

COLOUR: Germany



THE SUNDAY TIMES

No. 7425

SEPTEMBER 5 1965

PRICE 8d.

TIO PEPE THE SHERRY OF SPAIN

PM urges ginger groups to boost factory output

By James Margach, Political Correspondent

The Government is launching a new attack on restrictive practices on both sides of industry by proposing the appointment of factory production committees at local level and within individual firms. These committees, the Prime Minister announced yesterday in a speech at Bristol, will seek to get rid of all practices which hinder increased production, such as overmanning, restrictive work rules, inefficient layout, out-dated equipment, and poor handling of materials.

There should, he claimed, be a healthy and free exchange between the two sides of these committees, leading to broader problems like exports, with firms getting the co-operation of workers and workers prodigal managements. This would be industrial democracy in practice. The reforms will not require legislation, but will be left to the initiative of firms, reinforced by Government encouragement, backing and stimulation.

Mr Wilson's speech at Bristol marked the opening of a nationwide campaign which will be developed between now and November as part of his plan to restore confidence in his Government. The Prime Minister clearly intends to press on despite his Government's dangerously narrow majority until he feels in a winning position. In fact, he went so far as to add to his prepared speech an aphoristic statement that "the Government is determined to carry on with the job the country gave us to do. Perhaps they did not realise how difficult they made it because of the majority they gave us, but I don't think they want us to run away from it at job."

Claiming that the £800 million balance of payments deficit, which he inherited from the Conservatives, will be cut this year below £300 million, he said the



TUC

Honeymoon over 9
Incomes crisis week 9

Challenor 33

University places latest 6

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China enters for Pak

By Our Special Correspondent

KARACHI, Saturday — MARSHAL Chen Yi, the Communist Chinese Foreign Minister, made a surprise stop at Karachi today while the biggest air engagement in the Kashmir war was being staged over the battle lines.

He had been due to make a brief call here on the way to Mali, but yesterday he sent word that he would like to stay in Karachi for a day.

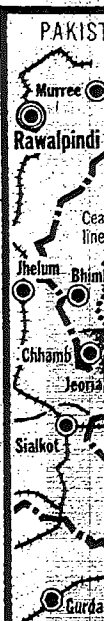
The visit came as, in a broadcast from Peking, the New China news agency blamed India for the present fighting in Kashmir and accused the Indian Government of falsely implicating Communist China in the conflict.

The Pakistan Foreign Minister, Mr Z. A. Bhutto, flew from Rawalpindi to Karachi to meet Marshal Chen Yi, and the pair went into a closed session for six hours. Later Marshal Chen said China supported the "just action taken by Pakistan to repel Indian armed provocation."

In Rawalpindi it was stated that in the biggest air battle yet in the Kashmir war 40 Indian aircraft flew into Pakistan territory in the Chhamb area, and were driven off.

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/by Vincent


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*O was an Oyster
who lived by the sea
a quiet and peaceful
old creature was he.*

O!

O you old oyster!

From "A B C. penned and illustrated by Edward Lear" (Constable Young Books 12s 6d); the handwritten facsimile of a delicious alphabet that has only recently come to light. The verses are also printed at the end.

The sad truth about Southey

NEW LETTERS OF ROBERT SOUTHEY/edited by Kenneth Curry
Columbia University Press/Two volumes 14s
By John Raymond

THE pathos and dignity of Southey's life demands a Gissing—the Gissing of "New Grub Street"—as its proper biographer. Poet Laureate (through the grace and favour of Scott, who stood down for him), ex-pantisocrat and reactionary, he is the most indefatigable man of letters in the history of English literature. A model husband and father, firmest in friendship, strongest in principle, he was a man born to be misunderstood. Like Lady Bracknell, he never recovered from the worst excesses of that unfortunate movement, the French Revolution.

With more than two thousand of his letters available, one would have thought that Southey was documented up to the hilt. Mr Curry, Professor of English at Tennessee University, has salvaged and meticulously edited another 500 of

from Westminster for the most honourable reasons, went up to Balliol, to 1838, nine months before he married his second wife, an elderly poetess with whom he had maintained a close correspondence for the previous twenty years. ("He returned," the D.N.B. tells us, "from his wedding tour in a condition of utter mental exhaustion, which gradually passed into one of insensibility to external things. The last year of his life was a mere trance.") Open these two volumes at almost any page, the tale is the same:

Poor Edith is very unwell—her spirits are deadlily depressed—indeed she seems almost heart-broken. However, like George the Second I shall be compelled to work—to drudge at Reviewing and to manufacture rhymes for the "Morning Post." God knows with how little heart, for the thoughts, which are uppermost shall have no vent. . . . (1803.)

It was impossible for me to

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EDUCATIONAL
also appear on page 46

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Spain, '36-'39: the great crusade

THE INTERNATIONAL BRIGADES: SPAIN 1936-39 by Vincent Brome/Heinemann 45s

By Stephen Spender

IF EVER there were a secular chapel devoted to the International Brigades, it would be hung with flags bearing the names of battles as heroic as any in history—Madrid, Jarama, Aragon, Teruel, Ebro. Its walls would be gilded with the names of Cornford, Beimler, Lukacz, and many others. The great virtue of Vincent Brome's book is his awareness that the truth of the Brigades was realised in these men and in fighting: not in the bungling, the Babel-like quarrels between leaders of different nationalities, the party intrigues; nor in the prisons and the sometimes brutal attempts to assert discipline, which went on behind the scenes.

At the end, the disillusionment of many volunteers was largely by-effects of the dissolution of the Brigades, in the last stages of the war, by the Republican Government. The real achievement and the real existence of the Brigades was a matter of months of terrible fighting and endurance in 1936 and 1937.

Very many movements are vulgarly called crusades, but the great assemblage of men believing in a cause, which made up the Brigades, really had many of the features of the early Crusades: the burning faith of an exceptionally large proportion of explicit believers, with a following of mistaken idealists and some adventurers and scoundrels.

At the same time a good many problems remain unresolved by Mr Brome, who does little except report or quote from readily available material. Apart from the initiative of a few Russian-directed Communist plotters, which would have been quite inadequate to achieve such a result, in what circumstances did the persons who provided the morale of the Brigades come to do so? What was the role of the Communist Party? Were the International Brigades really an army supporting the ideas of the Spanish liberals and socialists, or were they simply a Communist front? What was the past history of General Kleber? What was the real nature of the activities of André Marty? What went on in the "re-education camps" of the Brigades?

Most of these questions Mr Brome only answers very sketchily, and some of them not at all, or inconsistently. In his chapter on the origin of the Brigades, he makes them seem very much a Communist organisation, but later on he stresses the anarchist individualism of groups. Probably he is right

made diverse by Communists who were far more at home in Madrid than they would have been in Moscow.

Mr Brome has vivid accounts of fighting, but no maps of Madrid, the University City, Guadalajara, etc., without which it is difficult to form a clear picture of the battles. He quotes sources indiscriminately, without seeming to appraise the reliability of witnesses. A chapter entitled "Nephew of Sir Winston Churchill" is devoted to Esmond Romilly; one derives from it little idea of Esmond's tough, domineering, ruthless character (he is referred to as a "playboy") and it is surely misleading to exploit the relationship with Sir Winston, which was not one of consanguinity. Esmond's brother, Giles Romilly, who had a much greater experience of the Brigades than Esmond, is not mentioned.

Mr Brome does not explain why he refers to Ralph Bates, then an Englishman, as an American commissar. On page sixteen, we are told that Tito recruited volunteers from his office in Paris, on page 302 an interview of a few years back, by Paul Estob with someone in Madrigreras, is reported in which the interviewee says "he remembered seeing Tito among the recruits although Tito never penetrated to Madrigreras." Of course he may really have seen Tito, or he may merely have seen his ghost, but this is characteristic of a good many loose ends which Mr Brome does not tie up.

One cannot confidently recommend Mr Brome for decisiveness, objectivity, exactitude. But his book is always readable, and often deeply moving. Although a bit blurred, on the whole it seems just in spirit, paying homage to what was magnificent in the Brigades, but not concealing the blots, the dissensions, the evil. Mr Brome conveys an atmosphere rather than passes judgment. In fact, most of his characterisations are written in a spirit of suspended judgment. He reports a terrible remark by Harry Pollitt to Tom Wintringham's wife about her husband: "Tell him to get out of Barcelona, go up to the front line, get himself killed, and give us a headline." Then he adds in a footnote that the political commissar Will Paynter thinks it unlikely that Pollitt would have said this. Mr Brome offers no opinion. In the same spirit he prints an even more horrible story to the effect that the bravest (non-Communist) officer in the British Brigade, the legendary Captain Nathan, was an unprovoked murderer—one

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NEW LETTERS
Columbia Un

By John

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Spain, '36-'39: no art out of war

A POET'S WAR: British Poets of the Spanish Civil War
by Hugh D Ford/Oxford, for the University of Philadelphia 48s
By Henry Reed

ONE of the major traditions in the English departments of American universities is the ritual production, by advanced students, of a PhD thesis. It is a further tradition, only rarely broken with, that the basic subject of the thesis shall be of microscopic dimensions and even smaller importance; the test for the student appears to be how far he can make it stretch, either by irrelevant digression, or by simple repetition. All being well, his thesis is accepted, the PhD achieved.

By this time the ex-student has become an obsessional; after a little pause he returns to his subject, and decides that a few extra chapters might not come amiss. He adds not only these, but also a forty-page bibliography consisting largely of books unreferred to in the text, and a three-page preface giving separate thanks to pretty well everyone he has met since the age of five, ending with his wife, whom he refers to in expressions of tender gratitude which must sometimes come as rather a surprise to her. The result is a book.

Mr Ford gives us a book. Of the two stretching-methods I have referred to, Mr Ford prefers simple repetition. The basic materials he selects are, after all, extremely scanty: two dozen or more inoffensive poems about the Spanish Civil War, few of them with any particular merit, and many by names that have never been seen outside the journals of the time. These writers are of course fairly distinct from each other: all they have in common, apart from their allegiance to the Republicans, is an incapacity for memorable speech. Most of their authors would probably not even bother to own the poems by now. Yet Mr Ford contrives to blur any distinctness that may be discovered in them, by ruthlessly submitting to each and every one of them the same examination paper.

He conducts this as a *trava*

he prints an even more horrible story to the effect that the bravest (non-Communist) officer in the British Brigade, the legendary Captain Nathan, was an unconvicted murderer—one of the Dublin Castle Murder Gang. Part of the value of Mr Bromé's book is that it raises important questions about acts and about the persons responsible for them. A more authoritative historian will one day have to attempt to answer these.

voice with no replies allowed except his own: Is such-and-such a poet sacrificing personal sincerity to politics? Is he writing propoganda? Doesn't the reference to so-and-so in stanza two introduce too personal a note if complete identification with Communism is the aim? I can't believe that anyone can possibly care about this. There are roughly 150 pages of it, and the unfortunate poems are up to the neck in it.

From the later stages of this morass, which grows denser with repetition, there rise up with an unexpected look of genuine durability about a dozen poems by names well known before the war in Spain. These include Auden's "Spain," which its author has recently described in print as "trash," half a dozen well-controlled poems by Spender, a few pages of deceptively casual vividness by MacNeice, three or four lyrics by Herbert Read, and Day Lewis's narrative poem "The Nabara."

These poems, and possibly a few others, have survived the epoch in which they were written, and this, I gather, Mr Ford, after much cautious mumbling and bumbling, concedes. Some of them—Spender's subdued elegies, for example—seem in some odd way better than they did when they first appeared. There seems no point in re-inserting any of these distinguished works into their historical context; just as, in reverse, there seems no longer any point in isolating the Spanish War from the years of ever-spreading Fascism that led to it, and the world war which Franco's success perhaps made inevitable. To those who followed its fortunes, the Spanish War had a particularly sharp and saddening taste, which we may on occasion suddenly recall: a true imaginative and creative gesture might still be made from memory of it. But on the subject of the gestures made at the time, half a dozen succinct pages should by now be enough.

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