



# YESTERDAY'S LABOR DAYS

More than half a century ago, the women (pictured outside) were on the march to make life more meaningful for the mothers of today.

In those days, reported the *New York Evening Journal*, "girls have to be at their machines at 7 o'clock in the morning and they stay at them until 8 o'clock at night with just one-half hour for lunch."

By organizing into a union, these girls of yesterday ended the 12-hour work day—and the seven-day work week.

WE, who are the garment workers of today, now have a 35-hour week.

WE have time to spend in our homes with our children.

WE have won the leisure, health and dignity worthy of the mothers and future mothers of our 'nation.'

That's why Labor Day is important—fifty years ago and today. It recalls what has been done. It reminds us of what still has to be done.

*Insist on this label when you shop for women's and children's apparel. It is the symbol of decency, fair labor standards and the American Way of Life. In our hope for a better tomorrow, we the 450,000 members of the International Ladies' Garment*

*Workers' Union, 80% of us women appeal for your help. Please, when buying women's and children's garments, look for our union label. By doing that you will help us help ourselves make a better life for our families.*

## SOME LABOR DAY HISTORY

¶ The father of Labor Day was Peter J. McGuire, an official of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters, who became Secretary of the American Federation of Labor.

¶ It was in the spring of 1882 that McGuire proposed that the first Monday in September be set aside as a day to mark the progress of the American laboring man. The first Monday in September was selected as a good time since it was a pleasant time of the year.

¶ Labor Day was born in New York City where the New York Central Labor Union adopted the proposal of Peter J. McGuire, and the first Labor Day took place on September 5, 1882. At that time, the working people from all trades in New York City marched, including seamstresses, laborers, printers, cigar makers, etc. The main slogan appearing on signs carried in the parade was seeking a shorter working day: "8 hours of work—8 hours of rest—8 hours for what we will!"

¶ The first nationally marked Labor Day took place in 1885. In the spring of 1894, Congress approved of making Labor Day a national holiday, and the act, approved by Congress, was signed by President Cleveland.

¶ Labor Day has throughout the years been a day to mark the growth of organized labor from the era of exploitation and the sweat shop. Labor Day parades and festivities have through

the years marked the introduction of free public schools for all; the right to vote; the abolition of child labor; the shorter work week; unemployment insurance; Social Security and many other issues.

¶ The tradition of Labor Day, marked by organized activity on the part of working men and women, helped to give birth at the turn of the century to the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union.

¶ Labor Day is marked this year on September 6, 1965, the first Monday in September.

¶ Labor Day generally falls approximately the same day each September, although it is classified as a "movable" holiday. This year, Labor Day falls on September 6. Next year, it will fall on September 5.

¶ Throughout the history of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union, Labor Day parades have been utilized to express issues of importance to members of the Ladies' Garment Workers' Union. Demonstrations and Labor Day parades have reflected such issues as the demand for the removal of the sweat shop system; for greater factory inspection; for the abolition of working conditions leading to fire such as the Triangle fire in New York City; for support for the New Deal; the fight to end "homework"; for integration and against bigotry; and other socially important crusades.



(A handsome 64-page, 8½" x 11" soft-cover book, containing many historic photographs similar to the one here, is available from the Union Label Department, ILGWU, 275 Seventh Avenue, N.Y.C., N.Y. 10001. It costs just 50 cents, postpaid.)