

# *Milestones in Labor History*

## *--January--*

### *1*

**1875** - Women weavers union formed in Fall River, Massachusetts.

### *2*

**1903** - President Theodore Roosevelt issues an Executive Order, which became known as the first "gag order" that forbid federal workers from "...either directly or indirectly, individually or through associations, solicit an increase of pay or influence or attempt to influence in their own interest any other legislation whatever, either before Congress or its Committees...."

### *7*

**1939** - American Federation of Labor (AFL) organizer, Tom Mooney, freed after a 22 year imprisonment on false charges.

### *8*

**1945** - AFL grants a charter to the Office Employees International Union. The union's title was changed to Office and Professional Employees International Union in 1965.

### *10*

**1950** - Amendment to Railway Labor Act gives employees the right to negotiate for union shop and dues checkoff.

**1980** - Death of George Meany, first president of the AFL-CIO.

### *11*

**1912** - 10,000 mostly immigrant textile workers in Lawrence, Massachusetts begin their strike for better pay and working conditions. It became known as a fight for "Bread and Roses." After an eight-week struggle the strikers won a 15% pay increase and other demands. The victory was significant, as it demonstrated that semi-skilled workers--many of them recent immigrants and nearly half of them women--could organize themselves to improve their conditions. The impact of this strike led to pay increases for over 150,000 New England textile workers.

### *13*

**1874** - Mounted police charge into a crowd of unemployed workers demonstrating in New York's Tompkins Square Park, beating men, women, and children indiscriminately with clubs leaving hundreds of casualties in their wake.

### *14*

**1969** - Death of Roy E.C. Hallbeck, President of the United Federation of Postal Clerks.

## 15

**1929** - Birthdate of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. In addition to his contribution to the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s, King was an earnest crusader for labor, particularly municipal and hospital workers.

## 17

**1915** - Lucy Parsons leads hunger march in Chicago; Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) songwriter Ralph Chaplin writes his most famous labor song "Solidarity Forever" for the march.

**1962** - President Kennedy issues Executive Order 10988 guaranteeing federal employees the right to join unions and bargain collectively.

## 21

**1946** - Steelworkers launch 30-state strike against U.S. Steel.

**1974** - First day of a four-day strike by 2,000 postal workers at the New York Bulk and Foreign Mail Center. The "Battle of the Bulk" as it became known, was caused by postal management's unilateral changes in workers' hours and working conditions. As a result of the workers' solidarity, a federal judge ruled in the union's favor by directing management to settle the issue through binding arbitration.

## 25

**1890** - United Mine Workers founded.

**1926** - 16,000 textile workers strike in Passaic, New Jersey.

## 26

**1734** - New York maids organize.

## 27

**1850** - Birthdate of Samuel Gompers, first president and founder of American Federation of Labor. A cigarmaker by trade, Gompers received some of the education that shaped his approach to unionism through his work on the shop floor.

**1899** - Team Drivers International Union chartered by AFL. As the result of a merger in 1903, the union was renamed the International Brotherhood of Teamsters.

**1986** - 500 Hormel workers locked out for honoring Ottumwa, Iowa picket line.

## 29

**1889** - Railworkers in New York City strike for union recognition and an end to 18-hour day. Police break up strike.

**1934** - Sit-down strike in Akron, Ohio helps establish United Rubber Workers as national union.

## 30

**1919** - International Labor Organization founded.

