

means, "Those Moors want to pass. Those Moors want to pass, baby, but nobody's passing, baby, nobody's passing." They sing it clapping their hands in Andalusian fashion when they get off those dizzying *flamencos* that sound a thousand years old. Would it sound melodramatic to say a hundred thousand persons have determined to hold out until victory or death? When a Madrilenos says it to you in Madrid, you believe him. It is a matter of fact here, and he doesn't have to tell you about those eighteen months of resistance. As the Madrilenos speaks, he acts.

And nearly everyone you talk to says it if you get on the subject. "We'll hold out until victory—or death. Put that in your paper." The anarchist chambermaid, Natividad, in the Hotel Victoria, said it to me. Mayor Rafael Henche said it to me a little later the same day. The mayor described the city's difficulties: only half a pint of milk daily to Madrid's 63,000 children under the age of five. That seemed to worry him more than anything else—that and the traffic problem. He talked about semaphores and one-way streets while machine guns could be heard hammering away at University City, less than a mile from His Honor's offices.

In the face of ever-present danger the trivialities of ordinary life strike you as peculiarly heroic. The fact that twenty theaters and forty-six movies stay open and have been open every day since the Moors crossed the Manzanares; the fact that schools haven't shut down a single day, and that girls skip rope in shell-pocked streets. *Con pan o sin pan*—with bread or without bread—they resist. That is Negrín's adjuration to the people. The Madrilenos adopted that slogan in his daily life long before it was issued. There is really little bread and not enough meat, no potatoes, no coffee, no sugar, no milk for adults. But there is plenty of *bacalao*, the dried, nourishing fish most visitors can't down. There are considerable lentils-and-beans and beans-and-lentils from the neighboring Guadalajara and Ciudad Real provinces. There is a minimum of food that provides a sufficiency of calories to keep the Castilian alert and even spry. He has never lost that pride in personal appearance, so typically Spanish. You can't get your shoes shined without waiting half an hour in line. Bookshops are crowded all day from the moment the doors open, and you can get any classic you wish in Spanish, including Mike Gold's *Judios Sin Dinero*. That's right, *Jews Without Money*. And it sells very well, comrade, a salesgirl told me. I have described the trenches about Madrid in recent *Daily Worker* stories. It is sufficient for this article merely to say that the fortifications have kept pace with the needs of the times. As the Germans moved heavier artillery in on Mt. Garabitas and various fronts here, Spaniards dug deeper trenches, perfecting them with steel, etc., and dug *refugios* at necessary points. True it is that the Madrilenos will hold out till victory—or until the last man is killed.

But Madrid is not all of loyalist Spain,

someone may say. True, but it is not so far in the van. Alicante, Valencia, Castellon, where every man has built *refugios* for his family in the earth, have learned from Madrid, and there is a Popular Front, a political instrument of great force and suppleness to foster this heroism elsewhere. For the defense of Madrid is no miracle. It isn't merely a biochemical reaction peculiar to the Castilian. It derives from a complex of factors that amount to political awareness. It is a product of the violent hatred of oppression that the Castilian commoner was subjected to for centuries. Remember that the Madrilenos worker in the main was Marxian for the last half century. This was a stronghold of Socialism in Spain since Marx's day. It was the cradle of Spanish patriotism, too. Goya drew some of his most powerful works in Madrid, depicting the resistance to Napoleon's grenadiers in 1808. The social revolution in 1931 and its fruits, particularly since the February 1936 elections, affected the Madrilenos deeply. Now combine this republicanism, this syndicalism, and class consciousness—in other words, these attributes of the proletarian and middle classes—and you have the basis for the People's Front in these specific times. Get a government that represents this combination of economic, social, and psychological factors, and you get a people that will fight to the last to defend that government. And I am sure the Madrilenos will not feel I am detracting from Castilian heroism by claiming the above as the basis for his sterling defense. There are no miracles in politics. If it could be done in Madrid it can be done in Valencia and Castellon and Barcelona. That is the task of the Popular Front and its component parties.

One other factor, last but far from least: the peasantry, the great preponderance of Spain. It requires a special article, which I shall do; but for the purpose of this short piece I can say this: the farmer feels he gained immeasurably by democracy. He wanted land; he got it. He can till it as he wishes, either collectively or individually. He has known this since the decree of Oct. 7, 1936, when the lands of the rebel landowners were turned over to him and the *caciques* were kicked out. He was doubly assured of it in the reiteration of the government's principles on May Day eve. Point eight of Negrín's thirteen points confirms it. And the peasant is ready for a fight to the last ditch for his land. There are villages I have been in where every youth in town has enlisted, and only men over forty and women work in the fields. And their families see them off to the railroad station. They realize it is the only way out. Yes, this trip to Central Spain has confirmed all I felt in Barcelona. Unless the Spanish people are literally annihilated by overwhelming materials, they cannot lose.

No, this war for liberty cannot be lost in Spain; but it can be lost in London, in Paris, in Washington. That is the big danger and there is no use blinking it.

IN THE SUDETEN REGIONS

Prague, May 26.

THERE was much rejoicing in Prague for a few days after the fateful weekend of May 21-24, especially because the first elections were very favorable to the left. The two parties which showed the greatest gains were the Communists and the National Socialists (the latter is the party of President Benes and is the most progressive of the republican parties). The Czech fascist parties were routed and Henlein succeeded only in holding what he had. But now it is realized that the relief may be temporary because of the recovery of the SDP (Henlein's party) and the diplomatic maneuvers of 10 Downing Street.

On Wednesday, May 25, I visited the Sudeten regions with Gabriel Péri of *L'Humanité* to see whether Henlein had recovered any lost ground. That was the day of the demonstration and funeral of the two Nazis shot while crossing the frontier. Eger, the "capital" of the Henlein movement, was our destination.

Between Monday morning and this Wednesday demonstration, the SDP exerted itself to the utmost to regain control. The demonstration and speeches were planned and carried out for just this purpose. All the talks were extravagantly ferocious. The crowd was lifted to a pitch of frenzied hatred, chauvinism, and war-fever. Again they were promised that Hitler would soon come marching in and then all problems would be solved. The two dead Nazis were converted into martyrs because they had given their lives for Hitler. "Germany will live even if we are shot," went a typical phrase from the mouth of Henlein. Little children, four, five, no more than eight years of age, marched out of the great town square in those grim, gray uniforms, doing the goose-step as best they could. Storm Troops practically took over the entire administration of the city. Again the "Sieg Heil!" and the "Heil Hitler!" from three out of every four persons in the street. The Nazi salute was now flaunted. Not a single store was open, because Henlein had ordered it so.

A half block away from the Markt-Platz, scene of the demonstration, is the Communist headquarters in Eger. The town has about forty Communists. Despite the terror, the headquarters remains open, and there are still pictures of Thaelmann and Stalin on the wall. These men are incredibly brave. They show absolutely no fear though they live in the shadow of momentary physical assault, and all have been attacked many times. They sleep in the party headquarters, ready for any emergency. As we spoke with them, Nazi Storm Troops passed by in large numbers and there was danger that the building would be attacked. One Communist seized an iron rod and stood near the inner door, near us. Others went into the outer room, guarding the door to the street. These men are the comrades of Dimitrov. How proud one is to call them comrades and to shake their hands!—THEODORE DRAPER.



THE PEASANTS

Lithograph by Mitchell Siporin