



A bold voice for transportation workers

IN SUPPORT OF THE LOCKED-OUT ILWU LOCAL 30 MEMBERS AT RIO TINTO

At 7 a.m. on January 31, 2010, foreign-owned Rio Tinto, the second largest mining company in the world, locked out nearly 600 members of ILWU Local 30 at its borax mine and plant in Boron, California. This mega-mining conglomerate is trying to force an extremely concessionary contract ultimatum down the throats of Local 30's members and their families.

For example, Rio Tinto is demanding:

- The power to convert full-time jobs, whenever management wants, into part-time positions with few or no benefits;
- The ability to outsource all jobs, any time it wants, to contractors and temporary agencies that pay low wages and provide few or no benefits;
- To require the union to pay its legal fees, penalties, fines and damages for employment claims brought against the company by workers or the union;
- Elimination of the Veteran's Day holiday starting in 2011;
- The removal of scores of workers from the union contract;
- The ability to change shifts, hours and work assignments and impose mandatory overtime, making life impossible for Rio Tinto families;
- To require workers to give up their right to go to court if the company discriminates against them based on race, sex, age, disability, military status or religion, or if it violates any other state or federal laws, including the Civil Rights Act, FMLA, ADA, ERISA and FLSA. Under the Rio Tinto lockout contract, all legal rights would be transferred from American courts to a private arbitrator;
- The elimination of long-term disability coverage, which protects workers and provides economic security to families when an employee is injured and can't work, for any new employee;
- Drastic reductions in retirement benefits for current employees and the total elimination of pension benefits for new employees, who would only get a small 401(k) contribution.

Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO

888 16th Street NW / Suite 650 / Washington DC 20006

Tel:202.628.9262 / Fax:202.628.0391 / www.ttd.org

Edward Wytkind, President / Larry I. Willis, Secretary-Treasurer



Rio Tinto has a long and shameful history with respect to its treatment of workers, communities and the environment, here in the United States and around the world. ILWU's brothers and sisters in the Hunter Valley in Australia are facing the same kind of outrageous demands that workers are facing in Boron. The company is currently being sued in U.S. federal court over its treatment of the community and environment in Papua, New Guinea.

In 2009, Rio Tinto made almost \$5 billion in profits, despite a worldwide recession the likes of which hasn't been seen since the Great Depression. A couple of years ago, the company paid nearly \$40 billion for Alcan, a decision that left Rio Tinto heavily in debt. The company is now trying to climb out of debt by driving down the working conditions of its employees.

The AFL-CIO condemns Rio Tinto's lockout of ILWU Local 30 members. We urge all unions, community groups, environmental organizations and others who care about working families to lend whatever support they can to achieve a resounding victory over this greedy and abusive employer.

Furthermore, the AFL-CIO opposes the distribution of a \$308 million Department of Energy grant awarded to Rio Tinto for construction of a California public utility power plant until the lockout of ILWU Local 30 members is ended and they return to work with a fair and just contract.

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