

TIMEX TO TUZLA

Prepare second international workers' convoy!

OPEN NORTHERN ROUTE TO TUZLA

TO BREAK the blockade of Tuzla is now literally a matter of life and death. Winter is rapidly approaching. Thousands of workers and their families in the Tuzla region face starvation.

As the fighting intensifies, the isolation of Tuzla, the working-class capital of Bosnia becomes ever more acute.

How is this isolation to be ended?

To answer this question is the burning task facing those attending the Workers Aid convoy's report back meeting that is being held in Manchester this weekend.

The United Nations is deliberately preventing all but a trickle of aid reaching this region — it forced the Workers Aid convoy to stop on 17 October.

The UN wants to starve the Bosnian working class into submission, to force them to agree to the Vance-Owen plan for the destruction of their country.

They must not succeed! They will not succeed!

Puppet

From the start the UN set out to destroy the Workers Aid convoy. Why? Because this was a convoy unlike all others. It was taking aid to Tuzla as part of the fight to bring the working class of all Europe into solidarity with the Tuzla workers.

This is what the ruling

BY THE EDITOR

classes of the 'great powers' and their instrument, the United Nations, fear more than anything.

The workers of Europe must say: these plans will not succeed.

As Mr Hurtica, a representative of the Bosnia-Herzegovina embassy in Zagreb, Croatia, told members of the convoy: 'The most humanitarian thing to do is to campaign to open the northern route.'

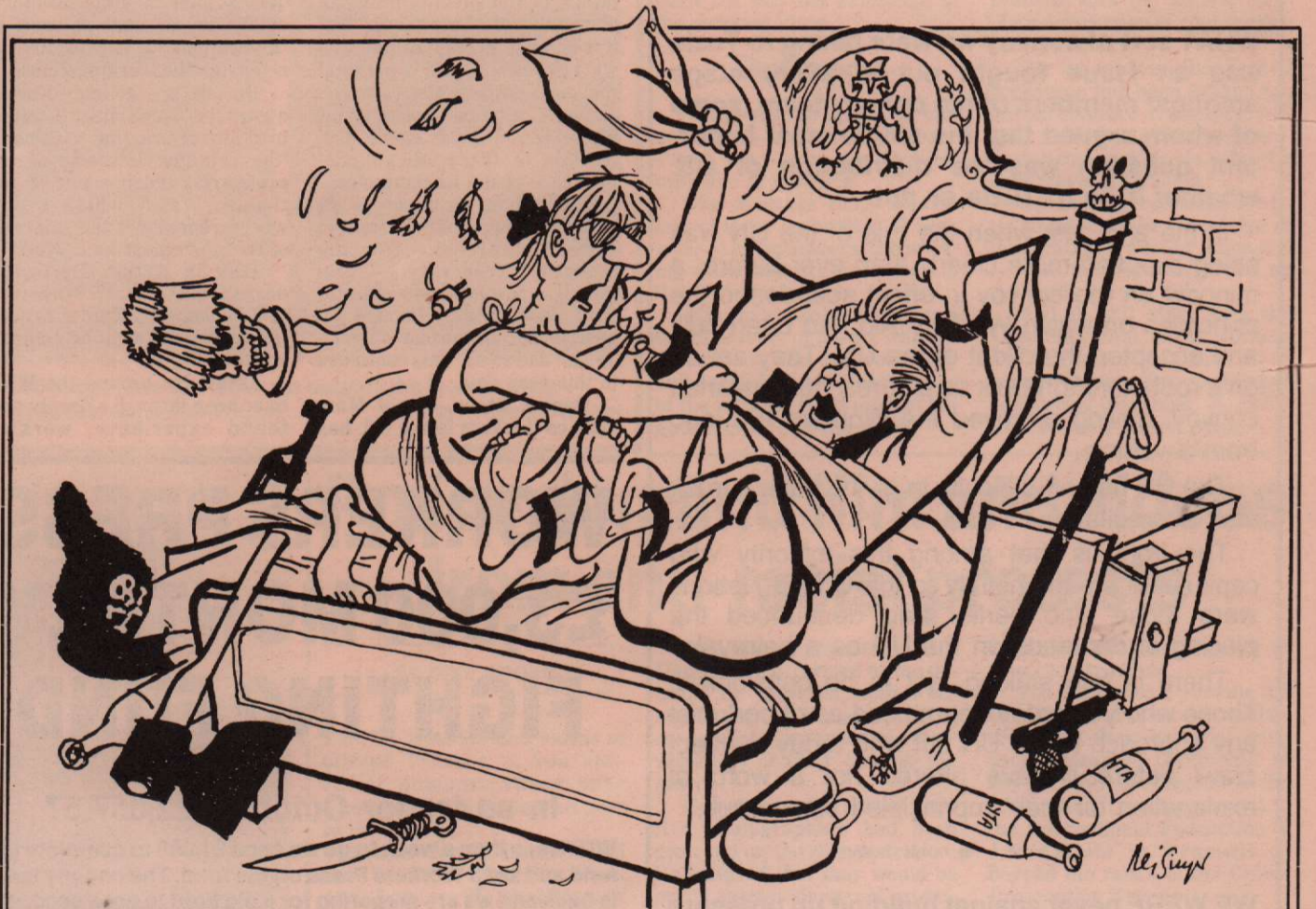
This route is the road from Orasje to Tuzla. It is less than 70km long. There is one section where any convoy could be attacked by Serb troops.

Supreme

This is the shortest and most obvious route. Opening it is the key to ending the siege of Tuzla.

A mighty campaign must be launched throughout the international working class to force open this route. Every single organisation and person that stands for the independence and integrity of Bosnia must join in this fight.

Every one of the many working-class bodies that supported the Workers Aid



BEOGRADSKJE BRAČNE RAZMIRICE
... zar ja manji velikosrbin od tebe? Majku li ti fašističku!...

OTO REISINGER

'Belgrade marriage quarrels' between Serbia's President Milosevic and Radical Party leader Seselj... 'You say I'm less a Greater Serb than you are? You fascist bastard!' From the Croatian paper 'Vjesnik'.

convoy must be asked to sponsor trucks for this next convoy.

Hundreds of trucks loaded with aid must descend on Bosnia from all parts of Europe, both east and west.

Organise such a convoy;

Open the road to Tuzla.

This is the decisive task facing the Manchester meeting.

Lift the blockade!

Open the Orasje-Tuzla route!

Forward to a mighty international convoy!

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CONVOY HOTLINE: 071-582 5462

Tuzla convoy and the UN

DURING the course of the Workers Aid convoy to Bosnia — which set off on 9 August from the Timex factory in Dundee, aiming for Tuzla — many political lessons were learned and some important principles clarified.

Not least of the lessons was that about the role of the United Nations. The convoy established beyond doubt that the UN is the main instrument for the ethnic division of Bosnia and the principal tool of imperialism in the Balkans.

The UN deliberately conspired to make sure that the convoy was unable to proceed along the northern route, and so it was stopped from reaching the mining town of Tuzla.

The UN did so because it knew that once this route was opened, aid could flow into this working-class stronghold of Bosnia.

More than this. The UN realised that had this route been opened a fighting relationship would have been re-established between the miners and other workers of Tuzla and the workers from the rest of Europe.

It is the re-establishment of this internationalism of the working class — almost destroyed through long years of Stalinist dominance over the working class — that the ruling class fears above all else.

It was this aim — to begin to rebuild working-class internationalism — that distinguished the Workers Aid convoy from the many others operating on simply a humanitarian basis.

* * * * *

WHAT sort of convoy we were taking to Tuzla was an issue fought out at every stage amongst members of the convoy team, some of whom argued that the single most important question was the distribution of aid, whether it be in Tuzla or not.

In the end, just when the role of the UN was being exposed more clearly than ever before, a minority on the convoy in effect abandoned the principles on which Workers Aid had been built and accepted the diktat of the UN. They set off on a route through Split as a purely humanitarian convoy, having removed the Workers Aid logo from a vehicle.

The UN had no difficulty in giving such a truck their accreditation.

The irony is that among this minority who capitulated so shamefully to the United Nations were those who earlier had denounced the placing of demands on the UN as a betrayal.

There is one striking fact to be considered. Those who yesterday denounced as opportunist any approach to the UN but who today in effect crawl before it have offered not a word of explanation for their unprincipled somersault.

* * * * *

WE WERE never against building up pressure on the UN. But any demands placed on the UN were made on the strict understanding that the convoy would never hide its aims and purposes from the working class, without whose assistance it could not have lasted a day on the road.

We demanded UN assistance as part of creating a force in the working class that would be able to take advantage of any divisions amongst the enemies of the convoy. At the same time we sought to help workers overcome any illusions they might still have in the nature of this so-called 'peace-keeping' force.

We have not abandoned our aim of getting to Tuzla. We fully support the launching of an all-European convoy that will be so powerful that its enemies will not be able to arrest its progress to Tuzla. But it will be a convoy flying the flag of Workers Aid for Bosnia.

Letters

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WE WELCOME LETTERS
SEND THEM TO: WORKERS PRESS,
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Not just 'cloudy' thinking

IN HIS interview recalling the 1953 split in the Fourth International, Bill Hunter says that 'the source of revisionism lay in a lack of confidence in the building of parties with Trotskyist principles' (Workers Press, 23 October).

Hunter goes on to say that 'Pabloism was a capitulation before the Stalinist and reformist bureaucratic apparatuses, and at its centre was a repudiation of the axis of the transitional programme — the existence of a crisis of revolutionary leadership in the working-class movement'.

And further that 'Pablo's revisionism developed from the pressures on the revolutionary leadership in the face of the necessity of breaking into the working class to establish an alternative to the seemingly enormous power held by the Stalinist bureaucracy'.

These formulations do not grasp the essence of revisionism in the Fourth International — either in 1953 or now. Pabloism was and is the instrument of Stalinism in the Fourth International.

This is why it seems wrong when further on in the interview Hunter mentions 'the cloudy thinking of some members of the international led by Mandel, who generally do not take theoretical questions seriously'.

Here he is talking about the failure of Pabloism to make an accounting of its prognoses. But it is not just 'cloudy' thinking — we are dealing with a political movement whose source is the struggle against Bolshevism, whose *raison d'être* is the destruction of the political independence of the working class.

Throughout its history Pabloism has sought out alternative agencies of revolution, from the Stalinist bureaucracy — 'projecting a revolutionary orientation', 'adequate or blunted instruments', 'unconscious Trotskyists' and so on. This continues to this very day.

Paul le Blanc, one of Mandel's co-thinkers in the US, has

recently written a book entitled 'Lenin and the Revolutionary Party' in which he places an equals sign between the Bolshevik party and the Sandinistas, 'some would-be Leninists — admiring the accomplishments of the Bolsheviks, the Sandinistas, or others — have failed to translate the successful models into the political-cultural realities of their own specific national situation'. To each their own, so to speak.

Mandel's United Secretariat of the Fourth International has always sought to dismiss the 1953 split as meaningless, an unfortunate falling out over secondary questions which was resolved ten years later.

After the expulsion of Healy in 1985 we were forced through a series of bitter internal struggles to re-examine and deepen our understanding of Pabloism and Stalinism.

That political capital enabled us to take a step forward in the founding of the Workers International to Rebuild the Fourth International. The early political fruit we can now see in the Workers Aid for Bosnia campaign.

Andrew Burgin
London N7

A bad taste in the mouth

DAVID DORFMANN's dishonest letter (16 October) leaves a bad taste in the mouth. He quotes part of Bala Kumar's article in the current issue of 'Liberation!' to suggest that it relegates the working class.

But in his article, Kumar quotes the 'Communist Manifesto's' aim of bringing to the fore 'the common interests of the proletariat independent of nationality [and] which everywhere represents the interests of the movement as a whole'.

Why is it that Dorfmann doesn't quote that? Why is it that he suggests Kumar argued the opposite of what he actually wrote?

Comrades around the WRP have been through a deeply profound experience, working

alongside supporters of the Fourth International's United Secretariat in building the Workers Aid for Bosnia convoy and meeting the very practical political challenges this experience poses.

If comrades are going to spiral off on this kind of made-up polemic, rather than engage in the real world, with its real problems, they will make a mistake.

'Liberation!' is a modest project. It's a little newspaper not a complete programme and it's silly to pick up on what we are not able to say in our first issue.

Dorfmann's only criticism of what we actually do say is that it's 'middle class' to look at how sexuality is socially constructed. What nonsense! We need to engage with the whole experience of young people today.

So socialists face the essential task of engaging not only with the trade union struggles Dorfmann may be very comfortable discussing, but also with the *battle of ideas* the right wing is conducting against young people.

Duncan Chapple
London N4

From poacher to gamekeeper?

THE point made by Trotsky, that the true role of the reformist leaders was to police the working class, seems to have been taken literally by a Labour councillor in Leicester.

Councillor Baljit Singh, chair of the police committee, has resigned all of his council positions and joined the police force! Singh, who earlier this year was calling for the police to be equipped with American-style side-handled batons, said: 'Giving up my council work is a sacrifice. I will miss the opportunity of debating crucial issues that affect the quality of life in Leicester.'

According to the Leicester local newspaper, Singh kept his intentions a 'closely guarded secret' until he was sure that he had won a place in the force.

Still, a loss for Leicester

Labour Party is a gain for the good citizens of Leicester. Labour leader Martin Ryan is quoted as saying: 'We will all be sorry to see him go. I know he will be an asset to the county's police force.'

Under the accelerated promotion scheme, Singh can be expected to become an inspector in a very short time.

It is strange how quickly things can change. It seems only yesterday that Singh was speaking at public meetings in support of the Highfields Youth and Community Centre, pointing to the corruption of the system, and advising opponents of the system to take to the streets in defence of their rights.

Paul Henderson
Leicester

Confusion over Timex deal

AFTER a mass meeting of Timex workers on Thursday 21 October, a majority of strikers accepted the deal which had been put to them the previous week by the Amalgamated Engineering and Electrical Union, but which had been pushed through by dubious means by Jimmy Airlie.

Confusion arose because on the evening news two of the strike committee had said that the dispute was over, while at the support group meeting different members of the strike committee had said they would continue with the boycott campaign, and would therefore go against part of the deal which called for it to be wound up.

About 50 strikers still have not signed the deal put to them, and according to a member of the support group they should be defended by the group.

The ruling class is using one of the weapons in its armoury — that of dividing workers by giving them redundancy pay. Workers should not be condemned for taking these payments, but blame should be placed on the union leadership for selling them down the river.

Ken Singer
Dundee

WORKERS PRESS £3,000 MONTHLY FIGHTING FUND

In so far for October: £2,057.57

WITH less than a week to go we need £1,000 to complete the fund and keep Workers Press on the road. The convoy team is back and we are preparing for a big fight to get a second convoy of hundreds of vehicles from the working class throughout Europe — east and west — to punch our way through to Tuzla.

As usual the paper is kept going through self-sacrifice and by pieces of string and chewing-gum. The computer equipment is in need of upgrading but we hardly make ends meet. We need a new photocopier — the one we have is hired at an extortionate rate. We need people to come in and help us and get trained to do work on page layouts etc. But why bother? Without the Workers Press there won't be a real fight for a second convoy. There won't be a fight to open the northern route to Tuzla that could keep this working-class mining town supplied throughout the winter. There won't be a fight to open Tuzla airport that could mean airlifts of supplies and a return of normal working conditions.

Help us fight to get the aid and working-class solidarity through to Tuzla. Make our work less of a struggle on technical matters and more of a political struggle. Thanks in advance.

Mike Cooke

Send money to Workers Press, PO Box 735, London SW8 1YB.

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for Workers Aid for
Bosnia
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Fast order service

Parkside women stop pit fill-in

Slavery protest at Booker prize



Middlebrook Mushroom workers and supporters demonstrate outside the Booker prize ceremony — some even dressed up as slaves (bottom right) Photo: Anthony Myers

THE age of slavery is not dead, say the sacked Middlebrook Mushroom pickers — and last Tuesday they demonstrated their feelings by protesting dressed up as slaves outside the Booker prize ceremony as the hopeful authors and the guests rolled up.

Last November, the 89 women were sacked by Booker-owned Middlebrook Mushrooms in North Yorkshire.

Booker's is a world-wide food and agricultural company that owes its origins to slavery.

At their protest, the mushroom pickers submitted their own book — 'Our Bitter Harvest' — for consideration by the Booker prize guests.

The dispute started with an overtime ban after Middlebrook broke a Transport and General Workers' Union agreement by changing overtime rates without negotiation. The company promptly sacked them.

The sacked women have been picketing for 11 months to get their jobs back. They also demand that the company sits down and negotiates with them.

They have rejected a £50,000 pay-off to be divided up among the workforce because they don't believe it compensates for the hardship they have gone through.

'For at least five years, we were loyal workers for Middlebrook and did everything we were asked,' said one striker about the deal.

'It's not just the money, it's the principle that a company can get away with dismissing you out of hand. We are looking for proper negotiation for re-employment or compensation for all sacked workers.'

THE women at Parkside pit camp and their supporters have succeeded in defeating British Coal's plan to destroy the colliery.

The pit ceased production a year ago and BC management recently took the decision to fill in the shaft thus making it impossible to ever restart production.

BY BOB MYERS

The Parkside women were determined to prevent this act of vandalism and to keep alive the fight to re-open the pit and re-employ the hundreds of sacked miners.

For three weeks the women formed a permanent human barrier to the pit entrance, turning back the lorries that were bringing the stone needed to fill the shaft.

British Coal have now turned off all power to the mine complex, even cutting off power to security cameras they were installing to monitor the women's activities.

All the remaining miners who were performing work in preparation for closing the mine have been sacked and the pit managers have also been laid off.

Now no one remains at the pit except security men and those campaigning for the mine to begin production again.

Now that the immediate threat to the mine has been defeated the Parkside supporters are directing their energies back out into the campaign in the working class.

Defiance

They want to speak at any meetings — trade union, Labour Party, etc. — to pass on their message of defiance.

The message that, regardless of laws, regardless of decisions of union leaders, the working class must organise itself to fight.

They have shown that even a small number of people who are determined can act decisively and carry forward the struggle of the working class against the government and the state.

Even as the Parkside supporters were preventing the destruction of Parkside, the Labour MPs in Parliament were making loud noises about the 'hypocrisy' of the Tories who were now closing all the pits that had supposedly been 'saved'.

Truth

The truth is that it was the Labour MPs who helped the government shut the pits by claiming that the promise to save some of them was an acceptable compromise.

It was not the Tories who shut the pits. They met a massive wall of opposition. It was the Labour and trade union leaders who shut them by breaking up that opposition with all their claims of a victory by saving 16 pits.

The government and British coal may now feel it is safe to proceed with the almost complete destruction of coal mining in Britain.

For the moment the mass of opposition has been broken up, but the defiance at Parkside will play an important part in preparing the working class for the next wave of struggle.

Of ensuring that the next battle starts with the knowledge of the fact that it was the union and Labour leaders who broke up the battle for the pits.

And it will start with the knowledge that if the workers are to fight to win they must rebuild organisations capable of conducting the kind of fights that are now taking place.

Police demand film and videos from anti-racist protests

BY MIKE COOKE

PHOTOGRAPHS and videos of alleged violence at two anti-racist demonstrations have been ordered to be handed over to the police.

Judge Gerald Butler ruled that the BBC, ITN, Sky News and London News Network should surrender footage of a demonstration outside the Royal London Hospital in Whitechapel, east London, where a man was unconscious after a racist attack.

The judge said that establishing the guilt or innocence of the protesters 'far outweighed the perceived loss of integrity' of the TV companies.

Police are also demanding material of the demonstration against the British National Party headquarters in Welling, south-east London, on 16 October. The National Union of Journalists is concerned that these demands could endanger the future safety of reporters and photographers.

'This material is crucial to these matters,' judge Butler said. 'I do not see how the integrity and impartiality of those involved should be affected when it is an order of the courts.'

But NUJ spokesman Tim Gopsill was surprised at the demand for material from Welling, seeing that the police had so many photographers and video-recorders of their own on the march.

Gopsill reported that at least five photographers had been attacked on the demonstration. He believed that they would be put in serious danger if protesters thought that their pictures could be used against them.

Gopsill accused the police of attempting to 'trawl' material for offenses. Common BBC, ITN and Sky guidelines require a signed statement from police, giving precise details of the alleged offence and where it

happened. This is designed to stop such trawling.

The NUJ runs a scheme for freelance and other journalists to protect their material from such demands. Ownership of any pictures is assigned to the NUJ, which then transfers it to the International Federation of Journalists in Brussels — beyond the reach of the Crown Prosecution Service.

Such transfers have to be made in advance of police requests.

The scheme was successfully used by four photographers cleared of contempt after demonstrations outside Murdoch's News International plant in Wapping in 1987.

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LAMBETH pensioners marching through Brixton on 20 October on their way to join a national pensioners' lobby of parliament. They were protesting against VAT on domestic fuel, and fear that the state pension could be means tested. One doctor has estimated that 10,000 additional deaths this winter will be caused by the increase in fuel charges from VAT.

Photo and story by Ed Hall

Inside left

Class enemies

BRITISH health workers back from Tuzla, Bosnia, have warned that people there do not have enough food to face the winter. International Workers Aid, challenging the blockade on that city, has torn the United Nations cover from imperialism's conspiracy against the Bosnian people.

The reported intervention by the British Foreign Office to stop artistes taking a UN flight to Sarajevo shows what forces are being confronted.

The capitalist media upheld its own blockade of silence on the Workers Aid convoy, even when it surrounded the UN headquarters in Zagreb! Workers exposing the UN, disrupting Foreign Office plans, fighting for internationalism? 'Hear no evil, see no evil, speak no evil!'

The National Union of Journalists has been helping Bosnian journalists stay alive and free to tell the truth. Like the GPMU print union it supported the Workers Aid convoy. Unions must also fight bourgeois dictatorship in the media here. Printworkers and journalists defending union rights in Salford, Bristol or Leeds, are in the same trench as the workers of Tuzla and Sarajevo.

The 'Morning Star' and 'Socialist Worker' also kept silent about the Workers Aid convoy. But the born-again Communist Party of Great Britain's 'Weekly Worker' remains outstanding for its attacks on the convoy and on the working-class of Bosnia.

First it warned 'well-meaning liberals' that supplies would be seized and comrades slaughtered 'by one militia or another' (10 July). Then it denounced the convoy as 'a reactionary stunt' (24 July).

'Workers should not take sides according to who is suffering the most', said Mark Fischer (24 July), affecting above-it-all 'neutrality' between the rapists and their victims, the fascist sniper and the people in the bread queue. This was dropped for the smear that Bosnians defending their country were all fighting for Muslim supremacy. No use telling these phoney 'Communists' that Tuzla's government is secular, that people in Sarajevo or Tuzla are united.

In 'Weekly Worker' (16 October), attacking the convoy again (they've nothing else to say about former Yugoslavia!), Jim Blackstock says: 'Unlike in Cuba, where the red flag of socialism — no matter how sullied by bureaucracy and compromise — still flies, in Tuzla the green shades of Islam proudly flutter.'

We could say Blackstock is ignorant, but why be charitable? These Stalinist liars are happy to trade on prejudices and fears about 'Muslim dominance', rather than have to change their ideas. Tomorrow they could just as easily turn on someone else.

Blackstock says, 'Workers Press, newspaper of the Workers Revolutionary Party, reports that their own Workers Aid convoy . . .'. Proud as we are to have supported the convoy, it was an *International Workers Aid Convoy*.

It belongs to all who helped: Timex strikers and Hungarian miners, workers in Manchester and Montreuil; our Serb comrades who proposed it, Bosnians who worked for it, Croat workers who backed us against UN obstruction.

Do our enemies realise what they've taken on? This is the working class!

Charlie Pottins

'People of Eu

ALLAN BROWN is a former British soldier who fought with the Croatian army against the Serb fascist forces, the Chetniks. Here he writes, on the anniversary of the destruction of the Croatian city of Vukovar, of his experiences of the butchery taking place.

IN SEPTEMBER 1991 I came to the former Yugoslavia to bring to the then hard-pressed people of Croatia my expertise in military weapons and tactics.

At first I was put to work alongside other international volunteers on burial parties. The people we were burying were Croats and some Muslims. There were men and women of all ages, from the youngest infant to the very old. Most had been shot or bayoneted. Some had died in bomb blasts. Some had been raped, tortured and finally beaten to death.

One of the things the Chetniks did was to cut the hearts out of old men and women and then leave the corpse in a sitting position with their hearts in their hands. What this was supposed to signify was lost on me.

At the end of September 1991 I moved to Osijek and then to Vukovar. Serb gunners had completely devastated Vukovar. When we left we had to run for our lives as if the devil was after us — in a sense this was so. On the way out we 'internationals' stopped to help an old man

take what I think was his grandson down off a door. The Serbs had crucified him. He was about eight years old. His crime was that he was not a Serb.

I last saw that old man sitting on the ground holding the dead boy crying and rocking him. I think the old man had gone completely mad. The Serbs probably butchered him later when they went past.

After we abandoned Vukovar the Chetniks killed everything — cats, dogs, women, and children. They even killed the 250 patients and staff left in the hospital.

These people were eventually found in a mass grave a few kilometres from that city.

The United Nations has investigated these crimes. They know who is responsible, but still they have not condemned them or made any arrests or enforced any sanctions.

Production-line butchery

AFTER the defeat we reorganised at Vinkovci. We got new men to



Bombed out houses in the ruined Croatian city of Vukovar

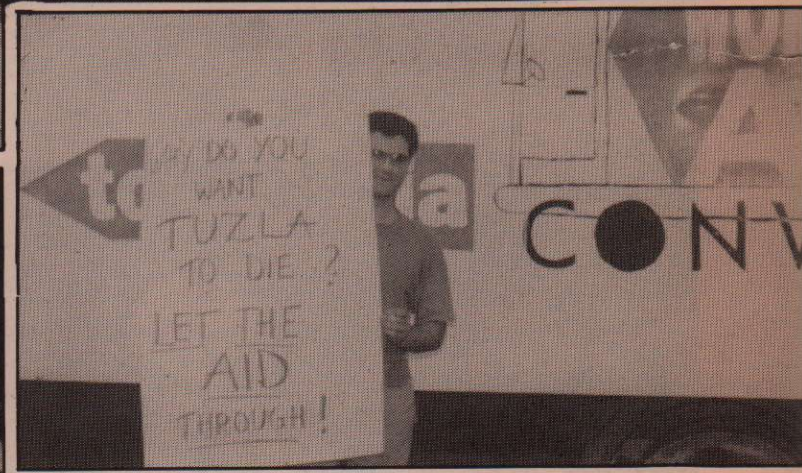
replace our dead and wounded — we had left many good friends behind in Vukovar.

We made ready for the next onslaught. Luckily for us the Serbs had spent themselves on Vukovar and had sustained greater losses of soldiers than us. They contented themselves with shelling us instead. Soon we began to fight back and we pushed them out of some villages and hamlets. In one village we found horrors that left our minds numb. We found a pile of 22 babies — none older than infants.

The top ones were white from loss of blood. The bottom ones were reddish brown from the children above. All had the left side of their necks cut. Their little eyes cried out at you for an explanation. But it was too late. I can't even explain it to myself.

It had been done systematically like a production line in a factory — probably by the same butcher.

In and around the house we found pregnant women. They had been raped and then bayoneted through their stomachs. They must



Scenes from the Workers Aid convoy to Bosnia: protesting against the role of the UN Protection Force in stopping the convoy from reaching its destination of Tuzla, outside UNPROFOR's headquarters in Zagreb, Croatia (top, left), and by a convoy member (above) some of the convoy team in Belgium (top, right); a lorry being checked at Slovenian customs (left); Warren Bates, chair of 653 branch of the TGWU transport workers' union, which supported the convoy, speaking at Piccadilly bus garage, Manchester (right); and a convoy member enjoying Piccadilly's hospitality (far right)

Photos: outside Britain, Anthony Myers; in Manchester, Rex Du

rope must wake up!

have died in great physical and mental pain. We found no men. There were other young women and older children who had all been raped and beaten to death or stabbed.

The Chetniks took one pregnant

'A crime of unimaginable proportions is being committed now and all who choose to turn away are guilty of this crime. Please help to open the northern route to central Bosnia. Winter is almost upon the Bosnian people.'

woman and did a crude Caesarean birth on her. They killed her child and then shoved her husband's head up inside her.

We internationals photographed

and documented all these crimes and they were posted to a higher level, to headquarters. Nothing has been done.

People in Britain, Europe and elsewhere will find this shocking and hard to take in. Some misguided people will even deny that these atrocities ever took place — just like the fascists do when talking about the holocaust.

But not only did these things happen but I witnessed the aftermath and helped to bury the victims.

It is happening now.

Open the northern route!

HOW do you carry on after such horrors, when you bury a small child who looks like your own child? We tend to get very drunk and cry ourselves to sleep. But still we dream.

If the people of Europe do not wake up, the whole Muslim people in this region will either be totally

annihilated or driven to the corners of the earth.

A crime of unimaginable proportions is being committed now and all who choose to turn away are guilty of this crime. Please help to open the northern route to central Bosnia. Winter is almost upon the Bosnian people.

The people have no body-fat left and no food reserves in stock. The route from Split, on the Croatian coast, will soon be closed by snow. If the United Nations Protection Force is allowed to keep the northern route closed then tens of thousands of Bosnians will die of starvation and hypothermia this winter.

It will soon be Christmas. Remember when Christian people are celebrating the birth of Jesus, so-called Christians will be butchering our Muslim brothers and sisters, and their children, over here. And other so-called Christians will be allowing them to do it.

**Open the northern route!
Lift the arms embargo!
Let us defend ourselves!**

City Lights

Crunch time nears for GATT talks

CRUNCH time is fast approaching for the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade talks.

Unless agreement is reached by 15 December the United States — by far the most powerful player in the six-year-long Uruguay round of negotiations aimed at trade liberalisation — will, under the requirements of its domestic law, be forced to withdraw and the talks will effectively collapse.

Such an outcome would come in the middle of growing tension between the United States and the European Community, which is reflected in the attacks by President Bill Clinton and his secretary of state, Warren Christopher, on the role of the EC in the former Yugoslavia.

There is a growing fear in sections of the European ruling class that the present US administration could turn its back on Europe and focus its prime attention on the Far East.

The immediate threat to the GATT trade talks comes from the French government's refusal to sign any deal because of the damage this would do to the still-powerful French agricultural lobby.

It is also claimed that the French film industry would be damaged by a Hollywood invasion should there be liberalisation of products in the 'cultural field'.

Today around 4 or 5 per cent of the population works on the land, which means that there are some 800,000 farmers, a sharp change from the situation immediately after 1945, when nearly half the French population lived in the countryside.

But even though its numbers are reduced, the French farming interest is still powerful, not least because many of the parents or grandparents of the suburban working class were farmers, and many still spend their vacations at the village where the family roots lie.

The French prime minister, Edouard Balladur, said on French television recently: 'We're trapped. If we sign the agreement, it will be said we have sacrificed France's agriculture. If we don't sign, it will be said that France has blocked a negotiation crucial for the world.'

Balladur has been desperately trying to involve as many politicians as possible in the discussions, so that if an unfavourable conclusion ensues everyone will be in the same boat.

He knows that France's industrial bosses are deeply divided. Industry chiefs, such as Francois Périgot, say that the need of French exports for overseas markets means that agreement in the GATT round is essential, whereas others, such as Jacques Calvet of motor giant Peugeot, are leading a vociferous anti-GATT campaign.

Balladur and his likely rival for the presidency, Jacques Chirac, have been outdoing each other in banging the Gaullist drum, blaming 'the party of foreigners' — what they slightly call 'Eurocrats' and 'technocrats' — for France's woes.

It is forecast that unemployment in France will rise to 3 million by next March and to 3.8 million by the time of the next presidential elections in April 1995.

By that time taxes will be absorbing some 50 per cent of na-

tional income as more and more money is poured into paying unemployment benefit.

Drunk with state debt

THE British government is currently borrowing the equivalent of about one-twelfth of the national income. Gavyn Davies, one of the 'seven wise men' — leading economists appointed to advise the Treasury on financial and economic policy — has estimated that should the economy grow at a rate of 3.3 per cent a year tax revenues will begin to rise, and spending on benefits fall as unemployment declines.

Hardly anybody believes that such growth is possible. Even if this rate is achieved its impact on unemployment is likely to be minimal. Increases in labour productivity will see to that.

A rate of growth of 2.8 per cent would be needed, calculates Davies, simply to stabilise the ratio of government debt to national income at its current level of 52 per cent. Should the growth rate fall significantly below that figure, then Britain will be heading down the Belgium road where the ratio of debt to national income is 112 per cent.

Unless government spending is sharply reined in, says Davies, debt could grow to unsustainable proportions.

He advocates tax increases of 3 per cent, equivalent to 10 pence on the basic rate of income tax, impossible given that the government, with a majority down to 17, already faces a rebellion over the proposed imposition of VAT on domestic fuel.

In Sweden government debt now accounts for 44 per cent of national income but looks set to rise to 76 per cent. Is Britain about to join this pair of debt-drunkards?

'Middle way' claims end

TALKING of Sweden, the welfare state is in a parlous condition in that country.

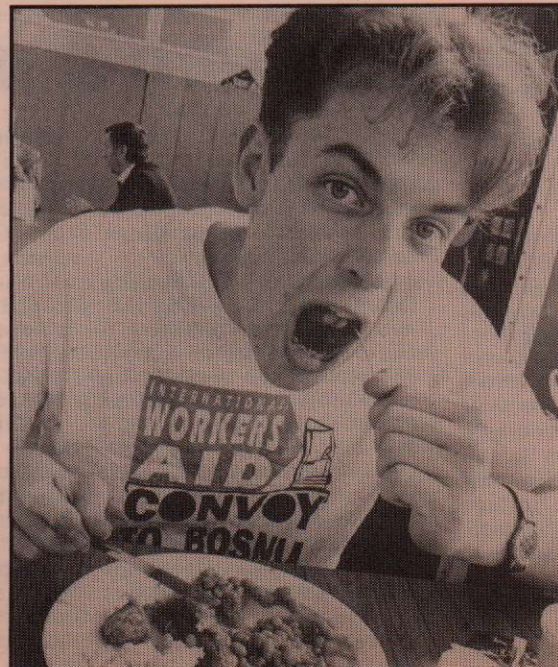
It was fine to pay unemployment benefit at the rate of 90 per cent of previous earnings when unemployment was under 2 per cent and most workers were simply moving between jobs. But as unemployment in Sweden reaches nearly one in ten this is no longer possible.

National income fell by 2 per cent in both 1991 and 1992 and by 4 per cent in the first half of this year. The banks, in desperate need of state handouts, are in a shambles, and the building industry in a slump.

The government is now slashing the budget. Public sector jobs are being cut, with 80,000 due to go next year; sickness benefit has been reduced from 100 per cent of lost salary to 80 per cent; fees for medicines have been increased; local government spending is being capped and voucher schemes introduced for schools and child-care services.

Old age pension will be paid at 67 rather than 65, and a new unemployment scheme is to be introduced to be backed by the government only when unemployment rises above the 4.5 per cent mark. The system of minimum-wage guarantees for people seeking first jobs will soon go.

Sweden was, of course, the country that advocates of a supposed 'middle way' between capitalism and socialism were fond of pointing to as proof that Marxism was redundant. Threadneedle



Bronwen Handyside reports

Two nations



Another triumph for British justice

FOR those who thought the introduction of the council tax meant the poll tax was all over, hundreds of people are still being jailed in Britain for failing to pay the poll tax in 1991 and 1992.

I thought it was bad when I was told last week about a 94-year-old man who had been jailed for three weeks for non-payment. Then I read in the 'Guardian' (21 October) about two severely disabled pensioners pleading with a judge not to be sent to jail.

George Smedberg, aged 74, who is an acute epileptic, and his wife Doris, who is confined to a wheelchair, had struggled to obey court orders to make payments, and were extremely distressed at the prospect of having to go to prison.

Magistrates at Ilkeston, near Nottingham, instigated by Erewash council, passed a sentence of 28 days on them for failing to pay off a debt of £379.

The couple had been taken to court in August last year, after the council accused them of owing £1,285 arrears for 1990-91 and 1991-92.

The magistrates remitted most of the debt and suspended a prison sentence on condition that they each paid £125, in weekly instalments of £2.

During the hearing, Mr Smedberg had an epileptic fit, and his wife, who has rheumatoid arthritis and is asthmatic and incontinent, soiled her clothes.

Having consulted council officials about the best thing to do, they each paid £8 a week out of their invalid pensions until February this year, when they thought they had paid off their arrears.

But the council chose to credit the payments to their 1992-93 poll tax bill, and prosecuted them again, alleging they still owed the tax for 1991. When they did not turn up in court, the council demanded that they be jailed, and magistrates sentenced them to 28 days each.

Last week the Smedbergs journeyed to court again — to ask the judge to consider whether the decision was 'so outrageous as to be against accepted moral standards'.

Only Charles Dickens could do justice to it.

High-class thieves

MEANWHILE a number of scandals have rocked the Welsh Development Agency.

Three of its executives have been disciplined and Philip Head, the chief executive, has resigned.

A financial investigation discovered many 'irregularities' in the WDA's accounts, including unauthorised redundancy payments, free petrol for private trips by senior directors, the appointment of a convicted fraudster as marketing director, and 'Operation Wizard', the use of more than £800,000 of public money to fund an investigation into the agency's possible privatisation.

Funnily enough, there are no proposals to jail any of the men responsible.

Directors make hay

WHEN I say the 'men' responsible, I use the word advisedly. In a survey of 1,434 top executives in 222 British companies, only 50 of them were women.

But male or female, they are, according to pension consultants Bacon & Woodrow, understating their real incomes — some of them are getting benefits worth at least twice their basic salaries.

And their pay increases are well ahead of inflation. The average director's salary in July was £92,000, including an average annual increase of 6.2 per cent. Almost 10 per cent of them are awarding themselves increases of more than 15 per cent.

Again on British justice

AND, also funnily enough, more than 40,000 directors suspected to be unfit to run a company (90 per cent of the total) have escaped disqualification by the Official Receiver in the last seven years.

Parliament's financial watchdog, the National Audit Office (NAO), lists several failures to protect the public because of delays, inaction and incompetence, including omitting to record on public registers nearly half the directors who had been barred from holding office.

The NAO found delays of up to six years between declarations of insolvency through unfit conduct and the disqualification of such directors. As a result, many cases are dropped before they reach the courts. Examples include a conference and exhibitions company with debts of £1.25 million, a furniture manufacturer owing £600,000, and a children's clothes company owing £1.1 million.

I think our best advice to Mr and Mrs Smedberg must be to form themselves into a limited company, quickly run up a debt of about £1 million, and go and visit relatives in Cyprus.

Off with their heads

SPEAKING of Cyprus, it warmed the heart a little to see the reception our own dear Queen got when she turned up to inspect a few of her Commonwealth citizens.

Protesters yelled: 'We don't want you here', whistled, and chanted slogans from their 1950s struggle for independence at a ceremony to present her with the keys of the capital city.

Earlier police had used tear gas to disperse demonstrations of schoolchildren. It's a relief in these liberal wishy-washy times to see the British crown is still prepared to wade through the bodies of children to get a free lunch.

The party falls out

THE cockles of my hardened old heart were warmed also by the spectacle of male Labour MPs caucusing to vote so that female MPs lost their places in the shadow cabinet — despite the Labour party conference voting to have reserved places for women.

I don't know which was more pleasing — seeing those ambitious self-seeking women bite the dust, or savouring the full extent of their male colleagues' bull-headed sexism; or perhaps it was contemplating the open hatred between the brothers and sisters.

If you have any material for this column, please send it to me at Workers Press, PO Box 735, London SW8 1YB.

■ Peter Fryer's Personal Column will return next week.

Television

Distortions and misinformation

Review by Anton Moctonian

THE main feature of the television coverage of the anti-BNP march in Welling, south-east London, on Saturday 16 September was the way it completely distorted the events of the day.

What was not on offer was a chronology of the day's events, with an account of what happened and why. What we got was repeated images of police fighting with demonstrators and no explanation of why this happened.

It is not possible here to deal with all the distortions and misinformation conveyed by the TV coverage of the event. But I should like to list a few of them.

Firstly, a sin of omission. What was not conveyed to the viewer was the sheer size of the protest. This was not a demonstration of a few anti-racist groups, as was suggested, but a spontaneous outburst of anger and disgust at the presence of the British National Party headquarters in south-east London.

Second is the fact that all the violence that day was provoked by the police tactic of blocking all routes along which the march could progress, and then physically attacking the demonstrators with batons and riot shields.

Third, although the television reports gave long lists of the police personnel who had been injured, no film was shown of the marchers who were injured, nor were there any interviews with any of the demonstrators.

My main memory of the day was that of a 'Living Marxism' salesperson walking up to a group of black women and asking them, in a very serious voice, if they were interested in fighting racism. 'We do it every

day' was the curt reply.

Speaking of absurdities, the television coverage of what took place at Welling included an interview with Marc Wadsworth of the ARA (Anti-Racist Alliance).

Scathing

Wadsworth was scathing about the actions of the 50-60,000 demonstrators. He devoted most of his energies to attacking not the BNP but those marching to close down its national headquarters, which is claimed to be a 'bookshop'.

Referring contemptuously to what he called 'the Plumstead punch-up', he played right into the hands of those who distorted what happened.

AFTER moving recently to a block of flats, I have found myself the recipient of five new cable TV channels, free of charge. This is just as well because the standard of programmes they offer is such that it is difficult to imagine any rational viewer paying to receive them.

UK Gold is a case in point. I list at random a day's selection of the programmes from this channel to illustrate what I mean. 1pm 'EastEnders'; 1.30pm 'The Bill'; 2pm 'Are You Being Served?'; 2.30pm 'Bread'; 3pm 'Dallas'; 4pm 'Dynasty'; 5pm 'Blankety-Blank'; 6pm 'Neighbours'; 6.30pm 'EastEnders'.

Who says that the free market cannot produce cultural excellence? Such a diet is surely enough to drive anyone insane. Schedules like this should carry a health warning, as watching them for a long period could seriously damage your sanity.

Programme guide



'Plant Life' tells how the best results are obtained — and why you should too (Channel 4, Friday 5 November)

Saturday 30 October EQUINOX: 'Memories Are Made Of This'. Examines current research into the mechanisms of memory (7pm, Channel 4). WITNESS: 'W Street'. In Washington DC alone, over a five-year period 3,000 crack-related murders were committed. This film visits a support group in the shattered black community where the epidemic has hit hardest (9pm, Channel 4). 'Bill and Hillary's Excellent Adventure: The War Room'. First of three programme's marking the first anniversary of Clinton's election victory. With behind-the-scenes footage of critical moments from the campaign (9pm, BBC2).

Tuesday 2 November ASSIGNMENT: 'Unfinished Business'. A report from inside the besieged Bosnian city of Mostar, where the men and women are determined to fight to the bitter end (7.45pm, BBC2). OMNIBUS: 'Magic Lantern'. Playwright and novelist Michael Frayn's documentary about Prague, Europe's most

haunting city (10.20pm, BBC1). **Friday 5 November** PUBLIC EYE: 'The Health Business — A Question of Trust'. First of a two-part look into the management of the reformed NHS (8pm, BBC2). PLANT LIFE: 'Flowers To Seed'. Third in eight-part series which, unlike other gardening programmes, doesn't just explain what to do to get the best results — it tells you *why* you should too (9pm, Channel 4).

Selected films

MACBETH (1948). Famously shot in 23 days. Produced, directed and starring Orson Welles (Saturday, 12.15pm, BBC2). THE MAGNIFICENT AMBERSONS (1942). Welles's brilliant follow-up to 'Citizen Kane' (Saturday, 3pm, BBC2). THE ASPHALT JUNGLE (1950). John Huston's realistic drama about a robbery that goes wrong. With Sterling Hayden, Louis Calhern and Sam Jaffe (Sunday, 12am, BBC2).

Trotsky versus Stalinism on the 'Jewish question'

BY BOB ARCHER

LEON TROTSKY's views on Zionism and the 'Jewish Question' were discussed last week at the annual general meeting of 'Revolutionary History' magazine.

Guest speaker Mario Kessler, a young academic from east Germany, though not a Trotskyist, drew a sharp contrast between Trotsky's views on the question and the explicit and implicit concessions to anti-Semitism made by Stalinists, including leaders of the German Communist Party (KPD).

He briefly sketched the development of Zionism and the different ways in which the Bolsheviks and the members of the Jewish workers' Bund opposed it.

Collapse

Kessler stressed Trotsky's role in combating anti-Semitism while commander-in-chief of the Red Army. But he criticised him for anticipating Zionism's collapse. 'Ninety years later, we can see how incorrect Trotsky's position was,' he said.

Kessler quoted Trotsky's very cautious reaction to the riots of 1929 in Palestine between Arabs and Jews. He gave full credit to Trotsky for anticipating what the development of Nazism meant.

'Trotsky was the first to anticipate the dreadful possibility that Jews could be totally exter-

minated', Kessler said, though he was at pains to point out that others like the supporters of Brandler and Thalheimer and the Socialist Workers Party of Germany (SAP) also gave timely warning of the dangers.

Trotsky didn't think Zionism was a solution for the Jews, but saw it as a utopia, a 'tragic mirage'. 'Trotsky thought a Jewish emigration was still a possibility within a socialist federation', said Kessler. 'But capitalism did not break down, and Israel became an example of growing capitalism in the Middle East.'

The early leaders of the

KPD, Kessler said, held a 'traditional Marxist' view that Jews would find emancipation through assimilation. He pointed out that this was the prevalent view on the left in the Weimar period [1918-33], but that it endorsed anti-Semitism by requiring Jews to give up a distinct culture and religion.

Kessler quoted Klara Zetkin, who in 1924 criticised anti-Semites in the KPD, and he told of 1920s KPD material that made concessions to anti-Semitism.

He quoted a 1929 speech by Hermann Remmele to the KPD central committee that showed

an ignorance of the real situation in the Communist Party Palestine. Remmele called on Jewish members of that party. Remmele thought that the anti-Semitism of the Nazis was merely a humbug, and that Hitler would reach an accommodation with the Jews.

Kessler's view was that its actions Stalinism created conditions where anti-Semitism and other forms of backwardness were encouraged. But he saw a difference between Stalinist concentration camps and the Nazi attempt to physically annihilate every Jew.

Bulletin's message of hope

QUANTAS airlines' advert 'Stopover en route, en us!' could have an unfortunate ring after a mass kidnap reported in the latest 'International Trade Unionist Bulletin'.

During a stop at Singapore, Quantas officers handed over eleven Burmese seafarers to Burmese government officials. The seamen had been en route to Bangkok, having walked off ship in Queensland and won a pay fight with help from Australian trades unionists. Held for four days at Singapore airport, they were then flown back to Burma, and internment.

Governments expect airlines to help control workers' movements. Reminding us what racist immigration con-

trols involve, an 'International Trade Unionist Bulletin' article 'Black people killed by British state' deals with cases like Joy Gardner's death at the hands of a deportation squad.

There are reports on the murder of an Indonesian woman trade unionist, on Israeli doctors confronting the question of responsibility for torture, and ANC leaders avoiding it; and on former South African prisoner David Kitson's new fight for justice from his British trade union.

The significance of civil servants taking 'secondary' action in support of printworkers in Bristol is noted, and there are reports on workers' struggles in Germany and Nigeria.

But the October 'Bulletin' leads on the Workers Aid convoy. A glance back at worker aid for Spain in the 1930s, an item on Tuzla hospital, Sarajevo's daily 'miracle' paper, and journalists in the Vojvodina complement the lead article, which says the convoy had a 'Message of hope as 'international working-class solidarity is alive and kicking'. ■ 'International Trade Unionist Bulletin' is published by the steering committee of the International Trade Union Solidarity Campaign (ITUSC), PO Box 1, Barking, Essex, IG11 7UJ. Cost is £5 for 12 issues. (Europe and Near East £8, Americas and India £10, Australia, Japan and East Asia £12).

Letters

More letters
— page 2

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Lessons for Bosnia from Eritrean liberation struggle

THIS is a comment on Doug Buchholz's letter (23 October) about Bosnia and who we must support.

Buchholz's letter was short and said little about his own views. It gives the impression that, in relation to Bosnia, and other cases of oppression, genocide and dismemberment in the service of imperialism, we have to reduce matters to abstract formulas.

I can comment less well about Bosnia than about the 100-year struggle of Eritrean liberation movements, which in many ways shows similarities with the Bosnian issue.

Before Italian colonisation in the 1890s, Eritrea did not exist. It was an assembly of shifting potentates and imperialist enclaves — Egypt, Ottoman empire, and fringes of the expanding Ethiopian empire.

Eritrea contained, and still does, a great diversity of ethnic, linguistic, cultural and religious groups; far greater than Bosnia. Under successive occupations — Italian, British, Haile Selassie and Stalinist-sponsored Mengistu — alliances of opposition were forged.

From small, spontaneous and disorganised beginnings, through all manner of factional activity, the vast majority of all groups unified behind the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) in the 1980s.

What is Free Eritrea today is a reflection of a unity and clarity in real struggle against all oppressors.

The sacrifices in blood and bones of every single family; the standing in the front line of women and men from every village, city and social group, physically merged all conceivable differences.

Yet, at the same time, each group proudly held to, and developed, its own culture. Often, each assimilated parts of other areas. That is how 'nations' formed. That is what self-determination is.

The agency for these things was the EPLF; the encapsulation of all the currents. The Front was the only force cap-

able of ripping apart the chains of bondage.

Out of the aspirations of the masses, their willingness to sacrifice all, and its own organic evolution, the EPLF assembled the arms, the organisation, discipline and training to smash the largest and best equipped military force in black Africa.

It not only freed Eritrea but opened the way to sweeping oppression from Ethiopia and presents an example to the masses of Somalia, the Sudan and as far afield as Bosnia.

How else could Eritrea have been freed? How could the Fourth International by itself have organised 'armed self-defence of multi-ethnic communities'?

Politically the Workers International to Rebuild the Fourth International — of which the WRP is a part — has deep disagreements with the leadership of the EPLF, as with the Bosnian government.

But how, in practice, can it have a choice or any hesitation in giving unconditional support to either in the face of a life or death struggle?

Of course, it carries the burden of maintaining and developing its own principled position before the oppressed masses, against the weaknesses, lack of clarity and potential degeneration of such limited nationalist forces.

That can only be done by intervening boldly and openly on its own agenda, but with real and growing links with the masses themselves.

In Bosnia, the *only* defenders are the spontaneous militias and the Bosnian army, however confused and, in the case of the leadership, vacillating.

How else do enclaves remain against the onslaught of the larger and better-equipped Stalinist-fascist forces?

Instead of abstractly seeking 'clarity', why does Buchholz not seek concrete means of arming the Bosnians, bolstering their morale and throwing their oppressors into confusion?

Steve Drury
Brampton, Cumbria



The 100-year struggle for Eritrean liberation (top) and a Bosnian soldier protects people in Sarajevo from sniper fire (above)

Sinn Fein: politically bankrupt

THE so-called Hume-Adams 'peace' plan for resolving the problems created by the British occupation and partition of Ireland has been presented to the Irish government.

It calls on the Irish government to persuade the Tory government in Britain to convene a round-table conference on resolving the question of partition and all issues related to it.

The plan requires the British government to make a public statement that it will abide by, and implement, any agreement reached at such a conference.

According to the plan, representatives of the British and Irish governments, the Unionist parties, the Alliance Party, the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP), and Sinn Fein would be invited to attend the conference in circumstances in which there was a total cessation of violence.

Sinn Fein with the full backing of the IRA army council would call for a full cessation of violence in the event of a statement being issued by the British government confirming in effect that the Irish people as a whole have a right to national self-determination.

The plan also agrees that Sinn Fein need not be invited to participate in such talks until

the violence is ended. It is only the cessation of violence by the IRA that is required and not that of the British state forces in Ireland and/or their collaborators in the loyalist terror gangs.

According to the 'Irish Times' (19 October), John Hume, leader of the SDLP, convinced Gerry Adams, president of Sinn Fein, during their secret talks about article 1 of the Anglo-Irish agreement, signed in 1987.

The Anglo-Irish agreement states that any change in the constitutional position of the north of Ireland would only come about with the consent of a majority of the people in the occupied six counties of Ireland.

The Unionist/loyalist veto, backed by the loyalist terror gangs and the British state, will continue to play its reactionary and backward role of preventing any discussion about or change to the constitutional position of the Orange state created by British imperialism in 1922 with the partition of Ireland.

Such a veto has always been supported and encouraged by imperialism. It prevents and denies all the people of the whole of Ireland the right to national self-determination free from British interference.

The 'Irish Times' reports that Sinn Fein agrees with the SDLP that 'Britain accepted that Irish unity was a matter for those who want it persuading those who don't'.

If Sinn Fein really believes this it is politically bankrupt, opportunist, and will do or say anything to join the so-called

'political process'. Like Nelson Mandela and the African National Congress in South Africa and the Palestine Liberation Organisation — both busily engaged in selling out their people to imperialism — the Republican leadership has moved rapidly to the right.

The aim of the Republican movement has always been to pressure imperialism to talk to it — and not to overthrow imperialism. Their wish may soon be granted.

Any deal that doesn't tackle the chronic economic, social and political crisis in Ireland is not in the interests of the working class.

There is almost 0.5 million unemployed people in Ireland and more than 2 million are on the poverty line. Thousands leave the country every year.

Marxists have always supported the right of Ireland and its people and other oppressed nations and peoples to freedom and self-determination.

But our understanding of how this is brought about is different to that of the bourgeois politicians and journalists.

Only the working class — organised in its own party and fighting for its own independent class interests against imperialism and for the socialist transformation of society — can truly liberate Ireland and her people from the tyranny of capitalist exploitation, unemployment, poverty, emigration and repression. Only socialism and not 'deals' with imperialism can do this.

Charlie Walsh
Harrow, Middlesex

Wanting a straight reply

THE row between the parliamentary human rights committee chair Lord Avebury and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office has intensified about the killing of a Birmingham-based Indian diplomat Mhatre.

The arguments started when the foreign minister said in the Commons on 21 July that all six people convicted in the killing of the Indian diplomat were members of the Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front — thus indicating that the JKLF were behind the operation.

Lord Avebury argues that only two out of the six Kashmiri people were members of the JKLF, and none of them gave any evidence about the JKLF involvement.

If the two JKLF members' involvement means the involvement of the whole party then the Conservative Party should also accept responsibility for every single action of any of its members! The Foreign Office neither agrees nor disagrees, but simply tries to avoid a straightforward reply.

However, the tireless Lord Avebury has once again indicated, in his letter of 5 October to the Foreign Office minister Mark Lennox-Boyd, that he would keep writing to him until he receives a proper and straightforward reply to his specific question!

During the Mhatre trial in 1985, the prosecution didn't accuse the JKLF of being involved in the assassination. Therefore, it seems obvious that the British government is simply trying to use this case to justify its recently declared treaty with India to extradite any individual acting against Indian interests in Britain to be tried in India.

There was no forensic evidence against Mohammed Riaz and Quayyum Raja, who were sentenced to life imprisonment, but the jury found them guilty on circumstantial evidence.

Tom Meffin, the police chief constable, who headed the inquiry, stated in a press conference shortly after the trial, 'We still want the man who pulled the trigger'.

Quayyum Raja
HMP Long Lartin

The International

Journal of the Workers International to Rebuild the Fourth International

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Price: £2

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CROAT FASCISTS MASSACRE OVER 80 BOSNIANS

FIGHTING has broken out along the southern route into the northern Bosnian town of Tuzla, which it is still Workers Aid's intention to reach with a second convoy (see page 1, and editorial page 2).

Survivors of a massacre in the central Bosnian village of Stupni Do told of how masked Croat Ustashe fascist forces had acted.

'Everything was on fire and we saw Ustashe throwing bodies into the flames', said Zinata Likic, who had been hiding for two days with her young daughters in a nearby forest.

She was one of 15 survivors from the village found by United Nations forces near the village of Pajtov Han, three miles south of the Croat-held town of Vares, which is on the main southern route to Tuzla.

'The men had black masks with white ribbons over them', she added.

The 260 all-Muslim population of Stupni Do had only 39 armed defenders.

An elderly Muslim man, wounded in the fighting around Vares, reported: 'We escaped at night through the forest. There were so many fires it was as bright as moonlight. There were lots of bodies and the HVO were throwing them into the fire.'

The HVO are the official Croat forces. It would appear that this report is confusing the HVO with the activities of the fascist Ustashe gangs being used by Croatian president Tudjman.

'When all the evidence is gathered you will find there has been a terrible massacre of Muslims by Croats in Stupni Do', Hasim Spahic, the deputy commander of the Bosnian

forces in Drabavine, told reporters.

A Swedish major with UN forces in Vares said he believed 250 Muslims were being held in a school in the town centre: 'We heard one shot fired from within the school today. We're worried about the safety of the people held there.'

The UN forces tried several times to enter the school, but were turned back and threatened by heavily-armed Croat troops.

Killed

A driver in a Danish UN aid convoy was killed on Monday when three convoys were caught in crossfire south of Novi Travnik in central Bosnia.

Because the fighting was so intense the body could not be recovered for over three hours. Two Dutch convoys were also caught in the crossfire, six miles from the main British base at Vitez.

Another Danish driver was injured by shrapnel and several other drivers sustained minor injuries. The Danish drivers recently threatened to stop aid operations because of the growing danger.

Workers Aid for Bosnia convoy in the Croatian press

THE Workers Aid for Bosnia convoy's 1 October blockade of the United Nations Protection Force headquarters in Zagreb was reported by the Croatian paper 'Vjesnik' a few days later.

In an article (right) that supports the convoy and is critical of UNPROFOR, it describes how the Workers Aid convoy blocked the HQ entrance for 14 hours to demand protection for its chosen aid route to Tuzla as reported by the Workers Press on 9 October.

'On Sunday morning,' the report says, 'the UNPROFOR moved against the convoy with two armoured vehicles carrying weapons because the Croatian police had refused to get involved in using any force in moving the convoy on.'

'At the press conference today, Dot Gibson, leader of the convoy, and representatives of Workers Aid from Belgium, Italy and other European countries sharply condemned the behaviour of UNPROFOR, openly asking: "What is the purpose of UNPROFOR in this region when Croatian refugees are not returned to their homes, when routes are not opened for humanitarian aid to central Bosnia and when it's obvious that UNPROFOR is merely standing by or even helping the Chetniks achieve their aims?"'

VJESNIK

HRVATSKI POLITICKI DNEVNIK

U Tuzlu i bez Unprofora!

ZAGREB - U subotu je u Zagrebu Međunarodna radnička pomoć održala konferenciju za novinstvo, objašnjavajući razloge svojoj blokadi zgrade Unprofora u Zagrebu, započete u petak u 16.55 sati te okončane u subotu ujutro u 7.00 sati. Ova humanitarna akcija doprime devet kamiona s humanitarnom pomoći u hrani i lijekovima radnicima Tuzle inicirana je od strane rudara iz Velike Britanije, a podržali su je svi rudarski i drugi sindikati Europe, kao i druge humanitarne organizacije. Međutim, kada je konvoj u pratnji 25 predstavnika radnika i sindikata iz više europskih država stigao u Zagreb, Unprofor nikako nije htio dopustiti da u Tuzlu krenu preko Hrvatske, već je inzistirao da idu preko Srbije. Odbijajući u svojim lecima, pismima i javnim istupima takvu rutu - jer ne žele ništa od Miloševićeve vlade i Karadžićeve bande, glasno-

govornici Međunarodne radničke pomoći inzistirali su da im Unprofor pruži zaštitu na putu Virovitica - Zupanja - Orašje - Srebrenik - Tuzla.

Nakon 14-satne blokade zgrade Unprofora sa svojih pet kamiona i izraženog solidariziranja sa zahtjevima prognanika i obitelji poginulih u domovinskom ratu, a koji već više dana prosvjeduju pred istom zgradom, u nedjelju ujutro snage Unprofora su sa dva oklopna vozila i naoružanjem krenuli protiv humanitaraca, jer je hrvatska policija odbila uključiti se u nasilno odvoženje kamiona.

Na današnjoj press-konferenciji Dot Gibson, voditeljica konvoja, te predstavnici Radničke pomoći iz Belgije i Italije, kao i iz drugih europskih zemalja, oštro su osudili ponašanje Unprofora, pitajući se olvorenno - koja je svrha Unprofora na ovom području, kad hrvatski prognanici nisu vraćeni u svoje domove, kad se ne otvaraju putovi humanitarne pomoći za srednju Bosnu, kad je jasno da Unprofor samo nadzire rad ili čak omogućava četnicima da ostvare svoje ciljeve. (pc)

Yeltsin's dictatorship

What Russian workers have to say about it

Monday 15 November, 7pm

Friends Meeting House, 173-177 Euston Road, London NW1 (opposite Euston station — use the garden entrance)

Air France workers continue strike

WORKERS at Air France last week voted against the advice of their union leaders and continued their strike against savage job cuts until they receive written guarantees that there will be no sackings.

Leaders of the biggest union involved, Force Ouvrière, called for a truce but they were voted down in mass assemblies at Paris's two main airports. The strikers insisted that the conflict was not over and they were getting ready to join a national public sector strike on 18 November.

Airport workers have fought pitched battles on the runways with the infamous CRS French riot police.

Dozens of angry farmers joined the strikers at Orly, Paris's second airport, dumping tons of potatoes and leading cattle into the airport perimeter.

Decision

The decision to continue the strike came despite a partial climb-down by the government, which tried to buy time with a promise to delay 4,000 proposed sackings for three months and to achieve jobs cuts without compulsory redundancies.

Prime minister Bernard Bal-

lador, facing the most serious challenge to the government in its six months in office, authorised this semi-retreat because of fears that the strike would spread to other areas of the public sector, in particular to the railways.

Deficit

The transport minister, Bernard Bosson, stressed that the airline faced a deficit of £600 million and that a new restructuring plan would have to be agreed.

The determined strike movement has already brought about the resignation of Air France chairman Bernard Attali. Attali's twin brother, Jacques, was forced to resign as president of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development after revelations of lavish spending.

Bernard Attali was only months ago asked to toughen up his restructuring plan and feels betrayed by a government that he says has lost its nerve. Only hours before his resignation Bosson gave Attali a vote of full confidence.

The head of Air France's domestic subsidiary, Jean Cyril Spinetta, was also forced to quit

as the government side-stepped the airline's management and negotiated directly with trade union leaders.

'We have won a battle, but not the war. Everything is still to be fought for,' a strike leader told cheering workers at Roissy-Charles de Gaulle airport.

Industrial chiefs expressed fears that other workers might get the idea that militant strike action could save their threatened jobs.

The business daily 'Agefi'

warned: 'By giving in to the strikers there is another risk: it may encourage the development of other militant actions, inspired by the success of the Air France workers.'

Ground staff at Orly voted to continue their action to demand written guarantees that there would be no lay-offs, together with promises that no arrested strikers would be prosecuted and that workers would be paid for the days they had been on strike.

Turkish army's revenge on Kudrish forces

TURKISH government troops have taken a savage revenge for the killing by Kurdish rebels last week of a senior Turkish army officer, General Bahtiyar Aydin.

Ayidin was killed during fighting in the town of Lice, about 100 miles from the Syrian frontier. According to the Kurdistan Workers' Party, the army later moved in and reduced Lice to rubble, killing at least 380 civilians.

The town, which has a reputation for supporting the Kur-

dish freedom-fighters, was said to be covered by a pall of smoke.

Tansu Ciller, who last June became Turkey's first woman prime minister is now under strong pressure to declare martial law in the 11 provinces where Kurds are in the majority.

She has been forced to sack the interior minister, Mehmet Gazioglu, and the defence minister, Nevzat Ayaz.

The Kurdish armed struggle in south-east Turkey began nine years ago.

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