

IN THE WORLD OF LABOR

By Paul G. Stevens

How Leon Blum Saved the Present Fascist Mayor of Barcelona

A certain Matteu was named mayor of Barcelona immediately upon Butcher Franco's entry into Barcelona at the beginning of the month. Senor Matteu is the head of the trust that has for years controlled the electrical industry, not only of Spain, but of Central France as well.

At the time of the heroic uprising of the Barcelona workers on July 19, 1936 against the Franco insurrection, Senor Matteu, among other reactionary capitalists and their lackies, was fast in the grip of the revolutionary workers committees.

What happened? How was Matteu released? Who is responsible for his escape and for his transformation from prisoner to jailer of the Barcelona workers?

An amazing revelation of the facts in the case is made in the February 3 number of the French journal *Jeune Garde*. An article signed Rous reveals the following facts:

Senor Matteu was linked to international and particularly French finance through Forquet, director of the famous Hispano-Suiza concern and a former French cabinet minister in the days of the Andre Tardieu premiership. Hispano-Suiza has been defended in French courts by none other than Leon Blum.

On July 30, 1936, the socialist and communist workers in the region of the Eastern Pyrenees learned with astonishment that Matteu had been released and thus saved from the course of revolutionary justice. At the Catalan border, where the news was tracked down finally, it became known that this arch-capitalist was released on demand of Leon Blum, then heading the first French People's Front government!

In fact, he had crossed the French-Catalan border that day in the company of the "Socialist" Monte, confidential secretary of Leon Blum, who came to call for him in his automobile!

Thus, while Blum and his French Socialist Party were participating in the face of the "Non-Intervention Committee" and denying aid to the hard-pressed Spanish workers under the pretext that it would involve Europe in a world war, he was actually giving aid to the forces that were out to crush them.

For Matteu, once released, continued to aid the Franco rebellion with his financial resources, being rewarded with the appointment as mayor of Barcelona upon the Fascists' occupation of the city.

These facts speak volumes about the inner corruption of the People's Front. They are a demonstration of the baseness of its proponents in the so-called socialist and communist parties.

Rumanian Fourth Internationalists Under the Blows of Reaction

The recent attacks upon the Fascist "Iron Guard," culminating in the murder of its leader, Codreanu, were followed up by the enrollment of some 70,000 Fascists in King Carol's Rumanian Guard. With the "Iron Guard" out of his way, the King-Dictator of Rumania has concentrated his fire on the left.

Among the latest victims of Carol's drive are comrades Stegan-Stefanov, Ion Donitrescu, Lucia Niculescu and Oscar Fraenkel, of the Rumanian Section of the Fourth International.

All honor to the Rumanian Bolshevik-Leninists who have fallen victims to the royal-fascist terror by their valiant struggle in the front ranks of Rumanian labor! Aid them by supporting the American Fund for Political Prisoners, which acts in the cause of such heroes as these.

French 4th Internationalists Join the P.S.O.P.

On January 28, the Socialist Workers and Peasants Party (P.S.O.P.) carried through a mass demonstration in the heart of the Paris boulevards, calling for the opening of the French-Spanish border (that was just before the fall of Barcelona) and for the right of asylum to the Spanish refugees. No less than 1,500 arrests were made in the course of the demonstration.

In light of the P.S.O.P.'s development, the minority of the French Fourth Internationalist party has recently joined the P.S.O.P., following the convention of their party. The statement of these Fourth Internationalists is printed in the official organ of the Socialist Workers and Peasants Party, prefaced by a note from the leadership greeting it. It declares that the leadership of the P.S.O.P. did not accept such a proposition. Pressure of time and the fact that important numbers of advanced workers who have broken with the People's Front have rallied to the P.S.O.P., the statement continues, have convinced the signers that they must at once join these forces in the closest daily activity in order to develop the resistance of the working class as a whole against the assaults of capitalism, war and Fascism.

"To be sure," the statement concludes, "it is known that we have not at all abandoned our ideas and that, particularly, we retain our complete loyalty to the Marxist transition program adopted by the Congress of the Fourth International in September 1938. We believe that this program would constitute an incomparable weapon in the struggle for the P.S.O.P. While we have given up our affiliation to the Fourth International we must, however, declare that we do not at all renounce the right reserved to us within the framework of P.S.O.P. discipline, to work for the unification of our party with the World Party of the Fourth International."

Mr. Arthur Horner in Footsteps of Ramsay MacDonald

Among those who are beating the drums for British war preparations is Mr. Arthur Horner, a Stalinist leader who after many years has reached eminence as President of the South Wales Miners Federation. While miners are engaged in a hard strike struggle to unionize the Cory Pits in South Wales, Mr. Horner is feted as a dinner guest by . . . Mr. Iestyn Williams, Secretary of the Coal Owners Association (South Wales Echo, January 23, 1939).

Another guest at the same dinner, the *Echo* informs us, was Sir David Morgan, intimate friend of the late Ramsay MacDonald.

Arthur Horner is well on the road of Ramsay MacDonald and only picking up speed. "Stalinism is Twentieth Century MacDonaldism."

LABOR! PICKET THE FASCIST GARDEN RALLY ON FEBRUARY 20!

Workers of New York! Rally to stop the Fascists! They are mobilizing at Madison Square Garden Monday night, February 20. Hitler's German-American Bund gangsters, Pelley's Silver Shirt scum and Coughlin's mob of labor-haters have hurled a brazen challenge at the workers of New York. Wrapping themselves in the cloak of patriotism and "Americanism," the Fas-

cists prepare to spew their anti-labor and anti-Jewish poison throughout New York City. These gangs have already gone too far. They must be stopped. What are you going to do to stop this murderous crew? We must not let this filthy, creeping slime get a foothold in New York. Gather in front of Madison Square Garden Monday by the thousands!

Be there at 6:00 P.M. sharp! Let the Fascists feel the anger and the might of the working class—Get out and picket! Don't wait for the concentration camps—Act now! On to Madison Square Garden Monday night! —Socialist Workers Party N. Y. District



A glimpse of the New York press on the eve of the Fascist mass meeting at Madison Square Garden, the headlines proclaiming the unprecedented police mobilization ordered after the Socialist Workers Party issued its call for the counter-demonstration. Lower left is the S.W.P.'s leaflet, reproduced by the New York Daily News Monday morning. Above is the same call as it appeared in the last issue of the Socialist Appeal.

POLICE BRUTALITY FAILS TO BREAK MIGHTY ANTI-NAZI DEMONSTRATION

(Continued from Page 1)

papers in New York City—the conservative *Morning Journal*, the "progressive" *Day*, and the social-democratic *Forward*—united in printing virtually the same news stories and editorials, using, in all cases, the same arguments and in many cases even the same words. Instead of a call to the Jewish workers to demonstrate against their sworn enemies, the fascists, they joined hands in a sniveling, cowardly appeal to their readers to do anything in the world Monday evening—go to the movies, stay at home, go to the mountains or the sea-shore—anything except go to the anti-Nazi demonstration. (See editorial elsewhere in this issue.)

Morris' Radio Appeal

Acting Mayor Newbold Morris issued a special last minute appeal to the population of New York City to stay away from our rally.

"Information has come to me," said this pompous professional democrat, "that some citizens, indignant at tonight's Bund meeting at Madison Square Garden, are planning to be present at or about the Garden entrance to express displeasure. In the interest of public order, I want to urge all citizens having no business at the meeting to remain away from the Garden and its immediate vicinity."

This statement, broadcast on the radio before the meeting and of course prominently featured later by the *Daily Worker*, was calculated to reduce the demonstration called by the S.W.P. to an insignificant handful of individuals who could be dispersed by the army of cops with a wave of the hand.

Yet, in spite of this imposing array of sabotaging talent from the ranks of the fireside "democrats," whose efforts were supplemented by the repeated emphasis given in the capitalist press to the fact that, as the *World-Telegram* put it, "neither the Socialist Party nor the Communist Party in this city had announced up to this morning (Monday) any intention to demonstrate or otherwise take cognizance of the meeting," and that "only" the Trotskyists would be there—

thousands of New York workers began converging upon Mad-

ison Square Garden even before 6 o'clock in the evening, that is, more than two hours before the Nazi meeting was scheduled to open! It goes without saying that they were not Trotskyists, these thousands who, by 8 o'clock, reached enormous proportions. But their presence around the Garden, in response to the appeal of a comparatively small organization, showed that the Socialist Workers Party had correctly gauged the sentiments of the best sections of the New York working class.

Rank and File Comes

Rank and file Stalinists, perplexed and irritated by the criminal sabotage of their officialdom, but nevertheless determined to demonstrate "unofficially" against the Nazis, whom they realize to be the menace they are, came to our rally by the thousands.

No less gratifying was the fact that one of the banners borne in the demonstration signified that the youth organization of the Thomasite Socialist Party had come to the anti-Nazi rally in spite of the shabby indifference of the party elders.

Equally inspiring was the contingent of Negro workers who came spontaneously to the tumultuous gathering, bearing their own posters and placards, including one signed by the Universal Negro Improvement Association.

Squadrons Move on Garden

By 6 P.M., the first organized squadron of members of the Socialist Workers Party and the Young People's Socialist League (4th International) left from a central assembly point for the Garden area. It was followed in swift succession by three other squadrons—each assigned to a specific concentration point.

Upon their arrival, they found what the *N. Y. Times* subsequently described as a wall of cops, in uniform, in plain clothes and mounted, "who made of Madison Square Garden an almost impenetrable fortress to anti-Nazis."

The Garden was blocked off by blocks around in all four directions. Traffic, both vehicular and pedestrian, was detoured in the most elaborate way.

Cops versus Workers

Nobody was allowed to penetrate the solid wall of cops who was not in possession of a ticket

to the Nazi meeting, purchased in advance.

The smallest gathering of workers, even of ordinary passersby, was instantaneously broken up by the cops in order to prevent a concentration.

But in spite of all their efforts, thousands of workers from all parts of Greater New York did begin to collect along the streets immediately outside the blocked-off quadrangle—primarily on 48th Street on the South and 51st Street on the North, pressing in both cases towards 8th Avenue, on which the main entrance to the Garden is located.

Thousands Cheer S.W.P.

The placards and posters of the Socialist Workers Party were uplifted amid the cheers of thousands. Almost simultaneously, on both streets, which by this time were choked to capacity by huge crowds reaching from Broadway to 8th Avenue, a spontaneous drive was launched to get through the police lines and into the immediate Garden area.

Action began on 48th Street. From the corner of 8th Avenue where a solid line of mounted cops was stationed, stirrup to stirrup, they made a furious attack on the assembled demonstrators. Moving in both directions, one group of cops trampled down a throng of patriotic war veterans and cut their big American flag to ribbons, while another group smashed brutally into the mass of workers.

Masses Reform Ranks

Although the Cossacks made repeated sallies into the workers' crowd, the mass formed and reformed, stoutly determined to hold their own until they gathered sufficient strength to exercise their right to assemble and to picket whether the cops granted it or not.

Meanwhile, 51st Street was jammed from Broadway to 8th Avenue with a crowd so densely packed together that it was virtually impassable. Just as close a line of Cossacks stood at the 8th Avenue end, backed by hundreds of police on foot. The forward surge of the workers bent that line over and over again, but did not succeed in breaking through.

Defense Guards Needed

It was evident, especially at

this point, that even a large gathering of workers cannot easily attain its objective unless these workers have been organized thoroughly in advance and trained to act in sharp coordination. It was evident, in other words, that for the complete success of such a demonstration a militant, organized Workers Defense Guard is indispensable.

The fury of the workers increased with every minute. They kept shouting angrily at the Cossacks, and boomed them for every vicious plunge into the crowd.

"Down with the Nazi terrorists!" they roared the cry of the Socialist Workers Party. "We demand the right to picket!" they shouted.

Surrounded by an unbreakable phalanx, one S.W.P. speaker after another, lifted on to the shoulders of huskies, made terse and militant speeches to the workers, who cheered so lustily that they could be heard, literally, for blocks away.

Max Shachtman, editor of the *Socialist Appeal*, was the first to speak. He pointed out that the La Guardia administration, elected to office by the vote of New York labor, was showing an amazing concern over the so-called "democratic right" of the Nazi assassins to hold a mobilization meeting which was an insult and a provocation to the working people of the city. The same administration, however, which gave such unprecedented police protection to the Fascist gang, was using the police to deprive the workers of their democratic rights, notably the right to assemble and to picket—rights supposedly guaranteed by the Constitution and by several decisions of the Federal and Supreme Courts.

He warned the workers of New York against being caught asleep in the struggle against Fascism, as was the case in so many countries of Europe. It can happen here, he cried, but it will be too late to stop it when the concentration camps are being filled. His appeal for the Workers Defense Guards as a protection against Fascist assaults, so strikingly underscored by the conduct of New York's "democratic" police, was enthusiastically hailed by the crowd.

Shachtman was followed by

other spokesmen of the Party. The speakers included James Burnham, Martin Abern, manager of the *New International*, Nathan Gould, National Secretary of the Y.P.S.L., B. J. Widick, the Party's labor secretary, Bill Morgan, leading militant in the unemployed movement, Richard Ettlinger, prominent among the progressive office workers, Paul G. Stevens, Irving Pankin, of the Y.P.S.L., and numerous others.

Parade Down Broadway

Suddenly, after having stood their ground for three hours, the workers veered around upon the signal of the demonstration's spokesman and marched down the street in a tremendous column for a parade down Broadway.

It is a long time since New York's most famous avenue has seen such a militant, vociferous, determined and large a working class parade. The police, concentrated around the Garden, were so scattered along Broadway that they did not even attempt to halt the parade.

Shouting their slogans as they marched along the almost equally crowded sidewalks, the paraders, led by the banner-bearers of the Socialist Workers Party, turned south from 51st Street and, after reaching 42nd Street with unbroken ranks numbering thousands, moved West to 8th Avenue again. At that point, the marchers turned North and proceeded in the direction of the Garden, which is located between 49th and 50th Streets.

Cops Attack

Just as the head of the march reached 47th Street, it ran smack into a newly-formed line of cops. Without a word of warning, they plunged into the parade, mounted cops in the lead, with rows of foot cops behind them. The horses were driven straight into the ranks of the marchers, first in the center of the street and then on the sidewalks. Shop windows were shattered to smithereens, and workers wounded by the jagged splinters. Others went down under the horses, as is so graphically revealed by the sensational photographs which were published in the press. Clubs were drawn and swung freely and viciously.

This was not in Czarist Moscow, in Hitler's Berlin or Mussolini's Rome. No! This took place in the domain of "democratic" New York, under the administration of "progressive" Mayor La Guardia, successful candidate of the American Labor Party in the last election!

Notwithstanding the assault, the lines of the march were still re-formed. The parade turned down 47th Street and proceeded once more to Broadway. There a fresh attempt was made to organize a meeting at the Duffy monument. But another police concentration was on hand and a violent struggle ensued.

The workers refused to be shoved around. They had seen many of their comrades seriously injured and beaten. When the police sought to disperse the marchers, they encountered the stiffest resistance.

March Terminates

Finally, after breaking through the police line, the crowd drove through to 49th Street, where the march was terminated by an announcement from an S.W.P. speaker whom the police, helplessly trying to break through the firm block of workers, sought in vain to reach so that he could be torn down from the taxicab he had mounted in order to address the marchers.

As the militants disbanded, along about midnight, the Tuesday edition of the *Daily Worker* appeared on the street. Unbelievable as it sounds, while the Stalinist sheet had a report of what went on inside the Garden at the Nazi meeting.

It did not even mention the fact that there had been tens of thousands of workers gathered near the Garden in a stormy, anti-Nazi protest meeting! From its report, one would conclude that the Nazis held their mobilization undisturbed by the presence of a single worker. The encouragingly huge protest demonstration, the police brutality, prominently featured by every capitalist newspaper, was deliberately and completely suppressed by the Stalinist paper!

Stalinists Sabotaged

But that incredibly stupid device will not save Browder and Co. from giving an accounting to their members as well as the workers in general. Everybody in and around New York knows about the demonstration, who initiated, sponsored and led it. Everybody knows that the Stalinists sabotaged it from frat to last. And thousands, including rank and file Stalinists, of the Party and the Young Communist League, are so disturbed by this policy, so ashamed of it, that they will demand an answer to the question that is being asked on all sides.

Meanwhile, the answer to the bigger question—How fight Fascism?—was given in thunderous tones by the magnificent demonstration which reached its highest note on the cry: Workers Defense Guards to crush the Fascist danger!

On the Line . . . with Bill Morgan

In the waiting room of the agency you just sit and wait. There are about fifty others ahead of you and fifty behind. The room is small and the air stinks. One dirty window tries to allow both air and light to enter but without success. At the other end of this room, behind a small railing, a little fat guy with fishy eyes and a stubby cigar keeps watching the crowd and smiling to himself.

After a while he stands up and calls out several names. A half a dozen thin young kids step forward eagerly and say, "Yes, sir!" They are sent out on a job. You are called in the next batch.

Take It or Leave It!

"This ain't no permanent job, see? It's only for a few months. Ya want it?" "What are the wages? How long do we work?" "Ya get paid by the hour and the hours are short."

There is no choice. Take it or leave it. Anyway, try it out. Besides the agency has your three bucks. . . . And, after all, a bus boy gets his meals—that's something to consider.

Take the B.M.T. local to City Hall station (a nickel is exactly one fourth of your total amount today . . .) and then walk south to Fulton Street. It is cold and you hurry in the hope that employees eat before starting work.

The cashier sends for the manager. He looks you over and asks for the agency's card. Then down to the kitchen. An apron, a swab for wiping off tables and a heavy metal tray—these are the tools of your new trade.

"Wait here until I send for you."

All the new bus-boys sit down and look at one another. The kitchen is hot and the dishwashers are wrapped in clouds of steam. Everything seems greasy. It is 11:15 a.m. And you are hungry.

Hurry! Hurry!—The Boss Is Watching

At twelve the manager appears and shouts, "Upstairs, all of you, and step, lively." Up you go and he assigns each boy a section of tables to keep clean.

The ability to load the tray with speed, and at the same time with as many dishes as possible is the trick to holding this job. And, since each employee pays for all the dishes he breaks—well, you have to be careful. And another little thing—don't spill food on the customers.

For two long weary hours you rush from tables to kitchen. Snatch up the plates and glasses—almost before the food is eaten—and load up the tray and then rush to the kitchen. The dishwashers snatch the trays and empty them with a smooth, swift motion. Out to the tables again. Hurry. Hurry. The boss is watching each trip—each load.

One fellow almost trips with a complete load. We catch our breath. The counter-girls smile when he returns and they say, "Watch yourself, Mister. Don't scare us like that."

At two-thirty things slow up and the employees eat in two shifts. Thirty cents worth each. The counter-girls are friendly and the portions of food a little larger than usual.

Everyone talks in whispers. The boss walks around in rubber-soled shoes. We eat in silence.

"The Union?" says one, "This boss won't allow us to join a union."

"But he has nothing to say about it. You just join and after everyone is a member, the union calls him on the phone for an appointment. He has to talk with the union when everyone joins."

"We had a union once and it was no good. They only collected dues. We didn't get a thing."

"We have nothing now, have we? This is up to us. We join and then we elect our committee to talk to the boss. What can we lose? Jobs like this are always open."

"He'll get others to take our places. Besides the counter-girls won't stick together. And the dishwashers—they don't like the counter-girls and the bus-boys."

"Will you join if I do? O.K.? Then you speak to your friends and I'll speak to mine. Let's see what happens in a week. And don't mention a word to the cashier—she's stuck on the boss."

Things Begin to Happen

Yanno, a dishwasher, was six feet tall and had hands the size of dinner plates. He didn't talk much. He just looked and said, "Union? Sure I join."

Helen, a counter-girl, was scared and refused at first, but when Joe, a cook, joined the union, she decided to sign up just to be with the rest of the bunch.

In two weeks all but three workers had cards in their pockets. The boss knew something was going on and he tried to pump something out of the counter-girls by hinting that business was bad and that he might have to lay off a couple of people.

Then everything happened at once. A tray crashed to the tile floor and a bus-girl fainted. The boss ran out on the floor and said, "Get downstairs. Turn in your apron. You're fired!" He followed her down into the basement and kept shouting. She started to cry. He slapped her across the face. Then Yanno, the dishwasher stepped up and let him have it. Right on the button. The strike was on.

And it was twelve, noon, just when the place was crowded.

It's a Union Shop Now

The police arrived to find a picket line marching up and down and a cafeteria full of bewildered customers. People were walking out without paying their checks. Others were yelling for service. The cashier was crying. The boss was trying to call the agency on a telephone that no longer worked. . . . It was a wonderful sight.

At the trial, when Yanno testified how the boss slapped the bus girl, all the strikers cheered, and the judge cleared the courtroom.

The boss finally had to settle. The picket line and the business agent were on the line every morning and there was hell to pay when scabs tried to get past the line. Now it's a union cafeteria. Yanno is the shop chairman.