



# Global Nonviolent Action Database

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## Chinese workers at golf equipment factory strike for benefits and union representation, 2014

**Time period notes:** *Workers organized elections to form their own representative committee in June 2014.*

June  
2014  
to: 23 July  
2014

**Country:** China

**Location City/State/Province:** Shenzhen, Guangdong

**Location Description:** *The Qilitian Golf Articles factory in Shenzhen*

### Goals:

Workers demanded that the company pay legally required social insurance and housing fund contributions, provide high temperature subsidies, living wages during low production season, and factory trade union elections.

## Methods

### Methods in 1st segment:

- 131. Refusal to accept appointed officials

### Methods in 2nd segment:

### Methods in 3rd segment:

### Methods in 4th segment:

### Methods in 5th segment:

### Methods in 6th segment:

- 008. Banners, posters, and displayed communications
- 047. Assemblies of protest or support
- 105. Establishment strike

### Notes on Methods:

QLT workers began to form their own representative committee in defiance of officially sanctioned union representatives in June. Other actions leading up to the two day strike are unknown.

## Classifications

### Classification:

Change

### Cluster:

Economic Justice

**Group characterization:**

- QLT factory workers

## Leaders, partners, allies, elites

**Leaders:**

Ji Jiansheng and Qi Jianguang

**Partners:**

not known

**External allies:**

not known

**Involvement of social elites:**

not known

## Joining/exiting order of social groups

**Groups in 1st Segment:**

- QLT factory workers

**Groups in 2nd Segment:**

**Groups in 3rd Segment:**

**Groups in 4th Segment:**

**Groups in 5th Segment:**

**Groups in 6th Segment:**

**Segment Length:** 6 days

## Opponent, Opponent Responses, and Violence

**Opponents:**

China Qilitian Golf Articles (Shenzhen) management

**Nonviolent responses of opponent:**

posting notices ordering workers to return to work

**Campaigner violence:**

not known

**Repressive Violence:**

not known

## Success Outcome

**Success in achieving specific demands/goals:**

6 points out of 6 points

**Survival:**

1 point out of 1 points

**Growth:**

3 points out of 3 points

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As of 2014, about 168 million rural migrant workers traveled annually to China's cities. This significant portion of China's workforce consists of workers leaving rural areas to find employment in cities in other provinces in order to send wages to families left behind. As the average age of the migrant worker force has increased, workers have switched the focus of strikes and protests from demanding wage increases to pensions, healthcare, and unemployment insurance. As of 2013, only one out of six migrant workers had a pension. Since migrant workers retain very little savings, this had become a crisis for aging workers who needed pensions in order to live decently after retirement. The government allowed workers to strike, but only in accordance with the government sanctioned All China Federation Trade Unions (ACFTU).

China Qilidian Golf Articles in Shenzhen (QLT) employed over 2,000 workers and produced golf balls and clubs for Nike, Callaway, Bridgestone, Ping, Cobra, and Titleist. Qi Jianguang, a 26-year old man who had been working at the factory for eight years, and other workers discovered that the company had neglected to make social security contributions. This common lapse was often ignored by government officials. Workers also discovered that the company had set up a new production line in the province of Jiangsu, where the company could obtain cheaper labor. The company had begun cutting orders in the Shenzhen factory and relocating machinery and other assets. Workers feared that the factory might soon close.

Workers had also become frustrated with the officially sanctioned union representation, believing it served as an extension of the government that had failed to protect worker rights. In June 2014, QLT workers elected their own committee of 13 representatives, led by a 42-year-old worker, Ji Jiansheng, to advocate for their rights.

On 21 July, the QLT workers went on strike demanding payment of social insurance and housing fund contributions, high temperature subsidies, living wages during low production season, and factory trade union elections. The strikers carried banners in a nearby park. They took pictures of the gathering on iPhones and news of the strike spread rapidly. Police briefly detained Qi Jianguang, a prominent strike leader on the committee, but released him later that day.

The success of a two week strike at Yue Yuan Industrial holdings in April 2014, had prompted QLT workers to strike. Yue Yuan, one of the world's largest producers of shoes, yielded and met worker demands for boosts in cost of living allowances and increases in pension benefits. News of the success spread virally via social media, and strikes began erupting at other factories, including QLT. Ji Jiansheng stated that the success of Yue Yuan workers was incredibly important to their campaign. The spread of strike news among workers at different factories had led to an increasing awareness of workers' rights. As Qi Jianguang stated, the common appeal for equitable and dignified treatment united the laboring class.

QLT initially threatened workers and posted notices on the morning of 22 July, ordering them back to work. Ji Jiansheng stated that the workers had the right to strike and have their lawful grievances addressed. China's Communist Party usually sided with companies in labor disputes and limited labor rights, but with the shrinking work force and slowing economy, local governments in recent years had been less willing to crack down on protests.

The workers stood firm and, following local government intervention on the workers' behalf, management agreed to negotiate the following day. The 13 member committee reported that both parties were willing to negotiate. The company met or compromised on all the workers' demands. At the end of negotiations, management agreed to hold monthly meetings with the democratically elected workers committee to further discuss any unresolved issues.

Workers celebrated their victory with a feast. The public lauded the willingness of workers and management to sit down face to face and discuss grievances.

Several months later, the company fired Qi Jianguang, accusing him of tarnishing the company's reputation by participating in an illegal strike.

The success of the QLT workers served to further embolden other factories in the rising trend of labor protests in China. The Hong Kong-based China Labour Bulletin recorded 1,378 instances of construction workers, miners, teachers, truck drivers, and factory worker strikes and protests in 2014, twice the amount recorded in 2013.

## Research Notes

### Influences:

Successful two week strike at Yue Yuan Industrial Holdings in April, 2014 influenced QLT workers' decision to strike.

### Sources:

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### Name of researcher, and date dd/mm/yyyy:

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