

On November 27m after 11 months of negotiations and a month of rotating strikes, the federal government stripped postal workers of their bargaining rights under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. the actions by the federal government was not just an attack on postal workers, it was an attack on all Canadians. Despite his open condemnation of Stephan Harper for imposing back to work legislation on postal workers in 2011, and his assurances he would never do the same, Justin Trudeau sent a clear message to all Canadians that our Constitutional rights as citizens are conditionally subject to the financial interests of large corporations.

For postal workers striking to oppose working conditions that made us the most injured workers in the federal sections, twice as high as the second most injured workers and 5 times higher than the national average, the actions of the Liberal government was doubly insulting as they didn't include any language in their back to work legislation addressing these unsafe working conditions - instead sending us back during the busiest time of year and during some of the most difficult weather conditions. The Liberal government made it clear that the profits of eBay and Amazon are a greater priority than the safety of Canadian workers.

They also made it clear they were okay sending rural and suburban mail carriers, 70% of which are women, back to the same working conditions where they would be required to work 10, 12 or 14 hours days for 6, 7 or 8 hours pay, simply because the President of eBay wrote a letter to the Prime Minister lamenting their profits were being threatened.

When Canada Post couldn't get agreement from the Union to binding arbitration in lieu of negotiations, they manufactured an artificial crisis to get it from the government. Without testing the veracity of any of Canada Posts assertions about backlogs, the Liberals happily complied.

The interim CEO of Canada Post said there was a million parcels backlogged in the system. She obviously hadn't done her homework. Last year, postal workers processed and delivered a million parcels a day on 67 occasions. A million parcels is a Monday for us.

On the first day after the back to work legislation was imposed, and the first tractor trailer doors were opened, it wasn't small business interests waiting inside as the federal government had tried to damage control as their justification in violating our charter rights, it was top to bottom, front to back, Amazon parcels.

However, as many CUPW Members went back into work feeling disheartened, something else happened. In the days that followed, the independent actions of private citizens, community activists and labour unions, stepping up to defend the rights wrongfully denied to us, showed us we were not alone in this struggle. The blockades that went up and the people who took our place on the lines sent a message back to Canada Post and Federal government that Canadian saw through the lie and that our rights as Canadians weren't up for sale to the highest bidder.

These spontaneous protests resonated within CUPW from one end of the country to the other.

The actions of all those private citizens who subjected themselves to injunctions, police intimidation and even arrest, said we collectively cannot, and will not, accept the injustice and

indignity of neo-liberal governments with their agendas of deregulations, privatization, austerity and greed.

Whether it be postal workers, steel workers, auto workers, teachers, nurses, etc, we are all under attack and we're all in this fight together.

This is my message to the Prime Minister - a government that foregoes its mandate to represent and defend the constitutional rights of the people in favour of corporate greed, has forfeit its right to govern.

The Liberal may think they act with impunity, but they're mistaken. They may expect our compliance and complicity but they will endure our tenacity and our outrage.

This fight will continue in the courts and in the streets. We will take back what was wrongly taken from us and we will collectively send a strong message to this government and all governments, both federal and provincial, that they are accountable to the people and we're coming after them.

In the proud motto of Labour; the workers united will never be defeated.

On behalf of all members of CUPW, I wish to extend our thanks and our solidarity.

In Solidarity,
Terry Langley
President
Canadian Union of Postal Workers
Hamilton Local 548