



INFORMATION UPDATE #2

January 12, 2012

U.S. Steel Must Train Current Workers

During the 2010-2011 negotiations, when the final agreement on the new contract was reached, U.S. Steel made an issue that it would start up production of the Finishing End (the Cold Mill and Z-line) but it would not start up the Blast Furnace for the foreseeable future. It said it would employ all 622 workers for 26 weeks, but 150 workers were "unslotted" – they would not hold jobs in the reduced production schedule.

The union maintained that the 26 week period should be used to train the so-called unslotted in production jobs, especially in the Cold Mill and Z-Line areas which are short of qualified people due to retirements. The company agreed that this was a good idea and gave the impression that this would be done.

Now, three months later, so-called unslotted workers have yet to be trained to do the Finishing end, but the company wants to increase the shifts the plant is going to run and there are not enough trained workers. What should the workers do about that?

Canadian and U.S. Workers Stand as One

- Rolf Gerstengerger -

As we reported last week, Electro-Motive Diesel/Caterpillar in London, Ontario has locked out its 400 workers and is demanding they submit to draconian conditions which include wage cuts of up to 50%, elimination of benefits and pensions, and threats to move production to Muncie, Indiana. Reports are circulating that the company is advertising for managers for the Muncie operation. The ads require experience in a "non-union" environment.

Meanwhile, the Governor of Indiana is trying to get right-to-be-slave-labour legislation, euphemistically called "right-to-work" legislation, passed as soon as possible. This legislation bans private-sector unions from automatically collecting dues at unionized workplaces. This right, in Canada called the Rand formula, won in the great strikes of '46, signified the *de facto* recognition of unions as bargaining agents of the workers which represent their interests. This recognition was essential to the post-war social contract and the equilibrium between capital and labour whereby the workers pledged labour peace in exchange for security of living

and working conditions.

The right-to-be-slave-labour bill bans private-sector unions from automatically collecting dues at unionized workplaces. This means that due to lack of funds, the ability of unions to maintain themselves as professional organizations and to organize non-union workplaces is undermined. It is a direct attack on the right to organize and the living standards achieved by unionized workers.

Information Update brings this legislation to the attention of its members and retirees and the Hamilton community because it reveals why EMD thinks it can hold the London workers hostage to its demands for concessions. The pressure is that workers should not think things through for themselves. It is to sow panic that even if the workers make concessions, EMD would want to move production to its Indiana operations in any case. It is also a shot across the bow for the 41,000 steelworkers in the U.S. whose contracts expire in September of this year. One of U.S. Steel's largest plants is in Gary, Indiana with the peace in exchange for security of living .../ 2

Indiana's Right-to-Be-Slave-Labour Legislation

Since Oklahoma passed similar so-called right-to-work legislation in 2001, there are presently 22 right-to-be-slave-labour states, mostly in the south and west of the United States. If the Indiana bill passes, Indiana will be the first of the Great Lake industrial states to have a "right-to-be-slave-labour" law for private sector workers. Wisconsin also last year passed an anti-worker bill for public sector workers. All of these laws are part of an anti-social offensive to

drive down wages, benefits, pensions and overall living standards and to block workers from organizing society in their own image, not that of the monopolies.

More than 7,000 workers rallied at the Indiana statehouse in Indianapolis January 4 to oppose the legislation now before the state legislature. Thousands more continue to rally, demanding that the bill be stopped. They are also demanding that the usual statewide public hearings on the bill be held.

Local 1005
U.S.W.

Plant Gate Collection

FOR M.A.N.A. EMPLOYEES

COLLECTION ON:
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 18th, 2012

WILCOX GATE	
5:30 A.M.	8:00 A.M.
2:00 P.M.	4:00 P.M.
5:30 P.M.	7:30 P.M.

GAGE GATE	
6:00 A.M.	7:30 A.M.
6:00 P.M.	7:30 P.M.

DONATIONS WILL ALSO BE ACCEPTED AT THE
UNION HALL @
350 KENILWORTH AVE. NORTH/HAMILTON
FROM JANUARY 16th TO 18th, 2012

*Let's Help M.A.N.A. Employees
Support Our Brothers & Sisters*

Issued by Local 1005 U.S.W.
January 11th, 2012
C.O.P.E. 3436

4 facilities employing more than 6,000 workers.

In all of this, a key aim of the monopolies and their media and government spokespersons is to have us believe that we are powerless to do anything about the situation. This is not the case. By sticking to their own interests, members of Local 1005 were able to engage the fight against attempts by U.S. Steel to impose a regime where it gets to act with impunity. Its aim to create a workplace where the workers are disorganized and defenceless has not prevailed because workers defeated U.S. Steel's attempt to treat the union with contempt. The members of 1005 gave a fitting response. They stood strongly with the union. They defeated its attempts to impose slave labour conditions, up to and including the inclusion of a slave clause in the contract. They ridiculed attempts to incite a so-called dissident rebellion against the union leadership on the pretext that the union leadership is authoritarian and the workers should have "freedom of choice."

This claim to "freedom of choice" is the new pretext on all fronts to attack the organizations which enshrine a collective will, a sovereign will, a rule of law based on a definitely constituted mandate. We see this in actions which virtually destroy representative organizations such as the federal parliament, provincial legislatures and the unions in order to disempower the members. Companies such as U.S. Steel then rely on the office of the executive power – the prerogative powers of the prime minister and first ministers in Canada, governors and U.S. president in the United States – to achieve their aims and get the laws they want passed or impose regulations which achieve their aim. It is done in the name of "fairness", "choice" or "equity" against the "greed" of those they want to bring under their control. To hide the politicization of private monopoly interests, we are fed a steady diet of anti-union vitriol about "greedy self-serving workers!"

It is because we did not forfeit union rights that, for an encore, U.S. Steel went to the federal government to sign secret deals which got it to drop its lawsuit under the *Investment Canada Act*.

In Sudbury, the essence of the fight waged by the Vale Inco workers was also and continues to be against the "right" claimed by Vale Inco to act with impunity. This is also the case in Alma, Quebec where the opposition of the workers to unfettered subcontracting is also a fight against attempts to have a non-union work force. The forestry workers are up against government supported outra-



geous shenanigans of companies such as AbitibiBowater which has reinvented itself under the name Resolute Forest Products after a fraudulent bankruptcy process.

Another way to destroy unions is with attempts to bankrupt them. The back to work legislation against the postal workers and constant harassment and violation of their rights at the place of work have forced their union into lawsuits and huge arbitration costs, putting a severe strain on union funding. Now, in the U.S., laws are eliminating closed shop union arrangements to destroy the unions another way.

All of it puts into perspective the aim of anti-union PR carried out by those newspapers and spokespersons in private industry and government which defend the interests of the monopolies and their cartels known as oligopolies. Very narrow monopoly interests are served under the fraud and hoax that this creates a secure economy which is needed for national security, by which they mean "homeland security" – a continental arrangement in which the Canada as we know it does not figure at all. In this "homeland," only company unions will be allowed and their job will be to deliver slave labour, including making sure they act as the security firms which prevent workers from standing up for their right to wages, pensions, benefits and working conditions commensurate with the jobs they perform, including proper standards for health and safety.

All of it shows that our fight in defense of the rights of all is a serious fight for the kind of future which will be created on the planet earth. Canadian and American workers stand as one for a bright future where they can exercise control over the decisions which affect their lives and the wealth they create.

It is not about greedy monopolies and appealing to the gods of plague to more fairly partition the pie. Whose pie is it and who gets to decide? That is the question.

Union Rights Yes! Monopoly Right No!

Saturday, January 21, 2012 • 11 am
All Out for the London Day of Action!
Victoria Park (Wellington St and Dufferin Ave.)

To register for a seat on the bus, call the Labour Council at 905-547-2944 or send an e-mail to hdlc@cogeco.net or contact Local 1005 at 905-547-1417 and

info@uswa1005.ca with your name and phone number. Buses will depart at 8:00 am from 1130 Barton St. East in Hamilton.

**To contact USW Local 1005: Call 905-547-1417 or e-mail info@uswa1005.ca.
Visit the website: www.uswa1005.ca**