

January 7, 2016

January 30, 2016

Local 1005 USW Issues Call to Go All Out for the Success of Hamilton Day of Action

**Keep Stelco Producing!
Steel not Steal!**



"The People vs U.S. Steel," Hamilton Day of Action, January 29, 2011.

Saturday, January 30 -- 1:00 pm

Hamilton City Hall, 71 Main St. W.

For information: Local 1005 USW 905-547-1417

or Local 8782 USW at 519-587-2000.

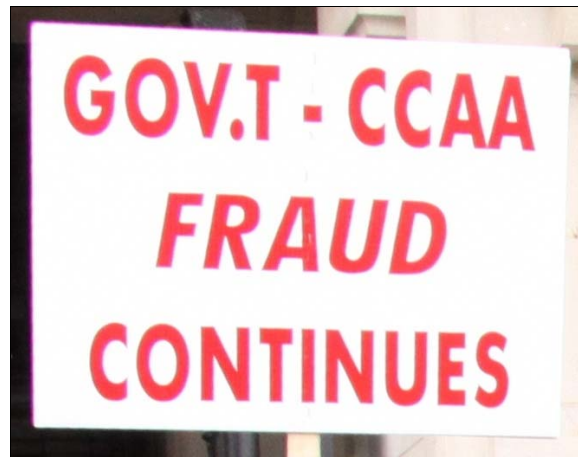
Gary Howe, the President of Local 1005 USW chaired the final Thursday Meeting of 2015 on December 17. Gary emphasized the importance of going all out to mobilize for the Hamilton Day of Action on January 30, 2016. He said a delegation of steelworkers went to Oshawa to inform GM workers of Unifor Local 222 of the struggle active and retired steelworkers are waging to defend their rights. The autoworkers for starters committed to sending a busload of workers to the day of action. The steelworkers also distributed 200 copies of *Justice for Injured Workers* while in Oshawa.

Gary said the union met with the Mayor of Hamilton to emphasize the importance of standing together at the rally to defend the city. He said the Mayor of Haldimand has also been invited. We also spoke to the Essar steelworkers in Sault Ste Marie to encourage them to participate, Gary said. Their mill is also under the fraudulent bankruptcy protection of the *Companies' Creditors Arrangement Act* (CCAA).

Addressing the Importance of Local 1005's Thursday Meetings

Former President of Local 1005 Rolf Gerstenberger, the originator of the Thursday Meetings, also spoke on December 17. He thanked everyone for their continuing participation in the Thursday Meetings. They are a means to sort out problems and decide on a way forward, he said. Since their inception, the Thursday Meetings have been an invaluable method in assisting Local 1005 in guiding the defence of the rights of steelworkers and the interests of the city and the country.

Rolf then briefly reviewed the history of the fight of the union members and supporters since the Stelco days to the present period. Right from the beginning, Stelco's first foray into bankruptcy protection under CCAA in 2004 quickly revealed itself as a fraud and tactic of monopoly right to break existing laws governing pensions, the collective agreements of unions and other arrangements, and to trample on the rights of all including those of small and medium-sized businesses and local municipalities. This fraud encompasses both the CCAA process and the actions of the governments.



Rolf said the union had consistently asked the provincial government and the company to follow the law under which arrangements had been made to deal with pensions and other issues such as wages and working conditions in a union contract. As far back as the 1990s and then when the economic crisis hit in 2002 and again in 2008, the province kept insisting that the Stelco and U.S. Steel cases were exceptions and not to worry about pensions or anything else.

At first, it was the "too big to fail" fraud governing the exception made for Stelco. But that was blown away in 2004 with the company's entry into CCAA. At every turn of the road, Rolf said, the governments gave concessions to Stelco that allowed it to bypass the law and its previous commitments, over the objections of the workers. The federal and provincial governments repeatedly assured steelworkers that they had nothing to worry about, first with Stelco and then again with the even larger monopoly U.S. Steel by invoking the fiction that the companies surely would not fail and the pensions were safe. Under this deception, the Ontario government gave U.S. Steel the same pension deferral on payments to make the pensions whole, and even went further by eliminating a special clause prohibiting U.S. Steel from paying dividends to its shareholders as long as the pensions were not made whole. As it turned out, as everyone now knows, U.S. Steel never had any intention of fully funding the pension plans and is now attempting to dump the problem on the Ontario government including even the criminal action of cutting off post-retirement medical benefits.

Now Rolf said, the "too big to fail" slogan has faded and the federal and provincial governments just want to wash their hands of their responsibility for causing the mess but we workers do not accept any whitewash and want to hold all of them to account. While governments appear quite willing to let U.S. Steel off the hook to slither back to the U.S. without paying for the crimes it has

committed here and even continue selling steel into Canada, we are not willing victims and are doing all we can to hold both U.S. Steel and governments to account, said Rolf. The Day of Action is an important step in building and sustaining our resistance movement.



Rolf pointed to the Ontario government's farcical appointment of banker Ed Clark to "look into the steel industry and see what could be done." The man is a banker responsible for the criminal privatization of Hydro One. He is not going to decide the fate of the steel industry in the favour of the workers and nation-building, Rolf emphasized. Our rights as workers should be recognized in the decision-making process, he said, and we need to fight to put ourselves in that position as leaders and nation-builders. Clark, Ontario Premier Wynne, Prime Minister Trudeau and those who own and control U.S. Steel are making decisions against

our interest and the collective interest of the nation and economy, Rolf said. They can do this because we the workers have not put ourselves in a position that is organized enough and powerful enough where we exercise our own influence and authority over the direction of the economy and nation in the public interest and deprive the ruling elite of their power to wreck the economy and trample on our rights. The Thursday Meetings are an important part of involving workers in discussing what needs to be done and working out solutions of how to turn the situation around, he said. He concluded by calling on the workers to solve the problem of making the Day of Action a success as an expression of opposition to this blatant attempt to defraud the workers and pensioners of what belongs to them by right.

When U.S. Steel bought Stelco it pledged to honour the pensions on the basis of its global holdings, not on a Canada-stand-alone basis. No amount of shenanigans should permit it to be let off the hook.

***All Out to Make the January 30 Hamilton Day of Action a Success!
Join Locals 1005 and 8782 USW in Hamilton on January 30!***



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