

Stop Exploitation NOW - Dignity to Our Workers! In support of Hongkong International Terminals Workers' Strike

Thursday 4 April 2013, by [China Labour Net](#), [Left 21 \(Hong Kong\)](#) (Date first published: 4 April 2013).

China Labour Net Editorial Note: Dock workers have been on strike in Hong Kong since 28th March to demand better wages. The striking workers and supporters have been occupying the Kwai Tsing dock over the weekend, ending the occupation only last night after the container terminal won an injunction against them. The strike still continues into the sixth day however.

Stop Exploitation NOW - Dignity to Our Workers! In support of Hongkong International Terminals Workers' Strike

Tue, 04/02/2013 - 07:47 — LabourWorld

Stop Exploitation NOW - Dignity to Our Workers! In support of Hongkong International Terminals Workers' Strike

On March 28th, more than 200 waterfront workers at the Hongkong International Terminals Ltd (HIT) owned by Hutchison Port Holdings braved terrible weather conditions and stood up to take industrial action in a courageous bid to demand rightful compensation for their labour. Capital cannot produce on its own; without the hard and often painful efforts of those who labour, none of the wealth that capitalists now boast would be possible. In each and every striking worker, we see the dignity of labour - they are the real owners of production, and all they ask for is the just treatment and reciprocation that they deserve.

Only a few days ago at a press conference to announce his company's annual earnings, Li Ka-shing gave the public a flamboyant display of his wealth. Yet never did he mention that his so-called success has been built on the exploitation of workers. Li happily believes that he has given waterfront workers a job and a cheque to feed their families, but the contrary is true - with their time, labour, mental and physical health, his workers have made an achievement out of his dark and often oppressive Terminals. If these workers had not risked their livelihoods and stood up today in defiance of injustice, we would never have known about the terrible working conditions and treatment in Li's HIT empire: 24-hour work shifts without breaks, no fixed holidays, no formal meal periods, years without a single pay rise, a total disregard for occupational safety and health hazards...

To repay what is indebted is only fair; these workers have sold their labour in return for their basic livelihoods. When the meager compensation that they receive is far from enough to repay the

significant costs of their labour, striking and disrupting production is a perfectly justified way to refuse continued supply of labour and demand just compensation. Yet even as more and more workers have joined their ranks, the company has continued to ignore their rights and demands, and even openly claimed that, despite having no rise but only decline in pay for 17 years, these waterfront workers are not the company's responsibility. At the same time, the company has condemned the industrial action as 'irresponsible behaviour' that has disrupted the operations of the Terminals.

The workers on strike are from numerous parts of the waterfront, with different positions and employed by different contractors. But what is undeniable is that they all serve the Hongkong International Terminals Ltd that is under Hutchison Whampoa Ltd, and that their situation and interests are aligned. Regardless of how many contractors the HIT has hired to outsource labour, the fact that those at the management level are making their living by exploiting the labour of these waterfront workers is undisputable. We are outraged at HIT's strategy of shifting what should be their responsibility to the contractors.

Under the current unjust tax system, Li Ka-shing is able to earn huge profits from dividends every year, and yet he is not required to contribute back to the society by paying taxes. Li has already taken every advantage at the expense of the people of Hong Kong. When he has come to monopolize economic and political power to the extent that the majority of Hong Kong is working for him, the suffering of the waterfront workers today is no different from the exploitation of every one of us tomorrow. As members of the laboring population, our fates are tied together. Li Ka-shing does not only owe the waterfront workers just and fair treatment, he owes the people of Hong Kong an explanation.

We demand that Li Ka-shing, Hutchison Port Holdings and Hongkong International Terminals Ltd immediately fulfill the following:

1. Publicly apologize for the Managing Director of HIT, Gerry Yim's attempt to disassociate the company with the waterfront workers at yesterday's press conference
2. Stop employing temporary workers without a 'safe card'
3. Conduct salary negotiations with union leaders who truly represent the workers
4. Eliminate outsourcing and directly employ all waterfront workers
5. Improve facilities related to occupational safety and workers' health, and establish a reasonable workplace safety code.

Left 21

March 29th, 2013

Co-signed by:

**Alliance for defending the Grassroots Housing Rights
Grassroot Development Centre**

P.S.

* <http://worldlabour.org/eng/node/564>

* <http://left21.hk/wp/en/>