



National Director's Update

February 2014

Steelworkers' Activism Achieves Real Results

Sisters and Brothers,

As labour and social justice activists, it's always rewarding to see tangible results from our work. In this edition of National Director's Update I have much to share with you on the impact USW activism is having across the country.

Black History Month

February – Black History Month – is a time to reflect on the contributions that African Canadians and Caribbean Canadians have made to our union, our communities and our country.

We celebrate this remarkable legacy and the important role African Canadians and Caribbean Canadians continue to play in our union and the labour movement.

It's a sad reality that workers of colour, particularly women, still suffer from a pay equity gap. And racialized Canadians are more adversely affected by austerity measures, social program cuts and other right-wing public policies.

As USW activists, we can honour Black History Month by recommitting to our leadership role in the struggle for equality, human rights and ending discrimination in our workplaces and our society.

Temporary Foreign Workers

Steelworkers are achieving results from our fierce activism on the federal Conservative government's scandal-plagued Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP).

Our aggressive advocacy forced the Conservatives to make modest changes to the TFWP last year. As we continue to lead the way in exposing the blatant abuses of this

program, Stephen Harper has been compelled to admit more must be done.

In reality, Harper's Conservatives have only paid lip service to improving the TFWP. With growing public opinion on our side, Steelworkers will continue to advocate for meaningful change that benefits all workers.

Quebec Steelworkers vs. Harper

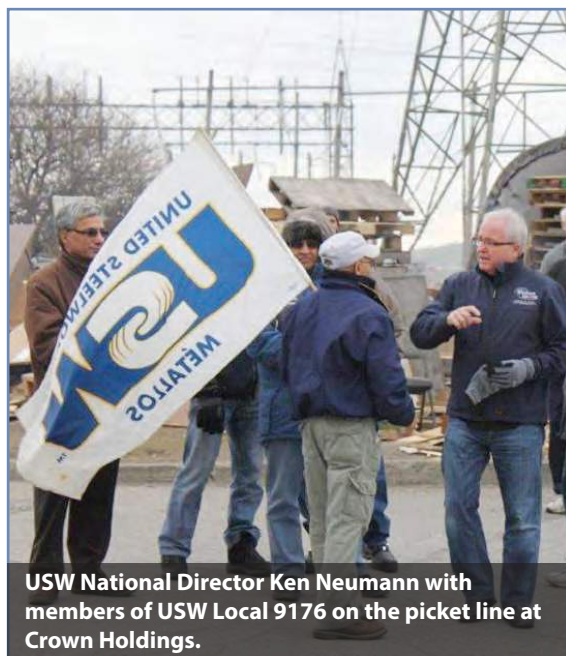
In Quebec, activists at the recent USW District 5

conference made it their priority to fight the Harper Conservatives' anti-union agenda that appears to be inspired by the American Tea Party.

As District 5 Director Daniel Roy put it, "The Conservatives have declared open season on us. But we won't allow them to bulldoze us. We are a bulwark to defend workers, the middle class and the less fortunate."

FAIRNESS WORKS

In District 6, USW leaders have launched an ambitious pilot project to engage, mobilize and learn from our rank-and-file members about how FAIRNESS WORKS.



USW National Director Ken Neumann with members of USW Local 9176 on the picket line at Crown Holdings.

Stop the Killing

Our District 3 activists continue to fight for justice, dignity and better health and safety protections for all workers, launching the Stop the Killing, Enforce the Law campaign that has become a national USW initiative.

Our challenges are great, but Steelworkers' activism continues to achieve real results in our struggle for economic, political and social justice for all.

In solidarity,

Ken Neumann

2014 SCHEDULE OF EVENTS AND CONFERENCES

National Human Rights Conference
2-3 April 2014
Toronto and Hamilton

Canadian Labour Congress Convention
5-9 May 2014
Montreal

USW District 3 Summer School
8-13 June 2014
Kimberley, B.C.

USW International Convention
11-14 August 2014
Las Vegas

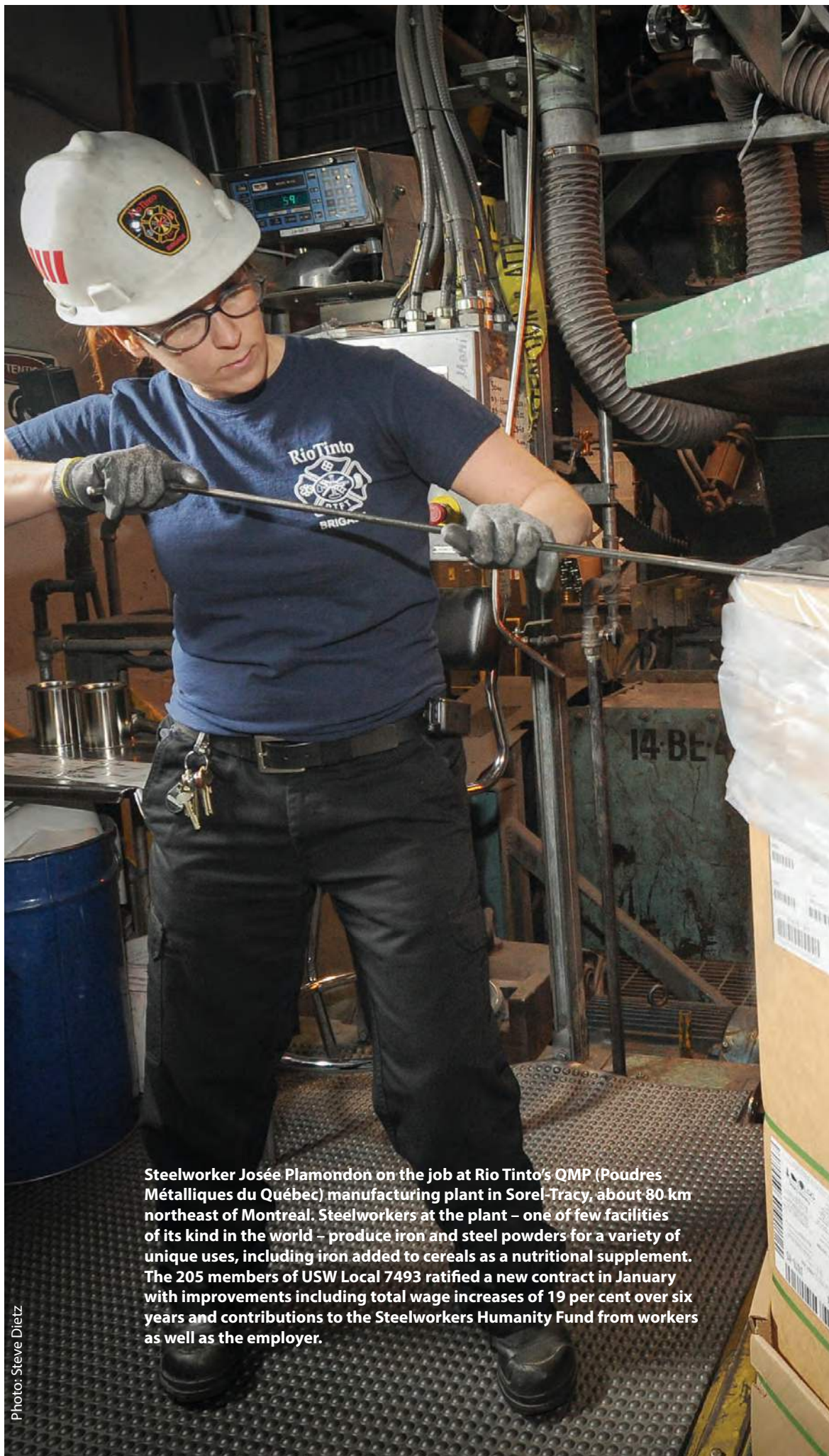
USW National Health, Safety & Environment Conference
6-8 October 2014
Toronto

USW District 5 50th Annual Conference
19-21 November 2014
Montreal

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Steelworker Josée Plamondon on the job at Rio Tinto's QMP (Poudres Métalliques du Québec) manufacturing plant in Sorel-Tracy, about 80 km northeast of Montreal. Steelworkers at the plant – one of few facilities of its kind in the world – produce iron and steel powders for a variety of unique uses, including iron added to cereals as a nutritional supplement. The 205 members of USW Local 7493 ratified a new contract in January with improvements including total wage increases of 19 per cent over six years and contributions to the Steelworkers Humanity Fund from workers as well as the employer.

Photo: Steve Dietz

Cambodian Garment Workers Killed At Rally

Cambodian garment workers were violently attacked by security forces and government-backed vigilantes on Jan. 3. At least four workers were killed and 39 injured during the crackdown. Twenty-three unionists were detained.

The workers were demonstrating peacefully for an increase in their minimum wage above the government offer of \$100 (USD) a month, which is insufficient to meet the rising cost of living.

IndustriALL and other international union federations immediately condemned the attacks.

“The right to strike for a higher minimum wage is solidly protected by the international right to freedom of association, enshrined in ILO Convention 87 – which Cambodia ratified in 1999,” said Jyrki Raina, General Secretary of IndustriALL.



Photo: © International Labour Organization (ILO)

“The threats, arrests, and the killing of trade unionists for the exercise of that right is an extremely grave violation and must be condemned. Any encouragement of that violence by garment manufacturers must end.”

Citizens around the world have demanded a change in the deplorable working conditions of garment workers following the shocking death of more than 1,100 in the Rana Plaza collapse in

Bangladesh on April 23, 2013, the deadliest garment industry disaster.

IndustriALL has called on the Cambodian government to investigate the killings, release all detained unionists and set a minimum wage that meets the needs of families.

Steelworkers! Add your voice to the call for changes and support garment workers via LabourStart: www.usw.ca/cambodia. ■



One of the principles the union movement stands for is fairness. When we fight for fairness and equality, it helps to have the facts and arguments to build support for our position.

That’s why the Steelworkers are on board supporting the Broadbent Institute, a new progressive think tank committed to Ed Broadbent’s vision of building a better and more compassionate Canada.

“Labour, including the USW, has been an essential early partner of the Broadbent Institute,” said Rick Smith, Broadbent Institute Executive Director. “Your support will ensure

the creation and advancement of exciting new progressive ideas, combatting damaging policy like the organized attack on the labour movement and training a new generation of progressive leadership.”

One of the institute’s first reports was Union Communities, Healthy Communities, which “makes the case that unions are vital to stable economic growth.”

The institute has launched a news blog, pressprogress.ca, to offer insights on issues from a progressive standpoint. Subscribe to updates to learn more. ■

www.broadbentinstitute.ca
www.pressprogress.ca

A Think Tank
for Fairness

BROADBENT INSTITUTE

FAIRNESS WORKS

Lately, a growing number of Steelworkers in Hamilton have been speaking with co-workers, relatives and friends about our union and the labour movement in general. They're talking about the real benefits of unions in our workplaces, in our communities and in our society as a whole.

A pilot project launched by USW District 6 is empowering Hamilton Steelworkers to join the public conversation about unions and the fundamental values we share with ordinary working people.

The pilot project is part of the USW's FAIRNESS WORKS campaign, launched in support of the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) initiative, Together Fairness Works.

Our FAIRNESS WORKS campaign is all about engaging and empowering our members to reclaim the conversation about unions and how the labour movement helps build a better society for all.

In Hamilton, veteran Steelworkers activist George Gillis is coordinating the pilot project that is training and mobilizing local leaders and rank-and-file members alike.

Gillis, President of USW Local 1105, is leading training sessions with activists from several Steelworkers' locals. In turn, these activists are engaging their rank-and-file members to stand up for fairness.

By fostering renewed grassroots dialogue, the FAIRNESS WORKS

pilot project also is encouraging members to offer their views and ideas about our union and the issues that are important to their families and communities.

It's a shining example of Steelworkers leadership and innovation in connecting with our members and the public about the values and concerns we all share.

As George Gillis says, "We're creating ambassadors for the Steelworkers, for the labour movement and for fairness."

Despite decades of misinformation and attacks on unions by right-wing politicians and corporations, public-opinion polls show most Canadians believe unions play a positive role in our society.

We know that Canadians share our values – jobs with decent wages and benefits, safe workplaces, a voice at work, retirement security, opportunity for all. In short, real fairness in our workplaces, our economy and in our governments.

Based on the positive results to date, plans call for our District 6 pilot project to be expanded to other USW locals and communities in coming months.

Together, through FAIRNESS WORKS, we're reclaiming the conversation.

Find out more and join in, at www.usw.ca/fairnessworks. ■



Steelworkers Standing Up for Fairness



The Urgency of USW Activism

Steelworkers' leadership on workplace health and safety has never been more crucial in the wake of shocking news that no charges of any kind will result from a deadly industrial disaster in British Columbia.

After two years of investigation, B.C.'s Crown prosecutors have decided neither criminal nor health and safety charges will be laid in connection with the Jan. 20, 2012, explosion at the Babine Forest Products sawmill in Burns Lake.

USW members Robert Luggi and Carl Charlie died in the explosion and another 20 workers were injured, many seriously.

The investigation into the Burns Lake explosion found the disaster was preventable. But B.C.'s criminal justice branch has decided not to pursue charges, stating a successful prosecution is unlikely due to a flawed investigation.

As USW District 3 Director Stephen Hunt points out, the Burns Lake travesty reinforces the fact that authorities consistently fail to thoroughly investigate workplace fatalities "through a criminal lens."

The USW has launched a national campaign, Stop the Killing, Enforce the Law, calling for greater enforcement of legislation, particularly the *Westray Act* that is supposed to hold employers criminally responsible for workplace deaths and injuries.

Our campaign is building public support to convince provincial governments to train and direct police, health and safety regulators and Crown prosecutors to focus more on criminal investigations and charges.

In B.C., Liberal Premier Christy Clark's underwhelming response to the Burns Lake travesty – appointing her chief bureaucrat to conduct a fact-finding investigation – offers little comfort to working families.

USW families in Prince George, B.C., are anxiously awaiting the outcome of a two-year investigation into a sawmill tragedy in their community. The April 23, 2012, explosion at the Lakeland Mills sawmill in Prince George killed two workers and injured 22 others.



Steelworkers recognize the urgency of convincing governments to apply the full force of our laws, not only to prosecute employers for workplace deaths, but also to prevent further tragedies.

This month, USW activists begin the next phase of our Stop the Killing campaign, lobbying municipal governments across the country to support our efforts. The lobbying will begin in Nova Scotia, in memory of the 26 miners who died in the Westray Mine disaster in 1992.

Find out more and support our campaign at www.StopTheKilling.ca. ■



Steelworkers Spark

USW forcing Harper's hand on temp

More than any other group in Canada, the United Steelworkers has exposed abuses of the federal Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP) and the clear need for meaningful reforms to benefit Canadians and foreign workers alike.

Our relentless advocacy has raised public awareness of the TFWP's role in the low-wage economic strategy of Stephen Harper's Conservatives and their corporate allies.

We continue to expose how wealthy corporations, from banks to coffee chains and foreign mining interests, are using the program to suppress wages, lay off Canadian employees, exploit vulnerable foreign workers and deny opportunities to unemployed Canadians.

Our leadership helped force the Harper government's hand. The Conservatives reluctantly made modest changes to the TFWP last year, such as stopping corporations from paying foreign workers 15 per cent less than the prevailing Canadian wage.

Now, faced with ongoing revelations of abuse and with public opinion increasingly opposed to his government's handling of the issue, Harper is once again musing about further reforms.

Staffing the Key to Better Care

USW District 6 Creates New Health Care Council



Real Change

Temporary foreign worker scandal

However, the Conservatives have shown categorically that their allegiance remains with corporate interests rather than Canadian and foreign workers who continue to be exploited and victimized.

Despite hundreds of complaints from one end of the country to the other, not one employer has been placed on a 'blacklist' that is supposed to ban companies that abuse the TFWP.

Now, as the Harper Conservatives scramble for more TFWP damage control, the USW is ramping up our advocacy.

The USW has appealed to the Supreme Court of British Columbia to quash a mining permit granted to HD Mining International. The Steelworkers first exposed HD Mining's plan to bring 200 temporary workers to B.C. even though 300 Canadians who applied for jobs were not offered interviews.

*We're reaching out to vulnerable foreign workers across the country, offering confidential assistance through our campaign website and a toll-free help line at **1-888-899-4405**.*

In Fernie, B.C., Steelworkers are helping a group of temporary foreign workers from the Philippines pursue employment standards complaints against their employer, a Tim Hortons franchise.

Through our national campaign Give Everyone a Chance for Canada's Future, we're increasing pressure for meaningful reforms to the TFWP. We're reaching out to vulnerable foreign workers across the country, offering confidential assistance

through our campaign website and a toll-free help line at 1-888-899-4405.

Steelworkers can be proud of our record of activism on behalf of Canadian and temporary foreign workers.

Find out more and support our campaign at www.everyoneschance.ca. ■

Health care workers in District 6 are uniting to put pressure on the Ontario government to improve staffing in the province's long-term care facilities, nursing homes and seniors' residences.

"Every problem in these facilities can be attributed to inadequate staffing," says Richard Leblanc, the staff representative working with the new District 6 Health Council.

"Our council allows our members to share information on collective bargaining, grievance handling and, of course, staffing levels. They don't feel isolated because other members in their sector are facing the same obstacles to providing optimum care. They are becoming activists."

Conditions in care facilities are a growing concern, as more and more Canadians require these services, says District 6 Director Marty Warren.

"Health-care workers are the backbone of the system, especially those who work with the elderly in hospitals, care homes and residences," says Warren.

"Our members are often heartbroken by the limitations caused by short-staffing. They care for individuals who have worked their entire lives and find themselves in a position of being unable to care for themselves. Instead of being treated like valued elders in a society that should give them the dignity and care that they deserve, all too often they are the victims of decisions – both public and private – to short-change care to the most vulnerable."

The USW Health Care Council is taking concerns about staffing to the public through a campaign this year. Members are becoming more active with the Ontario Health Coalition and with the Canadian Health Coalition that is lobbying for federal leadership on improving Canada's publicly funded and publicly administered health-care system.

Steelworkers know that Canada's Medicare future must include attention to long-term care. Our society must respect all of its citizens – young, old, men, women, the able-bodied and the sick and elderly. ■



Get informed, stay involved.

Join our online community of union activists.

Like us on Facebook!
uswmetallos

The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA) released the CEO Pay Clock to highlight the growing inequality of an economy that overcompensates CEOs while the rest of us face stagnating wages, growing unemployment and a young generation that can't find work.

Growing inequality is not only unfair, it's not good for our economy and it slows our growth potential. Meanwhile, governments grappling with a slow economy are pursuing policies that make

things worse. Cutting taxes, increasing the use of temporary foreign workers and attacking unions lead to lower wages and growing inequality.

That's why unions are so important: we're fighting inequality and standing strong for fairness.

Check out the CCPA's CEO Pay Clock to keep track of who's making what. ■

www.policyalternatives.ca/ceo.

All in a day's work? CEO pay in Canada

» By 1:11 pm on January 2, the first official working day of the year, Canada's top 100 CEOs have already pocketed \$46,634 – what it takes the average Canadian an entire year, working full-time, to earn.*

» In 2012, Canada's 100 highest paid CEOs made 171 times more than the average Canadian worker and 194 times the average Canadian woman.

POLICYALTERNATIVES.CA/CEO



*Based on 2012 CEO compensation data and the 2012 average Canadian wage.



171x



194x



Making Waves Fighting Corporate Greed

Steelworkers take on multinationals in the boardroom and on the high seas

Across North America, to the U.K., Turkey and even the Caribbean Sea, Steelworkers and our international allies are ramping up a global campaign against union-busting manufacturing giant Crown Holdings.

One of the world's largest producers of food and beverage containers, Crown is attacking the working and living standards of USW Local 9176 members in Toronto, and trying to deny employees in Turkey their right to form a union.

Thousands of our supporters around the globe have joined a LabourStart campaign demanding fairness for all Crown workers.

Crown forced a strike at its Toronto plant last September by demanding more concessions from employees whose previous sacrifices helped the company weather tough times and return to massive profitability.

In fact, USW members at Crown's Toronto plant received a corporate award last year for their record of productivity, safety, quality and budget management.



The Toronto Steelworkers helped Crown double its profits to more than \$500 million in 2012, when the company's chief executive officer received a compensation package exceeding \$12 million, or \$6,000 per hour.

Now Crown wants rollbacks from these same employees, including a two-tier wage system imposing pay cuts as high as 42 per cent on young workers. In other words, more for executives and shareholders, less for employees who produce the profits.

With the support of our allies, Steelworkers have taken our fight to Crown's corporate headquarters in Philadelphia, to some of the company's largest corporate customers in Canada, and to the corporate executives who sit on Crown's board of directors.

Crown's wealthy directors include Arnold Donald, who also happens to be the CEO of Carnival Corporation.

Three Toronto Steelworkers recently boarded a Carnival ship for a Caribbean cruise during which they distributed leaflets to thousands of international vacationers, making them aware of the Carnival CEO's union-busting. Meanwhile, our U.K. allies have been leafleting passengers in Southampton, home base of Carnival UK.

The USW has contacted thousands of North American travel agents, asking them to consider the risks of recommending Carnival cruises to their clients, given a host of problems dogging the company. And union members around the world are being encouraged to choose other cruise lines.

Take a moment to join our campaign in support of USW Local 9176 members and all Crown Holdings workers, at www.usw.ca/crownholdings. ■

“Deep in our history of struggle for freedom, Canada was the North Star...”

We sang of ‘heaven’ that awaited us and the slave masters listened in innocence, not realizing that we were not speaking of the hereafter. Heaven was the word for Canada.”

«Au cœur de notre lutte pour la liberté, le Canada était l'étoile du Nord... Nous avons parlé du ‘paradis’ qui nous attendait dans nos chansons et les maîtres des esclaves nous ont écouté en toute innocence sans réaliser que nous ne parlions pas de l’au-delà. C’était le nom que nous donnions au Canada.»

– Martin Luther King Jr.

February is African Heritage Month. The Tower of Freedom in Windsor, Ont., marks one of the Underground Railroad's major crossover points.

La Tour de la liberté à Windsor (Ontario) marque l'un des principaux points de traversée du chemin de fer clandestin. Février est le Mois de l'histoire des Noirs.

