

# *Milestones in Labor History*

## *--May--*

### *1*

**1830** - Birthdate of renowned labor organizer Mary Harris "Mother" Jones. A fiery speaker, and fearless agitator, she lived a full 100 years. Most of her time in the Labor Movement was spent on behalf of coal miners, but she fought for workers everywhere. At the age of 89 she was active in the great steel strike of 1919.

**1886** - 350,000 workers demonstrate in Chicago for eight-hour workday, beginning tradition of May Day as International Workers' Day.

**1888** - Nineteen machinists at the East Tennessee, Virginia, and Georgia Railroad assembled in a locomotive pit to decide what to do about a wage cut. They voted to form a union, which became the International Association of Machinists.

### *3-4*

**1886** - Four people were killed when police opened fire in a crowd of workers participating in a general strike at McCormick Harvester Company in Chicago. At a rally in Haymarket Square the following day to protest police brutality, events once again took a violent turn. A bomb exploded killing one police officer. Police responded by firing into the crowd, killing one and wounding many. Subsequently eight labor leaders were framed for the bombing. Four were eventually put to death.

### *9*

**1970** - UAW and former CIO President Walter Reuther killed in a plane crash while visiting union's educational center at Black Lake, Michigan.

### *10*

**1894** - Pullman Railway car employees strike to protest wage cuts. Nationwide walkout broken by federal troops and court injunctions.

### *13*

**1971** - Members of five postal unions vote in favor of merger. Nationwide vote for merger was 152,460 to 6,453 constituting a majority of 95.9%.

### *17*

**1977** - Death of Francis "Stu" Filbey, first general president of APWU.

## 22

**1920** - Lehlbach-Sterling Retirement Bills signed by President Wilson allowing Railway Mail Clerks retirement eligibility at 62, clerks, carriers, mechanics at 65, all others at 70.

## 26

**1937** - "Battle of the Overpass." Ford Motor company police attack and severely beat United Auto Workers (UAW) organizers at a Ford plant in Dearborn, Michigan. Despite Henry Ford Senior's determination to "never recognize the United Auto Workers Union or any other union," Ford Motor Company eventually signed a collective bargaining agreement with the UAW in 1942.

## 30

**1937** - "Memorial Day Massacre." Ten striking steelworkers are shot and killed by police and 100 wounded while peacefully demonstrating outside Republic Steel Company in Chicago.