

The Labour Movement(s) in Southeast Asia: Historical Contingencies and Contemporary Challenges

Double Session

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The successful economic development of Southeast Asia is related to the expansion of capital relations and the ongoing proletarianisation of its population. However, the labour “side” of the economic “miracle” in Southeast Asia usually remains hidden from view. Apart from occasional mentions of larger strike movements, labour as a class and as a collective agent is usually ignored in political analyses of the region. This also applies to political activists and civil society, which, for some decades, have downplayed class as a category of analysis and the collective struggles of the working class as a strategic moment. This panel hopes to rekindle interest in labour studies in Southeast Asia in which labour is really at the heart of the debates and discourses. We welcome contributions that take a comparative view on labour movements but also – or especially – contemporary research that address the politics of labour, labour and the rise of authoritarianism, labour and gender relations, labour and the environment, movements of migrants informal workers or home-based workers and the dynamics and lessons from important major strikes and collective struggles.