

RESOLUTION

MAY DAY - MADE IN THE U.S.A.

Whereas, young workers in the 1870s such as AFL president Sam Gompers and Carpenters' secretary P.J. McGuire – both members of immigrant families in New York City – had seen a long New York City building-trades strike win the eight-hour day, then lose it in the Crash of 1872, and

Whereas, they also knew that the 10-hour day, won in the Philadelphia general strike of 1835, had energized labor before the Civil War, and;

Whereas, it made sense to call for a national general strike for the eight-hour day, since the local and regional labor markets of the earlier period had finally become national by the 1880s, which was made possible by the expansion of the railroads, and;

Whereas, wages were then paid by the day and not by the hour, such a strike would reduce working hours and maintain a full day's pay that would leave working people more time for their families, for bettering themselves, and for taking an active part in politics, and;

Whereas, the roots of May Day are deep in American history, since it was the fledgling American Federation of Labor that in 1886, seeking the spark that would ignite the unity of the struggling American labor movement, called for a general strike for the eight-hour day to begin on May Day, the traditional day used by the carpenters' for setting wages and conditions, and;

Whereas, the first national action for the eight-hour day, the 1886 strike had international significance, where all the world was watching on May Day, when the walkout brought much of the nation's work to a halt, and;

Whereas, the world continued to watch as the Chicago police, acting for the employers killed strikers on May 3rd and again during the Haymarket affair on May 4, after which they rounded up many of the city's leftist labor leaders, who were later put on trial and condemned to death, resulting in the world labor movement adopting May Day as its international holiday and;

Whereas, all of this has been written out of most American history books, which also omit the fact that it was organized labor, with P.J. McGuire again in the fore, that unilaterally declared the first Labor Day, as a show of workers' strength in New York in September 1882, which we can also be proud of, and;

Whereas, we deny ourselves an important part of our heritage by not celebrating May Day, and we should now be grateful to another generation of immigrant workers, who by demanding their rights on May 1, 2006, have reminded us of this fact, so that we can all now move together in this new, globally integrated world, to reclaim what is collectively ours in celebrating May Day, and by doing so, join our brothers and sisters from all over the world, in a true showing of international labor solidarity:

Therefore be it resolved, that the _____ supports and joins with the Philadelphia Area Project on Occupational Safety and Health and the Pennsylvania Labor History Society in the campaign to recognize and celebrate May Day – USA, and;

Be it further resolved, that our organization will educate our members and others as to the true American labor history and meaning of May Day after 120 years of misinformation and will ourselves celebrate and will encourage others to celebrate May Day in whatever fashion deemed appropriate.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Name of union/org/group: _____

Address: _____

Email Address: _____ Phone: _____

Make a financial contribution to continue this important program. Make checks payable to: PLHS

Send to: Pennsylvania Labor History Society (PLHS), Labor Center, Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IUP)
Keith Hall 7, 390 Pratt Drive, Indiana, PA 15705, Attention Cindy Spiel man

For more information call: 724-357-2645 or 215-301-2633, Fax: 724-357-2564, E-Mail: cynthia@iup.edu

Visit the **MAYDAY USA** website at: www.maydayusa.org