activist students have been attracted into Maoist organizing networks through the organization of study groups by Maoists in the universities.*

On one hand, **the Maoist organizations have done political education** with the students, **encouraging the practice of getting jobs in factories and developing cadres** (工厂).

On the other, they have **encouraged students to persist in their activities** by describing massive social changes that they understand will emerge in the next few years.

There were a lot of strikes among workers in southern China throughout those years.

However, after several years of activities, when Maoist organizers and activist **students still hadn’t achieved any clear results**—which is to say that they failed to see signs that workers would respond quickly and in a widespread manner when the activists tried to mobilize them—**many of them gave up and left**.

In the previous two years [leading up to Jasic in 2018], students’ sense of **frustration about such factory activism** had already begun to mount.

Under these circumstances, participants felt somewhat anxious and impatient, and **it is precisely this anxiety that pushed Jasic into what it became**. They hoped to create something that would mobilize more workers and students to rise up.

Through the events of the Jasic struggle, the Maoists displayed their program (工厂), their beliefs and their methods.

We don’t believe that this event reflects a historical transformation for Chinese workers.

Students recognized and experienced the oppression felt by workers throughout society, and saw first hand the inequality and exploitation of Chinese society, so they entered factories to organize workers, hoping to have some effect. But the most important question is, what is the final goal of this stage-by-stage organizing? At the moment, this question is hardly ever discussed.

A critique of Maoist students' approach to factory activism

Reignite: *On the surface, what we saw is that students entered factories using Maoist language, and we know there is a vision behind this. But, people from all sides have different understandings and critiques of their reasoning. For example, some leftists are of the opinion that the students' vision was to set up independent unions and create a "color revolution." (5.1)*
What do you think is the vision behind their actions?

BASKETBALL

The students who entered factories are usually anti-capitalist to varying degrees, pursuing socialist ideas.

Some students worked in factories for six months or a year before coming out. Based on what they wrote of their experiences, it seems to me that their understanding of organizational methods are very close to the Maoist theory of the "vanguard party."

According to this line of thought, **prior to entering the factories, the students believed that they had already grasped a set of advanced, correct theories:** The working class is the most advanced, and we should lead them to stand up and fight. However, after entering the factories, students realized that many workers did not have the rebellious spirit that they had imagined, and also that workers often would not listen to their propaganda. This produced a kind of **disillusionment**, and some people really began to doubt the Maoist organizational ideas they had received.

This is because, after receiving Maoist political education while on campus, many students became deeply idealistic, passionate and angry. But while students had learned that "*workers have the power to change the world*," what they found in reality was that workers generally are in a condition of actual enslavement.

It is important to say that we are not emphasizing a need to accept the "*backwardness*" of workers, but that we have to figure out how to resolve this contradiction. To say that people can be immediately roused to action upon hearing the right theory is to promote an oversimplified understanding of capitalist reality. This is not dialectical materialism.

Most of the time, workers are not the "advanced class" of Maoist propaganda and political education—this is the reality of class society. Those who are ruled, who are enslaved, will take on the appearance of slaves. This is because of the class position of those who are ruled, which subjects them to this position in the social order from a young age, working through the family, schools, and the innumerable instances of education and training that make up the entirety of social life, not to mention the ideological indoctrination imposed by the rulers.

It is only in a crisis of rule (□□□□) that there might be a possibility for ordinary workers to make a large-scale change. Looking at the history of class struggle, we can see that **when a movement erupts, when a revolution comes, there is a sudden realization and the thinking of the masses changes decisively.**

But students, organizers and professional revolutionaries who have taken hold of advanced theory need to respect the law of revolutions, these laws of class struggle, and develop their subjective capacity within this context. **You can't create a revolution from thin air**, but you can do preparation, push things along, and discover the indicators and turning points toward this change. What we need to be asking is: What can we do under the currently existing conditions? What can be done with the current configuration of forces and level of mass awareness?

RED-HAIRED MONSTER

Under the training model used by this group of Maoist organizers, it is common for this sort of theoretical abstraction to emerge. Of course there are objective differences between students and

workers, and **if a student wants to become an organizer, they need to understand the conditions under which workers will make a change**, and from this understanding, push toward such a transition rather than holding onto a set of ideas and telling workers how they should change. **These students may understand advanced theory, but they haven't grasped the weapons of social change.** These weapons are in the hands of the workers, it's just that they haven't yet learned how to use them. Our task is to help them do that.

Some on the left have criticized these Maoist organizers and workers' goal of organizing unions, saying that this is doomed to fail.

I see the current Chinese union system as a tool that the rulers use to maintain stability.

It's a well-organized national system that is used to collect information on the situation of workers across each industry, preventing or limiting a large number of disputes.

From this perspective, if these organizers really want to reorganize or establish unions in every factory and then attempt a breakthrough within **the union system, transforming it into an organization controlled by the workers themselves, struggling in this direction seems really naive.**

From the organizers' perspective, however, if this kind of opportunity or opening appears within a given factory, where they can use the union to play a specific, partial role in helping workers recognize their own power, this kind of concrete union work is not a problem.

Did the Jasic organizers fully consider these factors? Or did they simply hope to create a spectacular, influential incident through this dispute?

Reignite: *Your analysis here is based on your understanding of Maoist networks' usual organizational forms and ways of working, correct? But this Maoist organizing system has been building up for ten years — how could they avoid talking about ways to mobilize workers?*

RED-HAIRED MONSTER

This buildup is based on an accumulation of work with students, i.e. training political cadres, rather than experience with labor activism. I don't think that they put work with workers at the center of their organizing.

From the information that has already been revealed, it is obvious that the worker organizing methods within the Jasic factory, as well as the subsequent development of protest activities more broadly, were done in an **extremely hasty manner**. The workers and activists who entered the factory were entrusted with the hope of attracting other workers' attention through one or two years of activity in the factory, establishing their reputations as individuals, and then using this to initiate a few collective actions before eventually setting up a union.

But I haven't seen any mention of efforts to unleash the power of "opinion leaders" (意见领袖) who already existed among the workers, or workers who had prestige in the factory.

Furthermore, throughout the affair, **the main force of people who were mobilized was clearly made up of students.** Participation by the workers who were originally supposed to be the focus of organizing and influence was quite low throughout the various events.

On the education of Maoist students and the problems with Maoist language

Reignite: *In their writings, many of the students have emphasized that their increasingly firm*

attachment to Maoism resulted from their time in factories and contact with workers, where they realized that Maoist language is the most appropriate for talking to workers, the easiest for them to accept. Because Maoist language is simple and easy to understand compared to other leftist jargon, and because Maoism emerged and developed in China, workers can easily connect to the historical resources it references. If we were to talk about Gramsci, for example, even if we aren't thinking about the difficulty of the language, we would at least have to think about the historical background implicit in his writing — historical events that aren't already understood by workers, and that lack any easily-accessible primers.

RED-HAIRED MONSTER

I'm not sure what you're specifically talking about when you describe contact between students and workers using "*Maoist language*." Those moving speeches given by a few activist workers on the street outside the Jasic factory used ordinary workers' language combined with a few class-conscious ideas. This is class language, and it's not the same as the language used in the series of articles from the Jasic Support Group.

In the beginning, those speeches were shared through a lot of workers' [online chat] groups (微信群), and a lot of workers got excited, because the speeches resonated with them. But later, when the students pulled out the images of Chairman Mao, a lot of workers thought it was pretty weird, or said that they didn't understand the point of that. In our observation, most workers in the Pearl River Delta don't have any particular feelings about Mao.

If the students' goal is, as they say, to unite workers, they should be studying workers' own language, not the kind of language that has been used in the Support Group's articles. If the students are in the factory with workers analyzing international issues as the terrain of struggle, then maybe the kind of language we found in the Support Group's articles may be of some use. But **if the students want to analyze the particularities of everyday life, then we can say that this language is completely useless.**

Reignite: *So you could say that language necessary to analyze workers' everyday life isn't preexisting, but rather has to be gradually accumulated and built up, right? But what we are seeing now is that the language used in students' support articles is only describing how miserable and powerless the workers are.*

RED-HAIRED MONSTER

Right. As for workers, the reason the language used by the Support Group is so out of touch is because these kinds of remarks can't provide real, concrete analysis of their lives. Furthermore, **the Support Group described conditions at Jasic as being incomparably bad, but in reality, treatment at Jasic is middling, or on the lower end of that at the worst.** On the basis of their own experience and judgment, workers don't understand these descriptions of "*naked exploitation*" and "*total injustice*" coming from the Support Group. Of course, the Support Group can criticize workers who don't understand their articles as being negative or backwards, but the emphasis needs to be on the fact that **this kind of propaganda cannot make workers truly recognize their own lives and oppression, much less stir them to action.**

You could say that **this propaganda was not intended to mobilize workers, but rather aimed**

at students. This is one of the points indicating that the emphasis of their work was on students, rather than workers.

According to our experience, **the best method to work with workers is to allow them to get active themselves**, regardless of how small the issue they choose to focus on — for example, unreasonable overtime practices.

In order to resolve this problem, organizers and worker-activists have to find a way to stir up other workers to take action together, have to face up to factory management, the labor bureau, and ultimately come into contact with each and every force that's suppressing them.

While organizing workmates to take action, workers experience all kinds of pressures and motivations. At the same time, it's possible to help workers analyze and move their actions forward, pushing them to think through their own predicament and how to solve the question of what to do about it. In short, blithely relying in that kind of language, stuff like *"the factory is evil, you're being exploited, you have to resist,"* can't really help them recognize their own status or the power of collective action.

Reignite: *So in fact, it's not that the amount of mass participation was lacking, but rather that the depth of students' ability to mobilize workers was insufficient.*

BASKETBALL

Some Maoist students have come to southern China and learned about workers' issues through labor NGOs. Some of them use a lot of language from the Mao era in those discussions, and workers react as if they're watching a "revolutionary opera" (5.2) [officially approved dramas of the 1960s-1970s]. But normally, when they're talking about non-political content, these students' language is more or less normal.

Reignite: *Then, why does it feel so 20th century when they talk about politics? Is it because, beyond the orthodox Marxism of the older Maoists in universities, they don't have any other channels to come into contact with alternate resources?*

BASKETBALL

Because of the education they've received, the books they've read, the people they've met have all been orthodox Marxists and Maoists, they don't have anything else to talk about.

But, they also haven't really digested this stuff, haven't turned it into their own thing, and when they repeat it, it comes out sounding very stereotypical. And, while some older Maoists social activists can talk politics with workers in ways that are very suited to their counterparts' educational background and culture, this takes a lot of experience.

On the Jasic students' decision to escalate the struggle

RED-HAIRED MONSTER

During the Jasic affair, as the group of activists first prepared for the unionization stage of the struggle inside the factory, their activities and methods, as well as the results they produced, were no different from the normal conditions of workers' struggle in the Pearl River Delta. Because of harm to the interest of the factory, workers organizing the union could be fired, beaten, or detained by police. The majority of workers can understand and sympathize with this.

But to return to the police station in protest after having been driven out of the factory and released from the police station — this is clearly different from what workers are used to.

Ordinary workers wouldn't choose this kind of option. To run back to the police station to protest the state apparatus immediately after being released... *"What is this going to get you?"* is a question that is always be considered during rights-protection struggles, and **this kind of action exceeded workers' understandings** of the current situation, and wasn't part of most workers' consideration. It's unimportant whether the return to the police station was planned in advance, or whether it was a spur-of-the-moment decision. If the individuals who were released felt something like *"We can't just leave it at that,"* that's understandable, but it's also a point where these individuals felt that they are different from normal workers, and maybe a moment where they felt like they could *"educate"* workers who would often simply give up, not continuing the fight after being released.

The students, on the other hand, felt that continuing to protest was meaningful. At that point, this kind of action still did not reach the level at which the state (国家) would feel that they were making a real political protest, and would not have led to the large-scale campaign of repression we see now.

What really made the authorities nervous was the subsequent nationwide call for assistance. When students from all over the country arrived in Shenzhen, this escalated into a political matter. At that time, a lot of labor NGOs familiar with the situation in southern China grew worried for the students, because everybody knew that what they were going to face next would be an even stronger wave of repression. They just didn't know when, or that it would become so wide-ranging.

Are you pessimistic about the future of China's labor movement (6) under the state's repression?

Reignite: *Many critics believe that, as a result of the government's repression in relation to Jasic, the space for labor NGO circles and leftist circles will shrink. What kinds of concrete pressure do you feel?*

BASKETBALL

After Jasic, the government did close down a lot of space. However, we can't blame this entirely on the Jasic affair. As we understand it, this tightening up by the state is part of a broad trend that began in 2015. (7) **Jasic simply accelerated and deepened these existing trends.** If the state simply wanted to gradually strengthen its managerial control, it wouldn't be this sudden or this strict, abruptly snatching up so many people.

What we're seeing now really is a low point, but this low point is a result of targeting labor NGOs and activists, rather than of targeting actual workers themselves.

At this point, the resources and channels that had previously begun to help people get in touch with and learn about workers have all been broken. **The people, organizations, information channels and activity spaces that were involved in work on workers' collective power are now gone.** Some people were warned off by the police, others were actually arrested, while other are simply scared. Even some ordinary social work activities have been limited.

Nationwide, the repression that began after the beginning of the Jasic affair has been extremely organized, maybe with a component that could be called a fishing expedition intended to reveal the entirety of the leftist network in the universities. With students from dozens of universities arriving on the scene and participating in on-campus support actions, the movement was escalated to a significantly politicized level. Regardless of what the Support Group said, the state could not believe that the affair was simply focused on *“opposing corrupt local police.”*

When the state realized that the Maoists had such a large-scale organizing capacity and were able to mobilize so many students, it must have been pretty shocking. Following this, **it launched a series of repressive actions**. So, after the **first wave of students** was cleared out, the next detainees were **a few Maoists**, and then “preemptive” actions — so-called “warnings” and “*demonstrative*” arrests of **several workers** with records, and so on.

RED-HAIRED MONSTER

While circumstances have been continually evolving, the state keeps moving down its line of targets. **Many who were not originally targeted have now become embroiled in the repression.**

BASKETBALL

This kind of state repression could mean the end of an era.

- **NGOs** following labor issues with backing from Hong Kong emerged in mainland China in the 1990s, but were basically buried following the 2015 wave of repression.
 - **Maoist organizations** on university campuses grew over the course of ten years, but now they’ve been pulled up by the roots.
-

Reignite: *So, do you have a pessimistic outlook toward this round of repression?*

BASKETBALL

I think it’s not a question of whether to be pessimistic or not, but rather to say that **the state**, on account of the objective terrain in local and international contexts, as well as political considerations, **decided to do away with this opposition in one fell swoop.**

Does the state have the power to do this? Currently, it looks like it does, and there’s nothing you can do to stop it. What’s more, in China, there is no such thing as an organized “*social movement*” that is well integrated into mainstream politics.

There are only individual protests. **China has more individual protests, such as strikes and other actions, than anywhere else in the world, but there is no movement.** Without a movement, there is no organized mass struggle, there are no political factions, and activist circles cannot get much support.

But this also means that the masses as a whole have not been severely impacted by any of this. Workers and the masses more broadly have not been influenced by Jasic at all. This is not like the early period of the Chinese revolution, when leftist groups had social roots among the masses, and then suffered large-scale slaughter before finally being repressed. **Now, the masses are not connected to any political groups at all.**

Reignite: So, do you think this wave of repression will stall the movement for the next several years, or not?

BASKETBALL

For this group of Maoists to get repressed in this way is quite normal, but **there will be a new wave of people coming up.**

- The class contradiction is only deepening, and resentful, bitter youth are emerging, one wave after another.

- But we also have to recognize that, while China's social contradictions are escalating, the level of dissatisfaction among the masses at each level of society is not in step with the dissatisfaction that exists among such political groups.

In short, new networks will be built, new individuals will join, and a new generation will rise up. Right now, there have not been any large-scale casualties (□□□□), and the experiences of the older generation can still be passed down to younger generations. Those who are passing on these experiences should take the state seriously, and take seriously the task of *“doing work with workers.”*

Notes from the translators & editors:

0.1 Reignite <https://www.reignitepress.com/>

0.2 Pun Ngai's response to critics
<http://www.europe-solidaire.org/spip.php?article52352>

0.3 Interview with China labor scholar Chris Chan
<http://www.europe-solidaire.org/spip.php?article52344>

0.4 Jasic, Strikes & Unions - Seeing through Muddied Waters, Part 1.
http://www.europe-solidaire.org/ecrire/?exec=article&id_article=52397

0.5 Unionists vs. the union - letters from the July 20th Incident in Pingshan, and Jasic Workers' Petition.
<http://www.europe-solidaire.org/spip.php?article45760>

1. Translation of original title: □□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□
<https://www.reignitepress.com/post/□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□>

2. Throughout the interview, Reignite uses the term **“Jasic Movement”** (□□□□) whereas the interviewees, RHM & Basketball, consistently reply with the term **“Jasic affair”** (□□□□, also translatable as **“events”** or **“incident”**). They explain: *“Reignite thinks it was a movement because in Hong Kong [where the interviewers are based], basically any protest or demonstration can be called a ‘movement.’*

In our understanding, however, the Jasic affair was not a movement because it did not involve widespread mass participation or a clear direction.

3. The Jasic Support Group refers to the nationwide Maoist network that officially formed after the Jasic activist workers' initial arrest on 20 July 2018, when several prominent Maoists launched a petition calling for an apology from the police, among other things, which over a thousand other people signed over the next few days, and which later organized multiple actions and became a focus for debates about the Jasic affair.

See our translation of the letter and the initial list of signatories in "Letters from the July 20th Incident in Pingshan."

<http://www.europe-solidaire.org/spip.php?article45760>

In part 3 of this "*Seeing through Muddied Waters*" series, we will look at this network in more depth.

4. We agree with the interviewees that it's important to distinguish between the initial 1-2 years of labor organizing (or "*worker work*" — see note below) at the Shenzhen Jasic factory, culminating in the organizers' attempt to form a union there in May-June 2018 and their dismissal, protests and arrests in July, on the one hand, and the subsequent months of nationwide solidarity activities (centered on the aforementioned Jasic Support Network), on the other — although both are often conflated as part of the same "Jasic Movement." Although **it's clear that some of the activist workers had been in touch with Maoist networks before the solidarity campaign took off in late July** (a point upon which the state has focused its legal attack), a closer look at the events suggests a qualitative shift in tactics, if not strategy and goals, from the more established conventions of labor organizing employed before July to a campaign aimed at influencing public opinion by creating a media spectacle starting after the initial release of workers from police custody on July 21st. Existing discussions of "Jasic" have focused on the latter. For a clarification of what took place at the factory in the months prior to 20 July 2018, the most detailed English account is still "*Preliminary Thoughts on the Jasic Events*" by Shannon Lee, Wolfsmoke, 17 September 2018. <https://wolfsmoke.wordpress.com/2018/09/17/jasic/>

5. The Chinese term translated literally as "***worker work***" or "***doing work with workers***" differs from the usual sense of "*labor activism*" in that **the goal isn't simply to support labor struggles** but also broader political goals such as workers inquiry, consciousness raising, networking and cadre development.

It's connected to the Maoist concepts of "*cultural work*," "*student work*," etc., but in China these terms are used beyond the specifically Maoist milieu, for example among Trotskyists and less politically coherent activists.

In addition, "*worker work*" usually involves getting jobs in the target workplaces, known as "*entering factories*" (进厂), although not necessarily for the purpose of "*salting*" in the usual sense of recruiting workers to join a union. (The almost universal and automatic equation of "*workers*" with factory workers and workplaces with factories reflects the continued focus on manufacturing shared among most Chinese leftists and labor activists, although some are beginning to turn toward service & logistics sectors.)

For a detailed analysis of "*worker work*" in relation to Jasic and beyond, see "*Doing Worker Work: Activist Workers & the Jasic Affair*" by Shannon Lee, Wolfsmoke, 27 February 2019.

<https://wolfsmoke.wordpress.com/2019/02/27/salt/>

5.1 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colour_revolution

5.2 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Revolutionary_opera

6. Chang disagree with the Reignite interviewers' implication that China has a labor movement.

From this and other writings, it seems clear that they are referring mainly to the handful of labor NGOs and activists that operated before the current series of crackdowns since 2015, with which

only a tiny fraction of workers had any contact even at the peak of those activists' involvement in collective struggles in the early 2010s.

The interviewees (RHM & Basketball) have also expressed elsewhere that they agree China has not experienced anything resembling a labor movement since the wave of struggles against SOE restructuring from the late 1990s to the early 2000s.

Instead, there has been a series of unconnected struggles since the 2000s, mainly centered in the Pearl River Delta, with almost no organizational or even personal continuity among them. (They say something similar in this interview below, about China's lack of "*social movements*" in general.)

Chang nevertheless seem also differ somewhat from the interviewees' perspective by seeking communist possibilities not in the eventual re-emergence of such a movement (for which the material possibilities seem to be absent) but rather in something that might emerge from the many other types of proletarian struggles (including but not limited to other types of labor struggles) that already disrupt the capitalist order in China every day. For more on this line of analysis, see "*Picking Quarrels*"

<http://chuangcn.org/journal/two/picking-quarrels/>

in Chuang #2: Frontiers, 2019.

<http://chuangcn.org/journal/two/>

7. On the beginning of this round of repression against labor NGOs and activism in 2015, see: "*Making Sense of the 2015 Crackdown on Labor NGOs in China*"

<https://wolfsmoke.wordpress.com/2017/07/29/2015-labor-ngo-crackdown/>

and "*The Guangdong Six and the rule of law (of value): Theses on the December 3 crackdown.*"

<http://chuangcn.org/2015/12/theses-on-dec-3/>

P.S.

<http://chuangcn.org/2019/07/jasic-2-reignite-interview/>

* A selection of articles concerning "the Jasic Movement" is available on ESSF :

- in English <http://www.europe-solidaire.org/spip.php?article52366>

- in French <http://www.europe-solidaire.org/spip.php?article52387>