

FEBRUARY 2019

Steelworkers Solidarity Will Make a Difference in 2019



Before most people had even settled into this new year, Steelworkers across the country hit the ground running, confronting challenges and embracing opportunities to make a real difference in 2019 for our members, our communities and our society.

In early January, leaders of several USW locals converged on Ottawa to make the case for federal government action against foreign steel producers whose predatory trade practices and illegal dumping kill Canadian jobs.

Representing USW members at eight different steel producers across the country, these activists took centre stage in submissions to the Canadian International Trade Tribunal (CITT). The USW delegation presented strong evidence

of a surge in steel dumping and the clear need to crack down on foreign producers that flout fair trade rules.

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I am looking forward to our 2019 USW National Policy Conference in April, when the solidarity, spirit and

skills of hundreds of Canadian Steelworkers will be on full display.

Our National Policy Conference will be held April 2-5 in Vancouver, preceded by our NextGen and SOAR conferences. The policy conference theme, Solidarity Builds, aptly reflects the USW legacy and ongoing commitment to building good jobs, stronger communities and a better future for our members and all working people.

Our policy conference is the opportunity for rank-and-file Steelworkers to set USW policy in Canada for collective bargaining, political action, membership growth and building solidarity. I strongly encourage all USW locals to send members to this year's conference to develop their leadership roles and strengthen our union.

With a federal election and four provincial and territorial elections to be held in Canada this year, many

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TRADE SELL-OUT

On trade and tariffs, Trudeau government has failed Canadians.

Photo: Steve Dietz

AS THEY USHERED in a new year, many Canadian families and communities have become increasingly concerned about the potential damage from the growing crisis in our steel, aluminum and manufacturing sectors.

With a Liberal government that has signed multiple job-killing trade deals and capitulated to illegal U.S. tariffs on Canadian steel and aluminum products, it's no surprise to see declining exports and more

illegally traded products dumped into Canada, leading to plant closures and job losses, with widespread projections that the worst is yet to come.

Canadian businesses, communities and unions – led by the Steelworkers – have been emphatic in warning the Trudeau government of the potential for massive, permanent damage from the crisis.

Our steel and aluminum sectors

directly and indirectly support 175,000 middle-class jobs across the country. With no positive resolution to the tariff dispute in sight, these Canadian workers and industries are bracing for the worst this year.

The chamber of commerce in Elgin County, Ont., has warned that 5,000 manufacturing-related jobs are at direct risk – a staggering 25% of all employment in the region – with thousands more jobs indirectly threatened.

With such dire scenarios facing families and communities across the country, the Trudeau Liberals must change course in 2019 and truly defend Canadian jobs and industries.

Broken promises of “progressive” trade

After three years in power, Canadian workers are still waiting for the Trudeau government to make good on its promise of a “progressive” trade agenda that would expand the middle class and build stronger communities.

Instead, the Liberals have embraced trade deals that increase the power of multinational corporations, while eroding Canada’s manufacturing base, killing good jobs, driving down wages and increasing inequality.

The Liberals rubber-stamped a Canada-Europe trade deal negotiated by the previous Conservative government, resulting in a flood of imports from European countries into Canada, while Canadian exports to these countries have decreased.

Next, the Liberals engaged in secret negotiations on the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), ultimately signing a trade deal with 10 Pacific Rim countries that is projected to kill 58,000 Canadian jobs.

The Trudeau government never bothered to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the TPP’s potential impact on Canadian jobs. But an independent study by American university researchers concluded that tens of thousands of Canadians will lose their jobs in our auto, steel, skilled trades and supply-management sectors.

The labour movement and other progressive groups fought for years against the job-killing aspects of trade deals such as the TPP. But the Liberals cavalierly rejected those concerns, just as they ignored their public consultation process on the TPP, which drew massive opposition to the agreement.

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The Liberals’ sell-out of Canadian jobs in the TPP clearly set the stage for Donald Trump’s demands for concessions in the negotiations to replace NAFTA with the new U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA).

Sure enough, the Trudeau Liberals capitulated to Trump’s demands. So much so, that Trump’s economics adviser gloated that “Canada gave very graciously.”

The Liberals did not even insist that the devastating U.S. tariffs on Canadian steel and aluminum be lifted as part of this one-sided deal, despite Trump indicating the tariffs could end if he extracted the concessions he wanted from Canada in the USMCA.

USMCA: A diplomat “with a bag over his head”

The Trudeau government even recognized the widespread

consensus of its failure on the trade/tariffs crisis. In November, the government’s Ambassador to the U.S. quipped that perhaps Trudeau should not attend a USMCA signing ceremony with Trump.

Rather than have the prime minister stand alongside the U.S. president at the ceremony, it might be better to send a low-level Canadian diplomat “with a bag over his head” to sign the agreement, the ambassador suggested.

Trivializing the crisis is unacceptable to the tens of thousands of Canadian families whose livelihoods are at stake. Canadians need their government to seize the opportunity now at hand to take meaningful action to defend their jobs and our key economic sectors.

Opposition to Trump’s USMCA – and the illegal tariffs against Canada – is mounting in the U.S., where a newly elected Democratic majority in the House of Representatives is expected to achieve changes to the agreement in exchange for its ratification.

It’s time for the Trudeau government to show some backbone and stand up to Trump as well. It would be ironic if the only champion for Canadian interests comes from the U.S. Congress.

The Liberals must refuse to ratify the new USMCA until key revisions are made to the deal, including permanently eliminating arbitrary and illegal tariffs or quotas on Canadian steel, aluminum and other exports.

Canadian families and communities cannot afford another Liberal surrender to Donald Trump. ■

ABI Lockout Passes One-Year Mark

BRAVING A SIBERIAN-COLD DAY, members of USW Local 9700 held a massive rally Jan. 11 to mark the one-year anniversary of being locked out of their jobs at the ABI aluminum smelter in Bécancour, Que.

At 3 a.m. on Jan. 11, 2018, ABI workers were abruptly and unexpectedly confronted in the smelter by thuggish security guards, acting at the behest of the facility's owners – global aluminum giants Alcoa and Rio Tinto. The workers were forced to immediately leave the plant, prevented even from showering to cleanse themselves of their exposure to toxic contaminants in the smelter.

As the lockout drags on, negotiations remain at an impasse, with the company demanding new concessions after reneging on previously agreed issues in contract talks.

Quebec Premier François Legault, who during last fall's election campaign promised that a resolution of the ABI dispute would be a priority for his conservative CAQ government, is proving to be incapable or unwilling to help bring about a settlement.

An incredibly unfair contract between ABI and provincial utility Hydro-Québec is making it easier for the company to drag out the dispute and try to force concessions on workers, said USW Quebec Director Alain Croteau.

The contract allows ABI to use its lockout as justification to renege on financial commitments to Hydro-Québec, Croteau noted.

"If ABI had to pay for its hydro commitments, it would probably have adopted a different attitude in bargaining," he said. "The govern-

ment must review these unfair contracts that allow companies to take workers hostage while passing the bill on to taxpayers."

In addition to its devastating impact on 1,030 members of Local 9700, their families and their community, ABI's lockout has cost Hydro-Québec and the province more than \$230 million in revenue.

ABI has rejected all attempts at mediation to reach a settlement, said Local 9700 President Clément Masse.

"There was very little separating the two sides one year ago. The gap has widened and over 1,000 families are suffering due to corporate greed, with the complicit silence of the Quebec government," Masse said.

"We need the government to get out of its pseudo-neutrality and restore a balance of power." ■



Get Your Local to Support ABI Workers

USW locals and members are urged to support the courageous struggle of Local 9700 members who have been locked out of their jobs at the ABI aluminum smelter since January 2018. Cheques can be sent by mail, to:

Syndicat des Métallos, section locale 9700

8310, rue Desormeaux Bécancour (Québec) G9H 2X2

* Make cheques payable to: Métallos SL 9700 F.D.P.

Donations also can be made online at:

www.metallos.org/lockout-abi



USW National Policy Conference

April 2-5, 2019

Westin Bayshore, Vancouver

- ✓ Hear dynamic keynote speakers
- ✓ Experience informative videos and presentations
- ✓ Help determine USW policy
- ✓ Broaden your USW networks

SOAR Conference: March 31 - April 1

USW NextGen Conference: April 1

National Locals and Federally Regulated Workers Conference: April 1

Register at

www.usw.ca/npc2019



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Steelworkers locals and activists are already mobilizing for key political action campaigns.

I am proud of our union and rank-and-file Steelworkers whose grassroots efforts helped elect NDP governments in Alberta in 2015 and in B.C. in 2017. These governments have implemented progressive legislation and policies to create good jobs, strengthen workers' rights and build stronger communities.

Steelworkers will continue to support progressive governments that truly represent the interests of our members and all working families. In our communities and in our provincial and federal legislatures, we will lead the fight for workers' rights, retirement security,

economic and social justice and a stronger public health-care system that includes a universal pharmacare program.

In 2019, Steelworkers solidarity will continue to build on our record of achievement in collective bargaining. Our members will continue to negotiate industry-leading agreements and we will always stand up and fight back against employers' attacks on our hard-won gains at the bargaining table.

Nowhere is this Steelworkers solidarity in greater evidence than in Bécancour, Que., where locked-out members of Local 9700 are in the 14th month of their incredible struggle against the attacks of global aluminum giants

Alcoa and Rio Tinto. More than ever, these courageous Steelworkers at the ABI smelter need our support. If your local union has not already done so, please make a donation in support of Local 9700 (see details in the article on page 4).

I look forward to standing shoulder-to-shoulder with you and USW members across the country to tackle the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead. Together, Steelworkers are ready to make a difference in 2019.

In solidarity,

Ken Neumann

National Director

2019 CAMPAIGNS

Elections Matter

ALBERTANS HEAD TO the polls this spring, and this fall we have elections in the Northwest Territories and Prince Edward Island (Oct. 7); Newfoundland and Labrador (Oct. 8); and the federal election on Mon., Oct. 21.

Alberta – “Premier of Steel” Runs to Win

Rachel Notley, Steelworker and the first NDP Premier of Alberta, has delivered a progressive government on the side of working people.

Notley’s government is the first to introduce a \$15 minimum wage. Other positive changes include updated employment standards, improved health and safety, progressive changes to WCB, and support for workers with Canada’s most progressive labour code.

Notley’s road to re-election will be challenging with the merger of the two right-wing, conservative parties and the relentless attacks by the new UCP, but she’s running to win. Albertans elected Notley for her pragmatic approach, and she has proven to be a strong, effective leader and defender of Albertan interests.

Our union will be active with a member-to-member campaign and Steelworkers Vote schools to engage our members and build support to re-elect our Premier of Steel.

Federal – Don’t Write Off the NDP

At the federal level, the Feb. 25 Burnaby South byelection paves the way for NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh to win a seat in the House of Commons.

The October election won’t be like the last one where voters swept Liberals to power to get Harper out. This time, Justin Trudeau’s Liberals will be running against their record, and they’ve underdelivered.

The Liberals have shown they can’t be trusted to follow through on real change and the progressive policies they promised like electoral reform, fair trade deals or ending pension theft.

The Conservatives will be dragged down by draconian premiers in Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, New Brunswick and Quebec.

Steelworkers can get behind Jagmeet’s plans: fighting for fair trade that puts workers first, a plan for affordable housing, fixing corporate bankruptcy laws to end pension theft, and acting now on universal pharmacare. Jagmeet is the only leader insisting U.S. steel and aluminum tariffs be dropped before Canada signs on to the USMCA.

Jagmeet is a fighter. And New Democrats are no strangers to being the underdog. Don’t write off the NDP just yet. ■



Photo: Premier of Alberta on Flickr used under CC BY-ND 2.0



Organizing Retirement Homes

WORKERS AT TWO RETIREMENT facilities in Alberta have recently voted to join the United Steelworkers as the union continues to grow its ranks across the country in the health-care sector.

Over 120 health-care workers at Chartwell St. Albert Retirement Residences and Chartwell Country Cottage Retirement Residences made the decision to join the Steelworkers to improve their working conditions and ensure they have the voice and respect at work that all workers deserve.

USW Local 1-207 President Ray White credits the success of the organizing drives to having two health-

care workers involved on the ground. These additions will bring Local 1-207 to 11 retirement facilities.

USW District 3 Director Stephen Hunt welcomed the members to the Steelworkers and noted the improved labour legislation introduced by the Alberta NDP government that protects the right of workers to join a union.

“When workers are able to make a decision free from company harassment, they’ll choose to improve their lives by joining the Steelworkers,” says Hunt. ■

OUR UNITY OUR STRENGTH

DISTRICT 3 CONFERENCE 2018

“**Our Unity, Our Strength**” was more than just a slogan for Steelworkers across Western Canada who gathered in Kamloops, B.C., for the District 3 conference last October.

With a focus on celebrating and learning from successes, the conference gave Steelworkers the opportunity to reflect on the progress made over the last three years and plan for the future. Throughout the week,

participants heard from members who reported on the important issues facing their locals and the strategies and tactics used to make progress at the bargaining table.

“The reality is that no matter where you work or what you do, we’re all facing the same attacks from employers. Without fail, every time we enter negotiations they are looking to roll back wages, benefits and other things that have been bargained for and won over decades. And in each and every instance, we are fighting back and winning,” says USW District 3 Director Stephen Hunt.

The conference also included Be More Than A Bystander training, which is part of the USW’s partnership with the Ending Violence Association of British Columbia (EVA BC) and several Canadian Football League teams. The training is focused on equipping Steelworkers with tools to be able to break the silence on violence against women. ■



Dons communautaires en 2018

Chaque année, le Fonds humanitaire des Métallos verse des dons à des organisations qui viennent en aide aux personnes et aux familles vulnérables partout au Canada. En 2018, le Fonds a remis 188 330 \$ à 112 banques alimentaires dans des localités où habitent et travaillent des Métallos.

Merci aux membres et aux sections locales qui contribuent au Fonds humanitaire des Métallos.

www.metallos/humanitaire

#métallossontlà



USW Local 7226, Local 1-207 and the USW Southern Alberta Area Council supported the Calgary Food Bank on behalf of the Steelworkers Humanity Fund.
Les sections locales 7226 et 1-207, et le conseil régional du Sud de l'Alberta des Métallos ont appuyé la banque alimentaire de Calgary au nom du Fonds humanitaire.



Wesley Urban Ministries and Hamilton Food Share (pictured) received contributions from the Steelworkers Humanity Fund and the Hamilton Steelworkers Area Council.
Wesley Urban Ministries et Hamilton Food Share (dans la photo) reçoivent des dons du Fonds humanitaire des Métallos et du conseil régional de Hamilton des Métallos.



Montreal-area Steelworkers presented support from the Steelworkers Humanity Fund to the Cuisine Collective Hochelaga-Maisonneuve.
Les Métallos de la région de Montréal présentent le soutien du Fonds humanitaire des Métallos à la Cuisine collective Hochelaga-Maisonneuve.



USW Local 9350 presented a contribution of \$1,700 to the South Porcupine Food Bank in Timmins, Ont.
La section locale 9350 des Métallos a présenté un don de 1 700 \$ à la banque alimentaire de South Porcupine à Timmins (Ontario).



Eastern Ontario Steelworkers presented Humanity Fund contributions to the L'Original Food Bank, Hawkesbury Central Food Bank and Vankleek Hill Community Assistance Fund.
Les Métallos de l'Est de l'Ontario ont présenté des dons du Fonds humanitaire à la banque alimentaire de L'Original, la banque alimentaire centrale de Hawkesbury et au fonds d'aide communautaire de Vankleek Hill.



Old Masset Village Council Food Bank in B.C. received \$638 in Humanity Fund support from USW Local 1-1937.
La banque alimentaire du conseil du village Old Masset en C.-B. a reçu 638 \$ en guise de soutien du Fonds humanitaire de la SL 1-1937 des Métallos.

Community Donations 2018

Every year, the Steelworkers Humanity Fund contributes to organizations across Canada that assist vulnerable individuals and families. In 2018 the fund contributed a total of \$188,330 to 112 food banks in

communities where USW members live and work. Thank you to members and locals that contribute to the Steelworkers Humanity Fund.

www.usw.ca/humanity
#USWCares



Along with the Humanity Fund contributions, USW Locals 2020 and 6500 donated almost \$10,000 to the Blue Door Café Sodbury Soup Kitchen and the Sodbury Food Bank.

En plus des dons du Fonds humanitaire, les sections locales 2020 et 6500 ont versé près de 10 000 \$ à la soupe populaire Blue Door Café et à la banque alimentaire de Sodbury.