

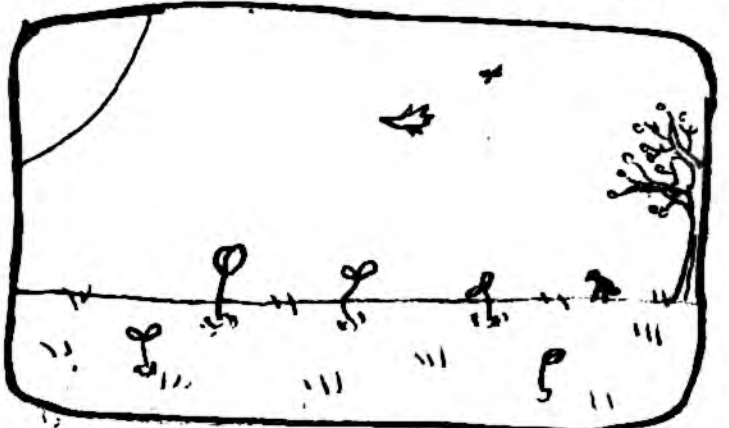
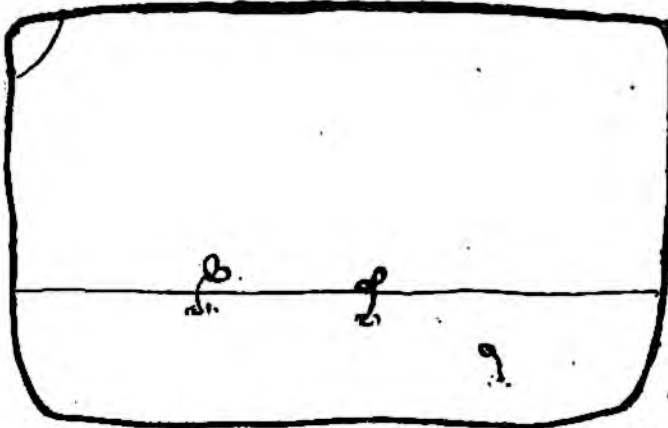
THE ROOTS OF



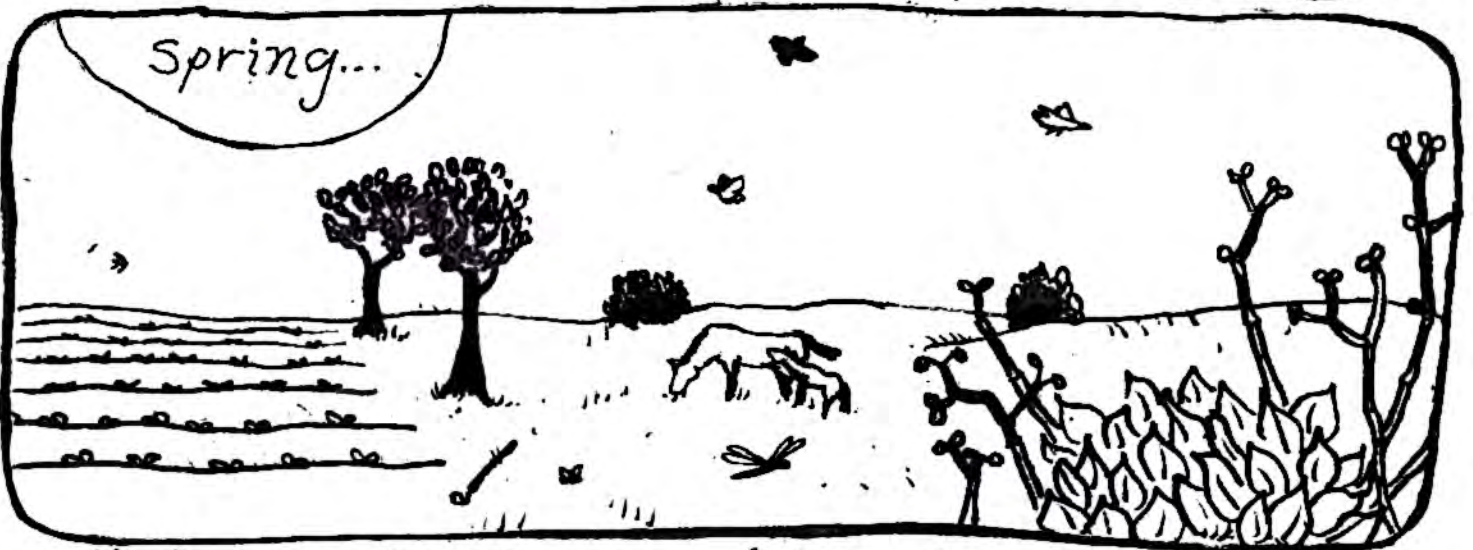
A SHORT HISTORY

A SHORT HISTORY OF MAY DAY

WINTER...



Spring...



Long before MAY DAY became International Worker's day...

A SHORT HISTORY OF MAY DAY

... It was a celebration of the rites of Spring!
A day of rebirth... of rebellion... of life-affirming



certainly not
a day for work!

It was a day to break the
routine of work &
everyday life!

A day to
give and play and share!
to dance and laugh!

to embody the
joy of Spring!

Misrule &
Mischief &
Reign!

For these reasons the
holiday was subject to repression

by Church & State
But the Robin Hood
Spirit of the day would always
prevail!

But the Robin Hood
Spirit of the day would always
prevail!

A SHORT HISTORY OF MAY DAY

THE REBELLIOUS CELEBRATION OF SPRING became May Day as we know it during the late 19th century, a time not unlike our own.

KNOWN AS:

THE GILDER AGE

This is the rise of U.S. Industrial Manufacturing...



"I can hire one half of the working class to kill the other half."
- Jay Gould
Railroad capitalist

The American elite believed capitalism to be a goose that laid golden eggs. They preferred to ignore that the eggs were ROTTEN.



Economic + political inequality were huge. The lavish lives + projects of the 1% veiled + relied on the poverty and disempowerment of the 99%

THE RICHEST 1% made more money each year than the entire bottom 50% of workers.

Working people were forming political groups and trade unions with distinct + varying ideas on how to EMPOWER themselves and improve their life

Thousands of people were immigrating from western Europe in search of work



in these groups and in the diverse immigrant communities vibrant cultures thrived, celebrated + organized around their identities as working people



A SHORT HISTORY OF MAY DAY

8 HOURS FOR WORK! 8 HOURS FOR REST!
8 HOURS FOR WHAT WE WILL!

In the 1880s
workers throughout industrialized countries
united in the movement for
THE 8 HOUR DAY

DENMARK

ITALY

AUSTRALIA

FRANCE

8 TIMER ARBEJDE!
8 TIMER FRIHED!
8 TIMER HVILE!

ORE DI LAVORO
ORE DI SVAGO
ORE PER DORMIRE

EIGHT FOR
LABOUR
EIGHT FOR
RECREATION
EIGHT FOR
REST

888



U.S.A

1886: A Nationwide action is planned. MAY 1st is chosen as the day for working people to show their power. Men + Women, immigrants + native-born, take to the streets. There is an unprecedented unity across the political spectrum as Trade Unionists, Anarchists and Socialists, unite behind the movement: "8 hours for Work! 8 hours for Rest! 8 hours for what we will!"

WHY

THE FIRST OF THE MONTH?

The date was chosen in solidarity with:
• Past Comrades, a commemoration of an earlier 8hr day March held in 1867.

• TENANTS, MAY 1st is the day leases were up; families would be in the streets moving their belongings to new apartments, or in the streets with nowhere to go...



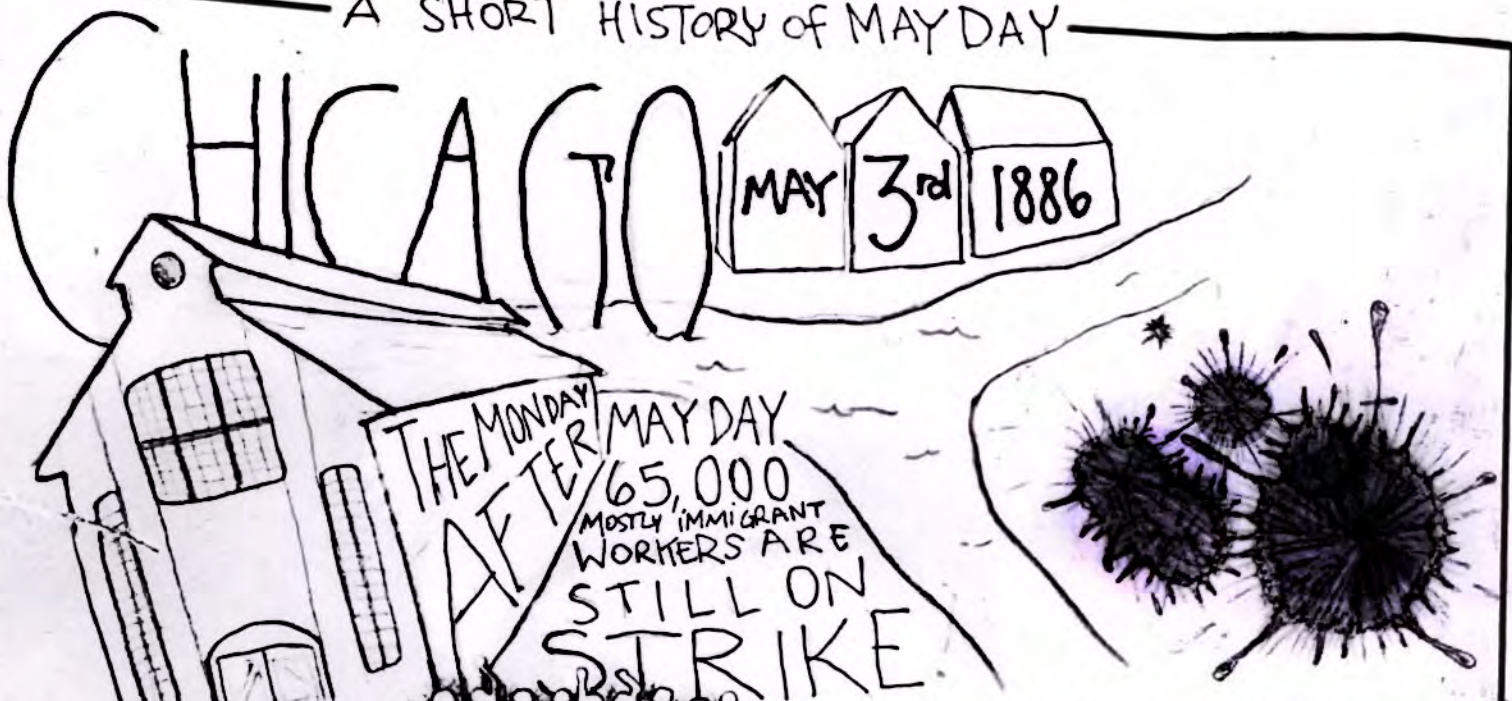
May 1st was also the day when workers' contracts ended in the building trades. Finally it was in solidarity with the rebel spirit of the Robin Hood tradition of the MAY DAY and the rites of Spring...


1 out of 30 New Yorkers Met in Union Square

IN CHICAGO

80,000 residents - over 1/4 of the entire population - most of them immigrants, marched together through the streets. The mood was joyous; workers felt a future of their own making at hand. Authorities and local media denounced them as dangerous ruffians...

A SHORT HISTORY OF MAY DAY



At McCormick's Farm Equipment factory 1400 workers had been locked-out since that February. Other protesters joined the picket-line to show their support. The police, serving+protecting only the factory owner, fired on the picketers; they shot and killed four men.  A local anarchist organization quickly helped organize a RALLY AGAINST POLICE BRUTALITY, to be held the next night in Haymarket Square!

Attention Workingmen!

GREAT

MASS-MEETING

TO-NIGHT, at 7.30 o'clock,

AT THE

HAYMARKET, Randolph St, Bet. Desplaines and Halsted.

Good Speakers will be present to denounce the latest atrocious act of the police, the shooting of our fellow-workmen yesterday afternoon.

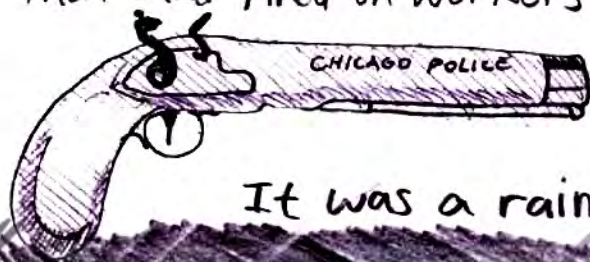
1886
3 DAYS
AFTER
MAY DAY

HAYMARKET SQUARE

1886
1 DAY
AFTER POLICE
HAVE KILLED
4 PEOPLE

RALLY AGAINST POLICE BRUTALITY

a crowd of 3,000 massed to hear the speeches, denounce the police murders, and stand up to the very police force that had fired on workers the day before...



Fleets of police waited in the wings

It was a rainy night...

...the law is framed for your enslavers!

Even though the crowd had dwindled to 300 people, 130 police marched into the square.

a bomb was thrown; it exploded,
killing a policeman. The rest of
the police rioted; shooting
wildly they killed 7
more police officers and
over 50
of the 300 protesters

1886

A SHORT HISTORY of MAY DAY

HAY MARKET

R E P E R C U S S I O N S

The person who threw the bomb—killing a policeman—was never identified. The police reaction to the bomb was blamed on the victims and used to discredit the 8 hour day movement and further criminalize dissent. Martial rule was declared for two months. thousands of people were interrogated or arrested. It became illegal to congregate in public spaces or protest without prior permission from the police

"The solution is the gatling Gun!" } The New York Times



the majority of the workers + activists rounded-up + intimidated were immigrants

A SHORT HISTORY OF MAYDAY

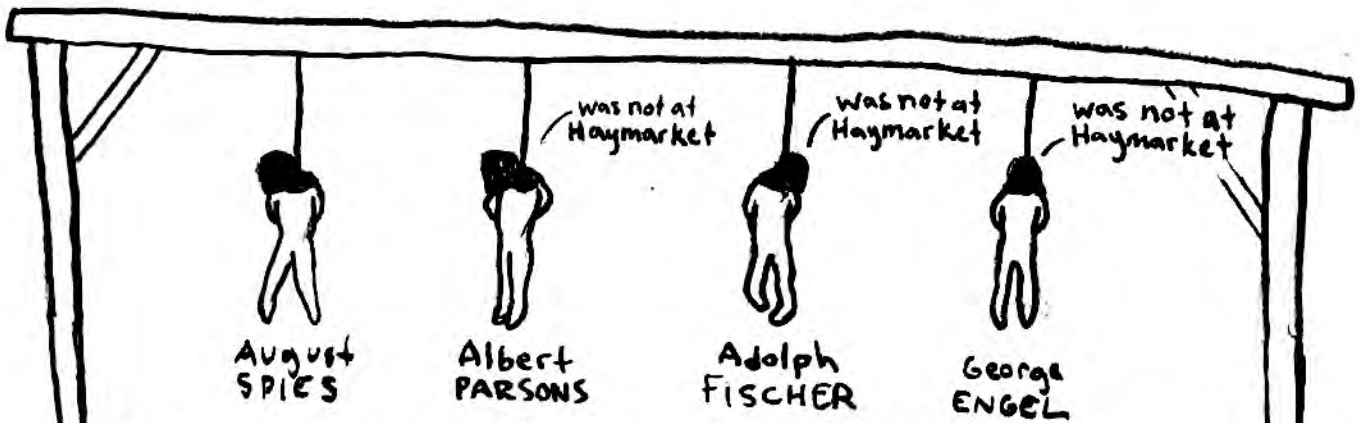
THE CHICAGO MARTYRS

There will come a time when our silence will be more powerful than the voices you strangle today.



-August Spies, activist + Labor Organizer, before being hanged.

THE bomb-thrower was never found. 4 prominent anarchists were sentenced to death - for their activism their political views and the power of their words



Black Friday: November 11th 1887; Albert Parsons' final words, cut off by the rope; "Harken to the words of the people -"

We won't forget you.



We will not forget this.

even the anti-anarchist Leader of the American Federation of Labor, Samuel Gompers, spoke out →

→ against the sham trials and called for solidarity saying, "Labor must maintain justice for Radicals or find itself denied the rights of Freemen"

A SHORT HISTORY OF MAY DAY

The 4 Chicago Martyrs became symbols of resistance and their deaths are commemorated around the world...

THE FIRST (official) MAY DAY!

Despite violent repression the struggle for the 8 hour day continued in America + across Europe.

[PARIS 1889; the centenary of the French Revolution; the newly formed Second International - a coalition of communist workers' organizations from all countries - ally themselves with the American Federation of Labor to call for an international day of action on May first:

...in all countries and in all cities on ONE appointed day the toiling masses shall demand the legal reduction of the working day to 8 hours!*

By picking May 1st again, we showed that we would not be repressed and in our refusal to have our entire lives defined by work we reclaimed the playful, giving spirit and power of Spring.

[THURSDAY MAY 1st 1890] protests, strikes and clashes with the police; demonstrations in the U.S., Switzerland, Romania, Belgium, Italy, Poland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Spain, Austro-Hungary, Russia, Cuba, Britain...!



*The struggle for the 8 hour day was long; workers in different industries won it at different times - setting the stage for 8hrs to finally become the norm in the 1930s New Deal.

A BRIEF History of MAY DAY

from that day forward,
MAY 1st would be known + celebrated as
INTERNATIONAL WORKERS' DAY



It is a day for solidarity - when differences between left political factions are set aside and we recognize our shared goals + collective power. A day for specific demands, such as the end of police brutality + racist immigration policies and the beginning of respect for the earth and control over our working lives; But also a day to articulate our broader visions of how the world should + can be: It is a day to celebrate our power, our history, and our future.