

# MEMBER UPDATE

## May Day: How to mark International Workers Day

Here's where Albertans are commemorating an important day for labour

This Sunday is May Day—also known as International Workers' Day.

It's one of the most important days of the year for the labour movement. In most of the world outside North America, May 1 is a holiday, much like Labour Day in Canada and the United States. Across the world, workers take to the streets on May Day, launching strikes and flexing their power as an organized working class.

It's a day with deep roots in the labour movement. In 1886, workers in the United States launched strikes on May 4, demanding an eight-hour workday. In Chicago, police attacked the striking workers, and in the ensuing violence, seven police officers and four civilians died after someone threw a bomb.

Police used the tragic events to crack down on organized labour—arresting many prominent labour leaders, many of whom were not even present when the violence took place. Media whipped up a public frenzy against workers and the labour movement. Eight prominent labour organizers were charged with murder and conspiracy to overthrow the United States government — whether or not they were even present when the violence took place.

Despite overwhelming evidence of their innocence, the workers were sentenced to death. August Spies, one of the condemned, said on the day of his execution that “the day will come when our silence will be more powerful than the voices you are throttling today.”

To commemorate these executed workers from what came to be known as the “Haymarket Affair,” workers across the world declared May 1 to be International Workers Day. The “Haymarket Martyrs,” as the executed workers became known, were symbols of the fight for an eight-hour work day — a fight

that workers eventually won. Just as Spies said, their silence was became a rallying cry for workers.

Now, over 100 years later, we still commemorate May Day — as a day to remember the struggles of the past, and plan for the fights of the future. When working people stand together, we are unstoppable.

### May Day rallies in Alberta in 2022

This year, after a pause last year due to COVID-19, there are two May Day rallies happening in Alberta — one in Calgary, and one in Edmonton. Here's where you can go to commemorate May Day:

#### Edmonton - Sunday, May 1 - 3:30 p.m.

Beaver Hills House Park

Details at the Facebook event here: <https://www.facebook.com/events/521206849574063/>

#### Calgary - Sunday, May 1 - 2:00 p.m.

Corner of Memorial Drive and 10 Street NW

Details at the Facebook event here: <https://www.facebook.com/events/401655135117574/>

Bring your co-workers, and your friends, to commemorate the struggles that workers have fought. Without our forebearers in the labour movement, we wouldn't have weekends, we wouldn't have access to medical care, and we wouldn't have workplace safety standards. Every protection that we have, we owe to the fights that came before us.

On May Day, we remember those fights — and we prepare for the future. We want our children and grandchildren to think of us in the same way. Let's fight, and let's win.