

REVIEWING OUR 1939 ACTIVITIES

Once each year comes that time when we take the past year in retrospect, glancing hurriedly at the various activities throughout the twelve months which have just come to a close. First on the list, we recall "Sava's" Hard Time Party, on Feb. 25th, a merry, gay, and colorful affair at which every one enjoyed himself. This was followed by the "Venus" presentation, a dramatic play enacted by Detroit players of "Kamnom fame." About this time, too, the JSF Educational Bureau was touring Joseph Oven through Pennsylvania and Ohio. May is usually one of our busiest months, for it is then our May Herald is published and in process of distribution. Educational Bureau literature, distributed yearly to affiliated organizations, was mailed in this month. "Sava's" concert was given on the 20th and on the 28th the Educational Bureau Ill.-Wis. district conference met in Chicago. July 4th saw one of the most successful picnic of the summer as well as one of the first—the Proletarec Picnic, at Kegel's Grove in Willow Springs. A large turnout of comrades and friends along with fine summer weather made this a jolly affair which netted a substantial sum for our sustaining fund. Kobal's picnic grounds in Clarendon Hills was the scene of "Sava's" basket picnic on August 27. Here, too, reports were that the whole chorus and their friends enjoy a perfect day in the country. In August, on the 25th to be exact, we recall that Joseph Martinek addressed the meeting of Branch No. 1 on the crisis through which the Czech people suffered. In the very beginning of September, SNPJ members from many sections of the country congregated at the Slovane Labor Center, adding life aplenty to the general routine, and, incidentally, rendering it quite impossible for your editors to get down to serious work. The occasion was the SNPJ Day in La Salle, Illinois. The highlight of October was again a dramatic presentation, this by the dramatic group of Branch No. 1 JSF. "Zentev" went over big with its Chicago audience and was staged a second time at the JSF Conference in Waukegan on Nov. 19. The end of November further saw appear, ready for sale and distribution, the 1940 edition of the American Family Almanac. "Sava's" fall concert was given on November 26, featuring the operetta "Picnicking in the Forest," and a well known out-of-town soloist. On December 18th, members of Branch No. 1 made merry at the social after the regular Branch meeting, this being a sort of wind up of the last month of the year. December 9th—no, we won't forget that—for on that day the Slovane Center Social Club had its "domaća zabava" at the Center. The Center was a lively scene that evening, jammed with a large turnout of members. On New Year's eve, the last affair of 1939, our comrades and friends ushered in the new year and sent off the old with a gay party in the SNPJ hall. New Year's eve parties, at which our Branch members meet with their friends for a good time, are an established custom with the Branch, dating back a good many years. With this short review we have covered the main events of the year; the activities which have taken most of our spare time, but have brought in the necessary income which makes existence of these various organizations possible.

NEWS AND COMMENTS

By Louise B. Jursey

Stephen Foster, the American Songwriter. Most of us when we were children sang Stephen Foster's songs at school. Some of his best loved were: "Old Folks at Home," "My Old Kentucky Home," and perhaps "Oh Susannah" and others too numerous to mention. Stephen Foster's musical talents were developed at an early age, and at sixteen he composed his first song entitled "Open Thy Lattice, Love." It is said that many of his earliest songs were published without his name, because of his modesty and lack of confidence. Often his songs became popularized by minstrels before they were ever published. Although his work met with much popularity, his later years were spent in poverty. His life was particularly sad one, probably due to his habit of immoderate drinking and an unfortunate marriage. However, despite this, he composed over 125 popular songs, among which the best known are: "Old Folks at Home," "Old Black Joe," "My Old Kentucky Home," "Massa's in de Cold Cold Ground," "Old Dog Tray," "Swanee River," "Oh Susannah," and "Oh Dem Golden Slippers." He was born in Pittsburgh, Pa., July 4, 1826 and died in New York City, Jan. 13, 1864. The composer had very definite stories behind every song he wrote. One needs but only observe the words of his songs to understand this.

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JSF Junior Guild Notes

CHICAGO.—Now that the winter is here and there is a lot of skating and snow-balling, many JSF Junior Guild members are finding it hard to attend our meetings. We must keep up the attendance if we want our club to be in good standing. Even though it is difficult to find time to attend, I am sure that one night a month is not asking too much. At our last meeting we were asked by comrade Joseph Drasier to participate in the March 3rd program commemorating the 35th anniversary of Proletarec. I am sure every one would like to take part in whatever we select, but we can not accept the invitation unless every one attends regularly our meetings and rehearsals. I am hoping to see a 100 per cent attendance at our next meeting. Please don't disappoint us. It will be held on February 2nd at the Slovane Labor Center. Let's see you all there. Frances Saitz.

BRANCH No. 1 MEETING

CHICAGO.—Members of Branch No. 1 JSF, are hereby notified of the regular monthly meeting, Friday evening Jan 26 at the Slovane Labor Center. Further discussion of plans for the 35th anniversary celebration of PROLETAREC, in March, requiring, for successful fulfillment, the cooperative group thought and activity of us all, will be on the agenda. Therefore, every member should be present.

"HARD TIME PARTY"

CHICAGO.—This Saturday, Jan. 27, you will have the opportunity to wear the oddest rig you can get up and still be in style at "Nada's" hard time party at the SNPJ Hall. "Nada" is a ladies' lodge of the SNPJ, with an indisputable reputation for sponsoring the very best of masquerade parties. We can say with a great deal of assurance that they will live up to their reputation Saturday. Come out and join the fun with them. Admission is only 35c. Ray Rudman will play.

35TH ANNIVERSARY OF PROLETAREC

CHICAGO.—Plans are well underway and much of the program definitely charted for the 35th Anniversary celebration of Proletarec on March third. The fact that very few labor papers have ever lived through 35 years of continuous publication makes this an occasion which should be properly commemorated. The two main speakers on this honorable occasion will be Eibin Kristan, who was once editor of Proletarec, and Professor Maynard C. Krueger, member of the National Executive Committee of the Socialist Party. Tickets have been distributed among members of Branch No. 1, and it is the duty of every member from now on until March 3rd to sell them to all your friends; get them into circulation and advertise this affair.

BORAH DEAD

Senator William E. Borah, the "Lion of Idaho" and the dean of the United States Senate, died on Jan. 19, in Washington at the age of 74. A cerebral hemorrhage, the result of a fall, caused his death. Borah was first elected to the United States Senate in January 1907. Thus he has served 33 years, a longer continuous service than any present member of the Senate. Known for his outstanding oratorical ability and leadership, and his devotion to progressive causes, he ranked as the outstanding constitutional lawyer in the Senate, and achieved world fame for his interest in foreign affairs.

Fiftieth Anniversary of UMW of America

Opening of the thirty-sixth Constitutional Convention of the United Mine Workers of America in Columbus, Ohio, starting January 23, which, it is expected over 2,000 delegates will attend, will also mark the beginning of the official celebration of the Union's Golden Anniversary. The United Mine Workers Journal, official organ of the Union, in reporting the event states: "We celebrate our Golden Anniversary at a time when our Union is at the very peak of its power, prestige and influence, and in the strongest position numerically and financially. With our membership roll over the 600,000 mark, we have practically 100 per cent of the nation's coal mine workers in our organization." Uruguay produced 56,885,932 kilograms of wool this year, an increase of 7.8 per cent from last year's production and eight per cent more than the average for the last four years.

SOCIALIST PARTY PLANS FOR 1940 POLITICAL ACTION

Plans for a series of vigorous national campaigns centering around issues of deep concern to the American masses such as unemployment and militarism—drives which will drastically alter the nature of the Socialist Party's domestic propaganda and further reactivate the membership in preparation for the 1940 political campaign—were started at a meeting of the National Action Committee, Jan. 6. From now on, until the plans are completed, the N. A. C. will meet regularly on alternate Saturdays with staff meetings on Saturdays when the N. A. C. is not in session. Activities in connection with the national drives will be carefully considered in the light of the present resources of the party. They will be designed to provide an answer to those comrades who want something definite and practical to do, tasks suitable to the present personnel of the party and that will stimulate it—not high-flown schemes which cannot be realized and tend only to exhaust the membership to no purpose. Clement on Future Work. On the subject of what might be termed a "Four Months Plan" for the party—to span the interval before the 1940 national convention—Travers Clement, national secretary, said: "We have talked a lot about revaluation in our movement and have carried on considerable work on this in theoretical fields. It is high time, however, that there was a general overhauling of our propaganda and that party theory found expression in concrete activities."

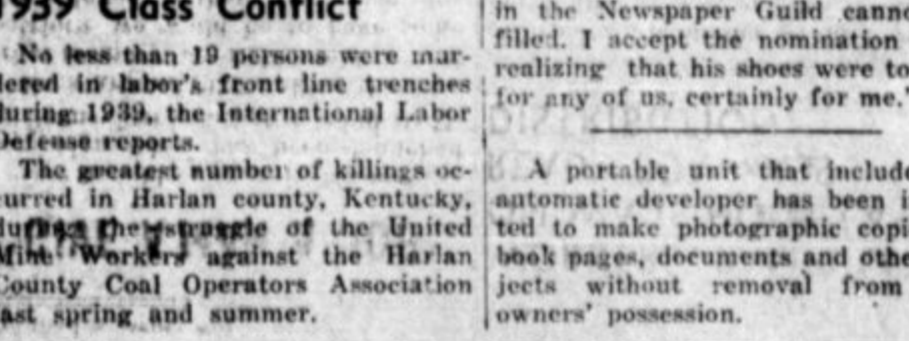
"GIVE A MAN A JOB" WORKERS' PAMPHLET ON WAGE-HOUR LAW READY FOR MASS DISTRIBUTION

One trouble with this job-making campaign which has been launched in Pennsylvania is that it is old stuff. Back around 1930, taking the date from memory, our radios told us how patriotic we would be to have some unemployed brother whitewash our walls or nail plaster-board on the attic rafters. It was the follow-up of the apple-selling drive, our readers will remember, and it just didn't produce the goods. If it fails again in Pennsylvania, we suspect that the "give-a-job" promoters won't be too disappointed—provided it serves another purpose. We are suspicious of what that purpose is. However, might we suggest that it is a carefully calculated scheme to imbue next fall's voters with the idea that— 1. It is possible to end unemployment by private employment, and— 2. The American people will do well to turn against New Dealism and trust themselves once more to the Republicans and their big-business bosses. We shall not be surprised if, sometime near the first of next October, the slogan of "labor's exploiters is, "We can employ you if the government stops interfering in our business." Nor, to be perfectly candid, shall we be astounded if the workers of the nation fall—as did the workers of Pennsylvania in 1938—for bill-board appeals to "Vote Republican and Get a Real Job." The present give-a-job campaign may prove to be nothing more than the groundwork for what is to follow when the time comes to again corral the votes of the American people. First develop a hope within the workers' breast. Then cash in on appropriate slogans at the polls. It's been done before. And when the people stop falling for bunk and hallyhoo—well, then—they'll end unemployment in the only way it can be ended; by using their political power to socialize industry and end the private profit racket. Reading (Pa.) Labor Advocate.

19 Workers Die in 1939 Class Conflict

No less than 19 persons were murdered in labor's front line trenches during 1939, the International Labor Defense reports. The greatest number of killings occurred in Harlan county, Kentucky, during the struggle of the United Mine Workers against the Harlan County Coal Operators Association last spring and summer. A portable unit that includes an automatic developer has been invented to make photographic copies of book pages, documents and other objects without removal from their owners' possession.

BOTH SURPRISED



Anti-Semitism has increased; we all know that—with the result that the tendency among the Jews in many parts of the country is to suppress their talents and ambitions, and to draw more or less apart from the main streams of American life... To a lesser extent, in milder forms, the same is true of many other new groups. My impression is that, in this game of prejudice, the most consequential are the attitudes of the old-stock people because they are the dominant group and whatever they do is more important, it seems, than what is done by the newer people... Such words as "alien" and "foreigner" are flung about all too carelessly, with all too much derision. Many people, when they say "alien," mean not only the alien, but also the naturalized immigrant; and often not only him, but also his American-born son or daughter if his or her name happens to sound "foreign." This sort of thing seems to be spreading. It is noticeable in the halls of Congress. It creeps into the speeches of professional patriots. It is being taken up by Americans who are not old-stock but of the more favored, earlier new-immigrant groups. As I say, the old-stock Americans' prejudice is the most serious in its effect; but, in fairness, I hasten to add that, by and large, the old-stock people—the real old-stock, who are hooked to the best traditions of America—are rather less apt to be prejudiced than some of the new groups, which—as a hanger-on from the Old World nationalism—maintain, here and there, active unfriendliness toward one another. Together, old-stock and new-stock elements manage to produce a stream of prejudice that runs through our cultural atmosphere and touches most phases of the country's life; and, in turn, produces, much inner chaos, which plays havoc with individual character, which makes people insecure and puts them on the defensive, which inhibits and kills ambition and talent and the inclination to participate in things. In fairness, again, let me say that amidst all the snobberies and related attitudes there is also much friendliness, or would-be friendliness, on the part of the old-stock and new Americans, one toward the other. On a rough estimate, I should say, from what I am able to discern from my current study, that 60 or even 70 per cent of old-stock Americans incline to be friendly on the whole, although much of that friendliness, unhappily, is spoiled in part by the tendency to be condescending and patronizing. And, also on a rough estimate, I should say that about half of the people in the newer groups are not actively prejudiced... I might say, too, that much of the prejudice is a superficial business, not personal, just sort of general, unfortunate and stupid. I am not blaming, nor excusing anyone here; the villains in this game of prejudice are also its victims. I find, for instance, that prejudice, essentially, is worse on the prejudiced than on their targets; it turns the former into objectionable people, robbing them of humanity and spiritual health. My point is that we have entirely too much prejudice, that it is growing, and that that is bad for America. The cleavages among the various groups are deepening; groups are pulling apart, into various corners, away from one another. This is true of the old-stock element as well as the new group... I know personally, or I correspond with, hundreds of old-stock people, particularly in the East, but also elsewhere, who may be representative of millions, and who are uneasy because their cities, as they say, are full of "these foreigners"; and who feel the country is going to the dogs, in part, because of that. A feeling is creeping on them that this is no longer their country, no longer America, Anglo-Saxon America; and they confess they are beginning to feel like aliens here. So they are withdrawing; their attitudes are getting rigid... and they hold onto their money if they have any, and they blame "these foreigners" if they haven't any. They are becoming unhooked from the country's expansive and creative impulses, from the American Dream; and are being drawn into the fear—and confusion-made trends to contract, to narrow down, to grow anemic, and reactionary. And this, by and large, is true, too, of the new groups. As I say, they are withdrawing into themselves, into ethnocentric sections, into national or group pride and egoism. This is true of immigrants and, increasingly, also of their American-born sons and daughters... 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Their Old World heritage, in most cases, is not England, but Poland or Italy or Armenia or the Balkans, etc. And the beginning of their vital American background as groups is not the glorified Mayflower, but the as yet unglorified immigrant steamer; not Plymouth Rock or Jamestown, but Castle Garden or Ellis Island or Angel Island or the International Bridge or the Mexican or Canadian border; not the wilderness of New England, but the social-economic jungle of the city slums and the factory system; not the Revolution of 1776, but the Industrial Revolution; not the peals of the Liberty Bell, but the first glimpse of the Statue of Liberty. (To be continued.)

THE IMMIGRANT PROBLEM

Summary of a Lecture by Louis Adamic

(Continued from last week.) We have here now 12,000,000 immigrants and between 30 and 35 million American-born children of immigrants who are designated in the Census as "native of foreign white stock." And we have, perhaps, 10 or 15 million grandchildren of immigrants who are not distinguished in the Census. This constitutes about half of the white population. Most of this half is non-Anglo-Saxon; over half of it, non-Protestant. Most of the new people are in cities. In 1930, at the last Census, New York City had a population of 7,000,000, of which 73% was foreign-born or of immigrant parentage. Chicago was 64% "foreign"; Philadelphia 50%; Cleveland 65%; Boston, of all places, 71%; Detroit, San Francisco, Minneapolis, and St. Paul 57% each; etc. Most of the large cities north of the Mason-Dixon line and east of the Mississippi are over 50% "foreign," so-called; which is true also of many small communities. English, of course, continues to be the prevalent tongue of the country, and there is no least desire anywhere to have it supplanted; but we do have over 1,000 newspapers and magazines published in about 40 foreign languages, and about 1,600 radio programs daily in other languages than English, and hundreds of parochial and "national" schools in which a great number of American-born children are taught more than a score of foreign languages. These facts and estimates, I think, are charged with dynamic possibilities, good and bad, but I believe mostly good if we are careful and intelligent. Involved in these facts is much of the future of the U. S. Each of the new-immigrant groups has a number of successful, prominent or famous individuals. There are over 2,500 immigrants in Who's Who in America—scientist, artists, musicians, educators, etc. The great majority, however, are humble folk, workers and farmers who skate on the thin ice along the margins of our erratic economy. Some are or were on relief, though not nearly as many as generally imagined... There is no doubt, though, that most of them are economically better off here than they would have been in the old countries. They generally realize this and are glad to be here; their devotion to this country, in many cases personally known to me, is almost beyond adequate statement. But while this is generally true, many perhaps most, are not quite at ease, not quite at home, spiritually or culturally. They are more or less different from the old-stock Americans, and are regarded as different, and they feel prejudice in various forms directed against them from various sides, from the dominant group, because they are different. Of late years, the Depression has had a hand in this. In many places the foreign-born and those of their American-born children whose names had a so-called foreign sound were laid off first, before the old-stock workers, sometimes even before the Negroes. This causes a vague, often unconscious sense of panic among immigrants and their families, and the tendency became for various groups to stay together and hold onto their foreign sections, which in the better times had begun to show signs of disintegration... In recent years, too, there has been a powerful backwash of group feeling or national emotions from the drastic events in Europe; some of it natural and inevitable, and some of it purposefully stimulated by agents of Old World governments. At the risk of oversimplification, this backwash and the Depression have been effective in increasing prejudice and intolerance, and in driving—more or less—the various elements back upon their own resources as groups. Anti-Semitism has increased; we all know that—with the result that the tendency among the Jews in many parts of the country is to suppress their talents and ambitions, and to draw more or less apart from the main streams of American life... To a lesser extent, in milder forms, the same is true of many other new groups. My impression is that, in this game of prejudice, the most consequential are the attitudes of the old-stock people because they are the dominant group and whatever they do is more important, it seems, than what is done by the newer people... Such words as "alien" and "foreigner" are flung about all too carelessly, with all too much derision. Many people, when they say "alien," mean not only the alien, but also the naturalized immigrant; and often not only him, but also his American-born son or daughter if his or her name happens to sound "foreign." This sort of thing seems to be spreading. It is noticeable in the halls of Congress. It creeps into the speeches of professional patriots. It is being taken up by Americans who are not old-stock but of the more favored, earlier new-immigrant groups. 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Requiem to 1939 Our war-time hope is that a sortie Ends labor's fight In 1940.