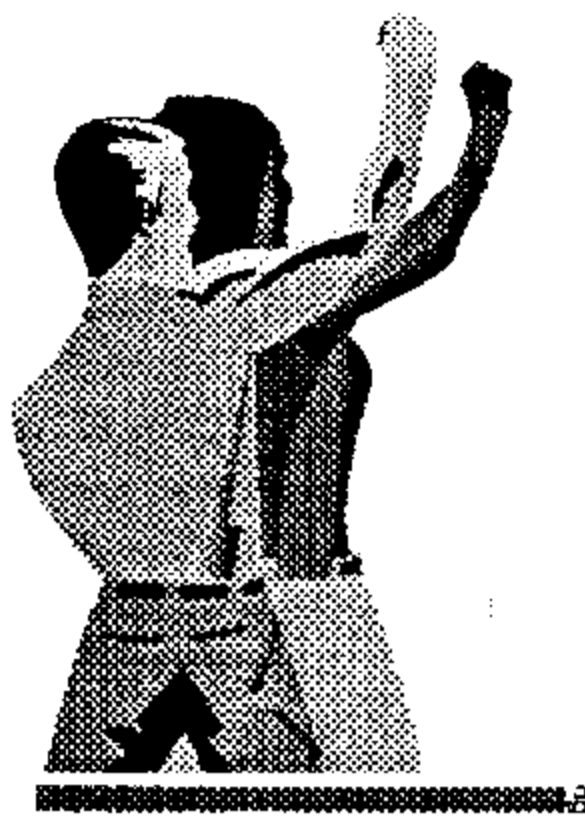


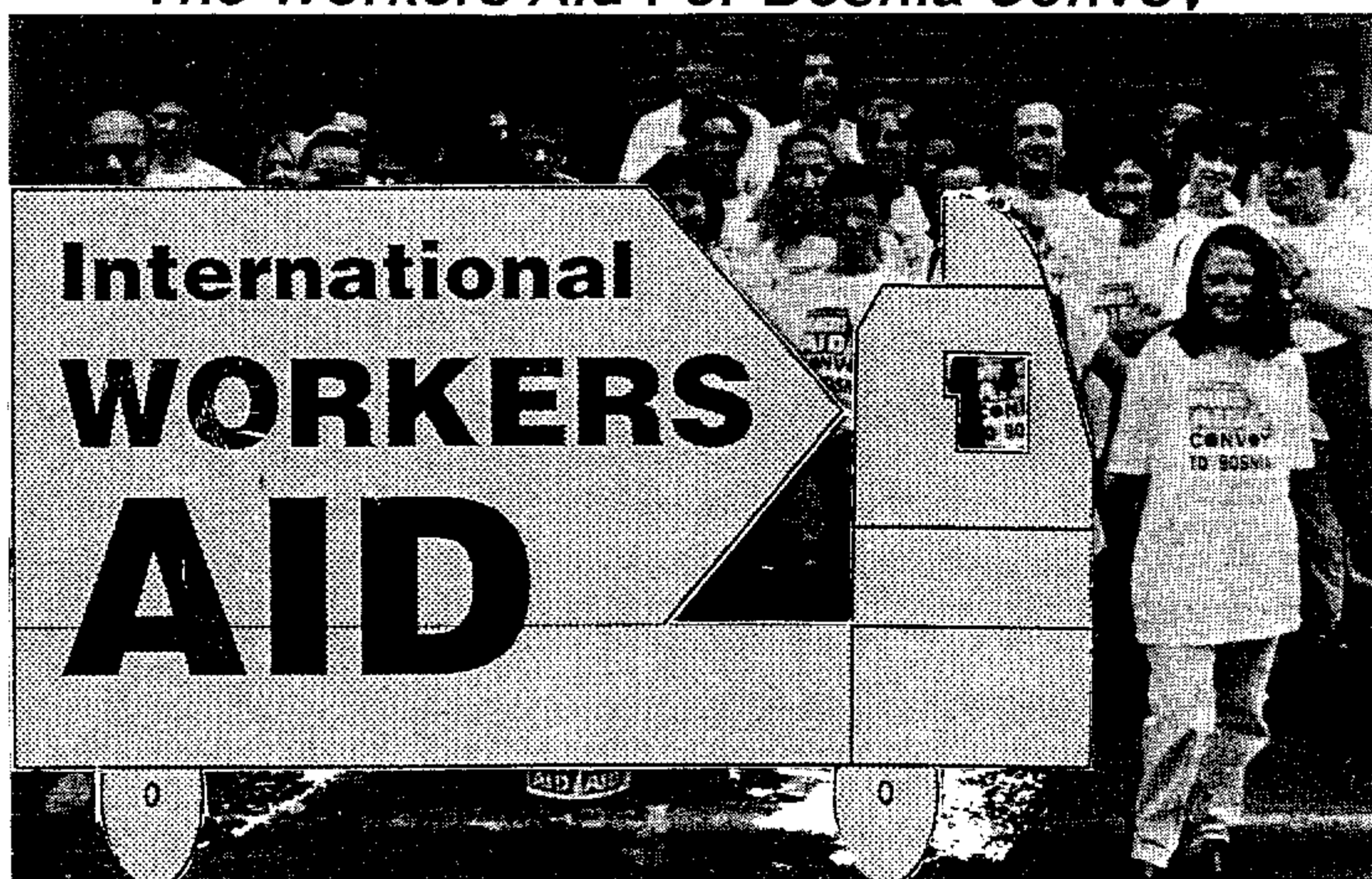
socialist VOICE



50th
I S S U E

SEPTEMBER 1993 ISSUE 50 (Solidarity Price £11 50 p)

*From Timex to Tuzla with the
The Workers Aid For Bosnia Convoy*



WORKERS OF THE WORLD UNITING!

B o s n i a

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Paper of the
International
Socialist
League



British Section
of the
International
Workers'
League

[4th International]

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This Issue By

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and Martin Ralph

*signed articles do not
necessarily reflect
the views of the ISL*

THE VOICE SAYS

The last 49 issues of Socialist Voice show a record of struggle to assist the working class and build a leadership - internationally and nationally. A record of which we can be proud and that now leads us to support the struggle for a united Bosnia.

In 1988 we were amongst the first to raise the question that the main issue in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe was: who would prevail? We warned that either that the workers have to re-build their class organisation and parties to establish workers' control or the bureaucracy would take the Workers States to capitalism and decay.

We participated directly in a number of international solidarity campaigns especially in Latin America, one of which helped release two councillors in Sao Paulo from a living hell in a Brazilian jail, and we wrote of the dangers to the working class and peasantry in Nicaragua of the appeasement of the Sandinista leadership to the Contras.

In 1988 we published the demands of the Intifada, demands that are still not met by the apparent new agreements between Israel and the Palestinian leadership.

We participated in the campaign to free Moses Mayekiso and we warned that only a workers government and a struggle for socialism could end the misery and suffering of the South African masses.

In Britain we were directly involved in the struggles against youth slavery, the poll tax, deportations, the occupation of northern Ireland and in numerous trade unions. The degeneration of the trade union and labour leadership was charted and fought by our members wherever possible.

It was the anti-poll tax movement that showed clearly that a new type of movement was developing in Britain. That movement of millions of people only found a faint echo in the trade union movement. Yet inside there was a striving to find a political and international expression. Many activists and workers talked of the

need for a new party, and many activists stood in England, Scotland and Wales in local elections on a class struggle basis. There are other examples of a striving to find a political expression that could not find a response in the Labour party.

All this experience led us to support the February conference earlier this year and the now the new paper 'UNITE!' which fights to unite the class and all its struggles from individual community actions to the mightiest movements inside the organised working class.

In many ways these struggles come together in the Workers Aid For Bosnia. The convoy to Tuzla is a workers' initiative that is seeking to help the Bosnian people. It is at the high point of the struggle for internationalism.

We have said the more the international working class supports the convoy, the greater will be its chance of success.

The Bosnian workers have a long history of internationalism, that is the desire to assist the struggles and revolutions of workers in different parts of the world. Although in terrible conditions their resistance is of immense importance internationally.

What they show to all of us is that the unity of the people, even poorly armed, is a mighty force. To really defeat those forces the West and Milosevic will have to destroy that unity. To win the Bosnians have to extend that unity onto an international level.

The revolutionary struggles of 1989 and 1990 was not a unity between the self styled politicians, gangsters and people for democracy. It is a struggle for the masses to have control over their lives. That is the inescapable conclusion of the events in former Yugoslavia. The Bosnian struggle is exploding the myth of Western "democracy" and of capitalist aid.

It makes more urgent, and increases the possibility of, building a new leadership with all those who did not betray in the past and with all those who are fighting today.

READ UNITE! PAPER OF THE COMMUNITY AND UNION ACTION CAMPAIGN
FOR COPIES OR FURTHER INFORMATION WRITE TO:
CUAC C/O CRISIS IN LONDON CAMPAIGN, 6A ACRE LANE, LONDON SW2

Burnsall Strike

All Out & Sold Out

After fourteen months of picketing, the Burnsall strikers have suffered their biggest setback yet; not from their employers, but from their union.

The General and Municipal Boilermakers have called off the strike and tried to force their members back to work. It has not worked-the strike is still on.

On 15th June last year, nineteen workers at Burnsall's, a West Midlands metal finishing firm, went on strike for union recognition and equal pay, and against the dangerous working conditions in the Smethwick based factory.

Three months earlier, twenty six of the twenty nine employees had joined the GMB. So bad were conditions at the firm that to date, there have been fifty three claims lodged with an industrial tribunal. One claim which has been won, is the appalling case of Nirmal Kaur, who suffered a miscarriage after being refused lighter duties and time off work to visit an ante-natal clinic. Workers at the factory had to endure the dangers of working with chemicals such as sulphuric acid without adequate protective clothing. There were no proper washing facilities, management did not even provide soap or toilet paper. Women received between £30-£40 a week less than men doing the same work. Everyone was forced to work an average sixty hour week and everyone was threatened with the sack if they missed a days work. Clearly, Burnsall's, which supplies car makers such as Jaguar, Rover and Ford, are a firm whose employees really need the protection of a union.

All of the local support groups that have been the mainstay of the strike, have condemned the GMB's actions and are calling on all workers to support the struggle.

We ask all our readers to help the Burnsall strikers by getting in touch with one of the support groups and giving whatever assistance is needed.

Contact: Manchester Burnsall Strikers Support Group
Box 47,1 Newton Street, Manchester, M1 1HW.
Tel. 061 225 4106

Instead of being given support, the strikers have not just been sold out by the GMB, but have been told by two union officials that their industrial tribunal cases will be dropped if they carried on picketing or attended the national demonstration that had been organised to support them.

The two Birmingham union officers, Jo Quigley and Danny Parry, added that the cases would also be dropped if the strikers criticised them or talked to the press about the affair. Quigley and Parry then issued a leaflet headed "Burnsall Workers Call Off Strike", which claimed the workers themselves had decided to give up, and worked closely with the local Labour council and the police to have the demonstration banned.

During the GMB's national conference at the beginning of June, John Edmonds the union's General Secretary, spoke of the courage of the strikers and reiterated the unions commitment to the dispute.

Six weeks later, when the strikers went to see Edmonds to demand that the union restored its backing, he refused even to speak to them. Instead one of Edmonds's underlings told the strikers their struggle was "considered unwinnable".



★ Anyone threatened with deportation can rest easy in the knowledge that their appeal will be dealt with by someone with a deep felt respect for the law. The new director of the Immigrants Appeals Advisory Service is Keith Best. Best's former career as a Tory MP, ended abruptly when he was caught buying British Telecom shares in lots of other peoples names. He was sentenced to four months in jail, but got away with a £4,000 fine on appeal. His brush with jail no doubt helped him in his next job as the director of the advice service Prisoners Abroad. The fact that the IAAS selection panel was headed by another ex-Tory MP, Humfrey Malins was another thing that no doubt helped Best.

★ The Labour Party are having another membership drive. The last one sent there membership from 300,000 to 90,000. This time the party have hit on the idea of cutting £5 off the annual subscription. Sounds more like a closing down sale than a recruiting drive.

★ Meanwhile, Manchester's Gorton Labour Party (Home of Gerald Kaufman) is being investigated by the Regional Organisers. Their crime? "A suspiciously large number of people have joined the party".

Stop the JAILINGS

The poll tax still means misery for thousands of people. Hundreds are still being jailed and the Labour Party and trade union movement still won't fight. Martin Ralph reports.

Magistrates in the Lancashire town of Bolton have earned themselves a particularly vicious reputation as they have jailed over 230 people for non-payment of the poll tax.

One magistrate jailed a man in his late forties even after hearing that his heart condition was serious. His health was so bad that the prison authorities put him, on arrival, straight into prison hospital, where he served his term. Another man explained to the court how he had not eaten for three days, his mother had recently died and he had had to leave the house they had lived in because he could not meet the payments. He offered to pay as soon as his claim for sickness benefit was sorted out. He was jailed for seven days.

Recently in Newcastle-on-Tyne Norman Laws, a pensioner with a history of heart and eye problems, started his third prison sentence for refusing to pay.

One thirty years old man who is mentally disabled and has cancer of the foot, was snatched from his home without warning by police and put in prison. When his mother arrived home she assumed he was at a friend's house. When he did not return, she phoned the police, who told her they could not find him. By chance the man's cell mate recognised him and told his brother, who, with the help of solicitors, got him released shortly afterwards.

Karen Massey was sent to prison by Newcastle magistrates despite asking the local council on a number of occasions to deduct payments directly from her benefits. Ian Wise, a solicitor, sought a Judicial Review at the High Court, which found that the council was wrong to refuse her offer. Karen was freed. So far, Ian Wise has helped to release seventy-five poll tax prisoners.

"Non-payment of the poll tax is a civil not criminal offence.

Yet poll tax prisoners are often treated worse than criminals"

If one solicitor could do that what could the collective efforts of the labour movement achieve?

PRISONERS

Non-payment of the poll tax is a civil not criminal offence, yet poll tax prisoners are often treated worse than criminals.

Yvonne Cunliffe, a campaigner from Bolton, told Socialist Voice how her son was jailed for non-payment in July. She rang Walton prison the following day and was told she would have to give two days notice before she could see him. The authorities refused her request to speak to her son, saying he would have to phone her. To do this he would have to buy a £2 telephone card. Yvonne pointed out that he did not have any money with him. This made no difference. Two weeks later Yvonne's son was still wearing the same set of prison clothes despite having to work in the garden each day.

Many councils and magistrates' courts are dealing with poll tax cases with a total dis-regard for the financial state of the person or the law. They are not explaining people's rights to them or bothering to find out whether people can afford to pay. Magistrates are ignoring their obligation to consider a defendant's welfare and background. In one bizarre case a female non-payer was initially sent to an all male prison because she had short hair.

LABOUR MOVEMENT

Thousands have been jailed but the Labour Party and trade union move-

ment still refuse to speak out and demand an end to this vindictiveness.

A struggle is being waged by a small number of activists to prevent people from being sent to jail for not paying the poll tax. The Labour Party and trade union movement are responsible to the working class for the continuing scandal of the jailings. Once the poll tax had become law the Labour Party leadership supported its implementation, they backed every move the Tories made and Labour councils were, if anything, even more savage in their dealings with non-payers.

The Labour leadership has not forgotten the poll tax. Now that the selection procedure for prospective Labour councillors is under way, Larry Whitty, general secretary of the party, has informed all selection committees that candidates have to prove they have paid the poll tax. Such a move is against the democratic right of Labour party members to have opposed the poll tax and it will exclude anyone who was too poor to pay it.

We must never forget that these are class issues, we call on the whole labour movement to act. No jailing should be allowed without a fight. Those who want to help the class and are seeking to unite the class against all the attacks, must demand an immediate end to the jailings and an end to the poll tax collections. This fight should be carried on in the trade unions, the councils and the Labour Party.

All those who seek to develop the independence of the working class must have this anti-poll tax fight as part of their banner.

Support poll tax prisoner
Norman Laws-
see article on next page

Free Norman Laws

The following is an extract from Norman Laws' letter of 10th August:

It seems, as you say, that Councils are lately putting more pressure on non-payers as the Poll Tax gives way to the new Council Tax in newspaper and TV headlines.

They must feel if they do not obtain these debts quickly, they may never get them.

Here is the joke of the month (rather sick joke).

I received a demand from South Tyneside Council for £652 Poll Tax debt (dated 22nd July) - two weeks after arriving at my present 'residence', sent to my home address of course, with the threat: "Further action may have to be taken which would entail further costs, and, if this debt is not paid in full by the next seven days, action will include an application for a commitment to prison."

Do they expect payment for the years which I have already served sentence for?

The £652 sounds like '91 and '92 taxes added together.

Honestly, are their registers in such a shambles or are they up to some more dirty tricks?

I am getting their official demand photocopied and I shall send you one, along with another from Alan Meale (M.P. for Mansfield) - he was responsible for organising a May Day festivity and charging £5 entrance fee! He sent some complimentary tickets to the Women Against Pit Closures (Rufford Colliery). I think they tore them up and returned the pieces.

Anyhow, he wrote the following to me:

"I have been informed by some of your friends locally, that you have been experiencing some problems with your Poll Tax [not a very original idea] and that you are now in prison again.

Whilst I am unable to offer you any help or advice in this matter, I trust your situation improves soon and that your wife is receiving good care in your absence."

What does he mean "SITUATION IMPROVES"? Does he intend to Buy Me Out? One joker tried that on me in '91, remember? I put him on the right track: to accost our eighty Labour Councillors who were the ones responsible for my jailing. I heard nothing more from him (Regional Secretary of the Labour Party and the TGWU too).

My reply to this Meale dead duck was:

"You seem to be as helpless as my own M.P. (Don Dixon, Labour Whip). He said 'Norman Laws deserves everything he gets. We are here to make the law not break it' Would he have said the same to the Suffragettes and all the other fighters for justice? And please to remember if it had not been for our fore-fathers who fought and broke the law for their rights, you would have no Labour Party to-day to provide you with a cushy seat where you can sit all day and do sod-all if the mood takes you. Anyway whose law is D. Dixon M.P. prattling on about - Maggie T's vindictive war against our class? Is that what we voted you all in for - to vote for this unworkable, unacceptable travesty of a tax? Further, how many times have you got up on your feet on the Westminster floor to condemn this evil, doctrinaire, ant-working class policy? Go on! Surprise me!!

I firmly believe that your party, which hopes to gain power (do they or are they afraid) - not by any decent Socialist policy of their own, but simply by default of the other side - is fading out of existence as voters walk away from you and your right-wing causes.

Too late the rallying cry now. We can only build a new party of fighting, working class, fire-in-the-belly members. Good day!"

Norman Laws

JOB CENTRE Occupied

Fifty unemployed workers occupied Brixton Job Centre in London last month. The action was part of Lambeth Unemployed Action Groups on-going campaign against the governments 'Job Plan Workshop' scheme, which as we reported two issues ago, is the Tories latest attempt to force the unemployed to undergo bogus training in return for their benefits.

Ray Barker was one of those taking part in the occupation, he told staff at the Job Centre that the protest was not aimed at them, the Action Group fully supported Job Centre staff's own campaign against job losses and privatisation. Ray said; "We are here to demand good quality training for real jobs".

John Adams was one claimant who happened to be in the Job Centre when the protesters stormed in. He described the scene; "I was just looking at the notice boards, seeing all the lousy work on offer, when all these people with placards and banners came in and yelled 'this is an occupation'. I got talking to one of the protesters and joined the group immediately".

The action also gained support from Timex strikers and Anne Hollifield, a Lambeth Councillor. The campaign has received the support of the National Collective of Unemployed Workers Centres who have agreed to organise a week of national action against Job Plan Workshops later in the year.

The Welfare State was once the pride of Britain. In Britain, it was believed, the government and people had entered into a compact, a compact that had changed the nature of society once and for all.

Gone would be the bad old days of mass unemployment, poverty, bad housing, ill-feed and ill-clothed children, untreated illness because the doctor's bills could not be paid, and the work-house as the only refuge for the aged and infirm. Well think again! They are all coming back.

It is the intention of Major's government just as much as it was that of Thatcher's to demolish the Welfare State and to replace it with an American system of private insurance, private health care provision, private pensions, private education, and private unemployment protection. Of course, nobody is going to stand up in the House of Commons and announce that this is the real policy. The Tories are not so naive to think that they could ever sell such a heartless disregard for the welfare of millions of people to the mass of the British electorate. If the Tories are to complete the project they set themselves in the late 1970s they must adopt more artful tactics.

Ever since Margaret Thatcher's accession to the leadership of the Tory party in 1976 it has been an article of faith with the New Right that it is the rich who have been exploited. It is they who have been obliged to pay for all the 'feather bedding' of the feckless, the unemployed, the bone-idle, the intentionally poor, the single parents with too many children, the old dear who the family no longer wants, and a host of other 'social misfits' and 'hardship cases'. The demonology of the Tory party grows year by year. Recently they have re-activated an old demon the 'one-parent family' but just for good measure they have started on the elderly - who are living too long - and the disabled and the infirm. As the demography shifts the balance of the population towards the aged - who from now on will comprise an ever growing proportion of the total population - the New Right, in the form of the No Turning Back Group of Thatcher die-hards, has seen its opportunity. Universal benefits it claims can no longer be afforded. The retirement age must be increased, people with occupational pensions must not expect to receive the state pension as well - even in if they have contributed towards it all their working lives.

WHERE HAS ALL THE WELFARE GONE?

by Michael George

"Since Margaret Thatcher's accession to the leadership of the Tory party it has been an article of faith that it is the rich who have been exploited"

Nor can the state, it seems, continue to afford free prescriptions for the elderly. No doubt we will be told that to offer pensioners such 'perks' is to demean them. All they want is the 'right' to participate in society on the same basis as everyone else. Single mothers too, have become targets of the New Right. Not only does being a single mother offend against the New Right's obsession with 'family values' but the lack of child care means that they are unable to work and therefore become part of the 'dependency culture'. The New Right would like to find ways of making them go out to work and be 'independent', but the cost of providing child care is too high.

Nobody can be sure yet which group will be the first to suffer from the new lie that the country cannot afford to maintain the welfare system or continue to provide free care for all through the NHS.

In recent months the far right of the Tory party have had to pull their heads beneath the parapet. With Maastricht out of the way they will be looking to restore their influence and to secure gains in the second budget of the year in November.

It will be interesting to see whether the Chancellor throws them a bone by chopping a whole section of welfare spending, or whether he continues the salami tactic of taking thin slices from the cake, a tactic that Mrs. Thatcher found so very useful. But whatever the outcome one factor should be borne in mind: the principles at the heart of the Welfare State are dead and buried so far as a large part of the Tory party are concerned. We have gone beyond targeting the 'misfits' of society, and those to whom

other such derogatory labels can be attached and now its the turn of the 'little old dears' and married mothers to pay for the growing economic crisis that Mrs. Thatcher lead us into. And remember, the New Right may try to use the projected budget deficit of

some £50 billion to justify their need for cuts in the benefit system, but they have never accepted that one person has a right to a benefit which is paid for out of taxes paid by another. So far as the New Right are concerned the ultimate prize is not a reduction in the welfare benefits but their complete abolition, not a cut-back in the National Health Service but its complete privatisation.

Socialist Voice welcomes contributions from readers

Send your letters, articles, photographs etc. to our usual address

Make Socialist Voice part of your campaign

ERM and Maastricht

The crisis Deepens

The Maastricht treaty has been ratified by votes in Parliament but the reality is that the whole process is breaking apart.

Twelve months ago Britain was forced to withdraw from the Exchange Rate Mechanism and now the pressure on the Franc has forced such a fundamental revision of the currency bands that the ERM has effectively ceased to exist.

Any thoughts of a European monetary union by 1997 (the scheduled date), or any other date are just the dreams of the European parliamentarians.

Major's 'success' at getting Maastricht through parliament brings to mind another Tory prime minister who held up a piece of paper nearly 60 years ago which said we would have piece in our time.

The collapse of the ERM is one of the clearest expressions of the depth of the recession, the weakness of all the European economies and their inability to compete in a world market.

On the eve of the debate on Maastricht, British businessmen were wheeled out saying that to adopt the social chapter would kill the economic recoveries, at the same time, in Germany labour laws are being changed so that workers can work longer hours and work on Sundays and bank holidays. Recent economic figures show that we are growing at the expense of higher wage economies like Germany.

The growing economic problems are not limited to Europe.

Proctor and Gamble, for example, have stated that 13,000 jobs are to go over the next three to four years with thirty of its 147 plants to close worldwide, whilst Fujitsu, the Japanese giant, is cutting its staff by 6,000 in the next two years to "...lower its costs and increase profits."

With only a pallid economic recovery in the US and Japan and finds, as with all industrialised nations, their products undercut by Far Eastern economies, the world continues to lurch into a severe slump.

The effect on Britain is acute. While the government refers to the fiddled



unemployment statistics as proof of economic recovery another fact gives an opposite view: the total number actually employed continues to fall. The total fell last year by 609,000. Britain's present economic strategy is one of making us the sweat shop of Europe, according to the latest reports 24 per cent are living below the poverty line. Peter Lilley says, "We are paying more to keep people on the dole in Britain than workers are paid in South Korea."

The reduced industrial base in Britain is unable to support the gains won by the working class. One city analyst described the £50 billion deficits in spending as a "colossus" that is not sustainable.

The Thatcherite policies of privatisation cannot avoid the consequences of all this. These do not alter the underlying weakness of the British economy and it will add to that weakness. Selling off British Telecom in July has reduced the deficit for one month to £1.5 billion. Over a decade of privatisation has helped break up the industrial base of the country.

All the political arrangements of the European politicians have only disguised the economic contradictions. The Thatcherite example is one of the strongest while it proclaimed to strengthen the economy it helped cause

Behind the News

was compiled this month
by
Audrey Smith and
Peter Windeler

further decline.

Professor Godley of Cambridge, one of the most consistently accurate bourgeois economists, says that the manufacturing base will be so small by the end of the decade that it will not be able to sustain the economy. The European Commission report of 5th August that surveys employment prospects states, "...jobless totals will rise in numbers unparalleled in decades...economic output will drop...there is no concrete sign of recovery".

Greater protectionism will result from the tensions in Europe but cooperation inside "Fortress Europe" where immigrants are being banned will continue. The "ethnic cleansing" that is rampant in the former Yugoslavia is already on the increase in Western Europe due to the racist policies of the Common Market.

In the past Britain encouraged a cheap labour force to come to the country, now factories can be constructed any where in the world.

Roaming world capital seeks to maximise its profits and secure its own protection.

It is investing in the Far East economies. Politically it already has an escape route to leap tariff barriers and to secure grants by its co-operative alliances, such as Rover/Honda and Nissan.

This process can also bring workers of the world closer together. When the Timex workers spoke to the workers of France and explained the fiasco of the "Hoover" relocation that lost French jobs they found no hostility but a realisation that the unity of the class interest transcended national boundaries.

The old capitalist order of the world which Bush thought to recreate as the New World (how long ago that seems) is disintegrating.

The collapses of the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, the Middle East and the passing of the ERM have common roots - the decline of imperialism.

There is the potential for massive change because in all corners of the globe capitalism can only survive with increasing barbarity.

WAKE UP world

Wake Up World was an event organised by 'International Artists Against Racism' in aid of the United Nations Children's Emergency Fund appeal for the children of the former Yugoslavia. It was held in Manchester's Royal Exchange Theatre on Sunday 18th July.

Vanessa and Corin Redgrave organised 'Wake Up World' in response to an appeal from Rade Serbedzija, an actor from Sarajevo. The audience had paid their ten pounds to applaud and admire, their role was to be entirely passive. The event was made up of eight hours of lectures from the 'great and the good'. There was little said about the plight of Yugoslavia. Instead, the speeches were organised around the Holocaust and the Jewish experience. Very few could see what this had to do with the situation in the former Yugoslavia, but slowly it became clear that the link and the only link with what followed was ethnic cleansing. The first two speakers were survivors of the Nazi Holocaust, their anguish captured and subdued their listeners. The audience was tied by sympathy and embarrassment.

Rabbi after Rabbi spoke, concentrating on the Jewish persecution, only one speaker referred to the gypsies who had perished and no one to the trade unionists and the homosexuals. Speaker after speaker claimed that the Holocaust was unique, letters were read from the famous whose families had perished. Two and a half hours of dogmatic claims, exhortations to do something and folksy anecdotes, two speakers assuring their listeners that after you had punched and overcome the anti-Semitic school bully he showered you with friendship and presents, even more it was the claim that the Jewish experience was unique. If the running order had been reversed and the persecution survivors spoken last the

audience would have left long before then. At the end of the afternoon the hotch potch of appeals with the only clear

messages the supremacy of Jewish interpretation the dishonesty of the comparisons and the contradictory appeals to only be human and all will be solved. The most telling summing up was done by a black woman in the audience. She shrugged and looked away.

There were few 'outside' speakers, in the evening most of the artistes continued the same theme. The comedian Robbie Coltrane read out a letter, Andy Bell from Erasure sang with a group from Sarajevo.

The exceptions were a warning from Georgia about the imminent break up of the old Soviet Union, an American descendent of the Cherokee read out her poem about the destruction of the nation, a black group rapped to a song demanding 'Identity'. Daniel Day-Lewis read from Seamus Heaney on the 'Great Hunger' of the Irish Famine and the British treatment of the starving.

After concentrating on 'The Holocaust' most of the artists repeated in a variety of ways the belief that if we realised our humanity and sat down to talk together everything would be solved.

Artists played and sang, recited their poetry "...because they were part of humanity". One because "...she was a wife, a mother, a Jew, an Israeli and loved the world". It was like the worst excesses of Miss World with contestants who wanted to meet people, to travel and be happy.

This event was about a tragedy which awakens nightmares and which could engulf Europe if not the world. Appeals to realise a common humanity did not save the inmates of the death camps.

There was no consideration of the origins of the break up of Yugoslavia instead it was like wading through treacle sabotaged with the booby traps of false assumptions.

And the black women? Catching her eye I mouthed to her asking what she thought? Smiling she signalled back with her hand over her mouth and then an enormous yawn. I suppose that was the kindest thing she could do.

"There was no consideration of the origins of the break up of Yugoslavia instead it was like wading through treacle sabotaged with the booby traps of false assumptions".

R *a socialist voice*
Review

WAKE UP world



**WORKERS
AID**

MANCHESTER WELCOMES CONVOY

PETER WINDELER

Upon its arrival in Manchester the Workers' Aid for Bosnia convoy held a meeting at Manchester Town Hall on Thursday 19th August.

Over one hundred people heard speakers discuss the problems and successes of the campaign.

A PhD student from Sarajevo from Salford University who became stranded in Britain at the outset of the Yugoslav civil war spoke of the uniqueness of the convoy in that it was workers sending help to fellow workers and in this sense was symbolic. He went on to remind those present that the destination of the convoy, Tuzla, was a heavily industrialised town with coal mines and salt mines and one of the largest chemical industries in Europe.

Tuzla, the student said, was also a well integrated town which had not experienced the horrors of a community turning upon itself. But, he said, the situation in Tuzla was worse than that in Sarajevo which had received regular aid convoys. Because of this he was glad that the convoy had decided to go to Tuzla. The student was glad to see so many people present at the meeting because as the war had dragged on in Yugoslavia less and less support had been received and in Tuzla winters were very severe.

The student advised the audience that he did not want to discuss politics but Bosnia had been divided for the interests of the big powers and against the interests of ordinary workers. The only solution will be when the people learn to live with each other - his one hope was that the children of the conflict will live their lives in peace. Finally, the student reminded the audience that miners in Tuzla had sent support to British miners during the miners strike and it was only right that workers in Britain should support workers in Bosnia.

Jackie Vance, the leader of the convoy, also spoke to the audience. He said that members of the convoy had had the chance to meet and talk to Bosnians in Manchester and that this

had been an uplifting experience.

He said that they had received tremendous support from housing estates and community centres along the way from where the convoy had started at the Timex factory in Dundee. The striking workers at the Timex factory had sent a message on the convoy to the workers in Tuzla - from one set of workers in struggle to another.

From Dundee the convoy had travelled to Edinburgh and then onto Glasgow, in both towns receiving huge support. Then on to Newcastle and Leeds, where large amounts of food had been donated.

Prior to arriving in Manchester the convoy had been to Liverpool, being put up at the Unemployed Centre. In Manchester the convoy had been to the Parkside Women Against Pit Closures camp. In fact, all along the route the convoy had integrated itself into the struggles of the local communities.

In Manchester for the first time they had experienced difficulty when the police had stopped them from making collections on city centre streets. But, as an example of the growing stature on the convoy, just one telephone from the convoy headquarters in London to the chief constable in Manchester had solved the problem and permits were issued to allow collections the very next day.

Jackie explained that the convoy arose out of a campaign that was launched some three months previously, with a march in London which had attracted only 15 to 30 people. At the time he had doubted whether it would be possible to form a convoy from such small numbers. However, now Trafalgar Square had been booked for the National Demonstration on 5th September and it was expected that it would be full to overflowing. In addition, there would be a flute band and two miners bands playing.

Now the convoy consisted of seven lorries, a coach and an ambulance

which would leave Britain on 6th September and it was anticipated that the convoy would be twice that size by then.

Once on mainland Europe the convoy would meet up with other lorries from as far away as Sweden and Belgium.

Jackie said that because of the situation in Yugoslavia it was not possible to say that they would definitely reach Tuzla but it was the convoy's full intention to reach it. It was believed that the prestige of the convoy, created from within the working class would guarantee its safe passage. Support for the convoy had been received from both Latin and North America. The convoy had now linked up with many struggles, including those of miners and fights to prevent the closure of hospitals.

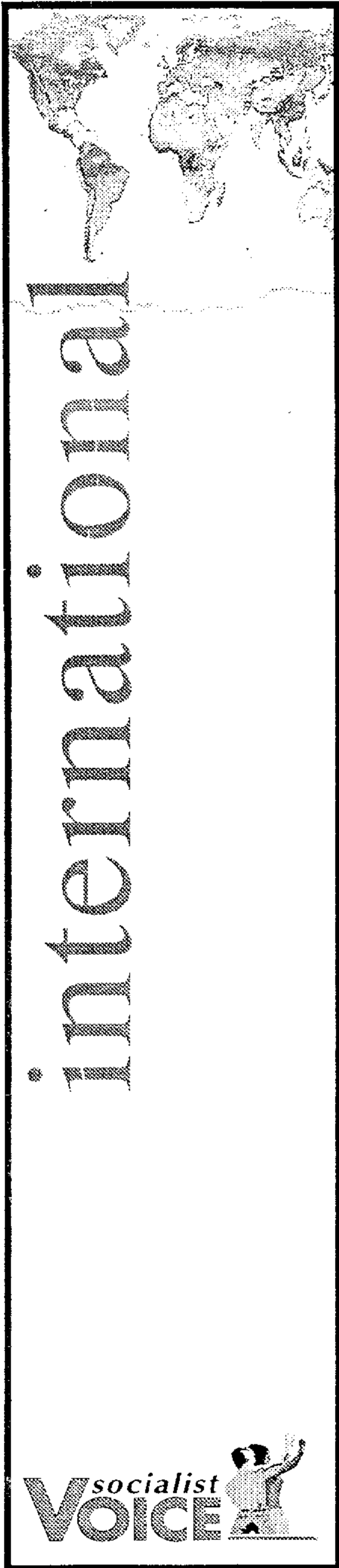
Finally, Jackie said that he was hoping to return to Manchester on 30th October with a message from the workers of Tuzla to the workers of Manchester.


Elma, a young girl who was a refugee from Bosnia, spoke at the meeting and called upon everyone to support the campaign, especially for the children in Bosnia who only know how to love and how to play. She had recently heard that her 5 year old cousin in Tuzla had had a severely injured leg because of the fighting.

One of the last speakers was a teacher from Tuzla who had been in Britain for 10 months having left her husband in Tuzla because he felt that the town needed him. She had come to Britain in order that she and her two daughters would be safe from the fighting.

She said that when she heard of the Workers' Aid convoy she found the news uplifting and it had raised her moral.

She explained that no nationalist leaderships had established themselves in Tuzla and it remains an oasis of integration. The convoy would bring very powerful moral support which would be greatly appreciated.



W  R K E R S
A I D F O R
B O S N I A
SUPPORT the CONVOY

MARTIN RALPH

The continuing arms embargo on those defending Bosnia is the clearest example that Western governments, despite all their hand wringing and talks of peace, do not support the right of Bosnia to defend itself. That is why we have to give the fullest support to the Workers' Convoy to Tuzla.

The role of 'Doctor Death' Lord Owen and the United Nations 'peace plans' have all been aimed at forcing the Bosnians to accept the dismemberment of Bosnia, even British television has shown, United Nations troops going into an area with the purpose of "disarming the different sides". However, the only force they disarm are the Bosnians - the Serbian army, they are "powerless" to disarm. Despite all the weaponry at their disposal, they are 'powerless' to take an aid convoy to relieve the starving of Mostar or there is a problem with 'red tape'.

One young woman from Sarajevo, Guardian 9th August, summed up the feelings of many Bosnians when she said of the UN, "When they first came we welcomed them. We thought they would help us, but now they are acting like the Chetniks. They wanted to keep us trapped here like animals." It is similar to when the British troops went into northern Ireland. At first

the catholic population welcomed them but that feeling soon disappeared after the troops started turning on the population they had gone to "protect".

From Milosevic to the United Nations to John Major they all seek a way out of their problems at the expense of the Bosnians. Lord Owen has only one purpose in Bosnia, and that is to represent the interests of British imperialism.

OPPOSITION TO WAR

It would be a great mistake to consider that the war is being fought by three solid camps: Muslim, Croat and Serb. A 14 year old Bosnian Jasnet Bosknjak told Socialist Voice, "It is not a war, where two armies are fighting each other. The Bosnians do not want to fight. It is really aggression from the Serbian army and others."

The Serb army is no ordinary army. Many of those fighting in the Serb army are mercenaries, paid to kill. "For every child killed Serbs soldiers are paid 500 to 1000 Marks." One Bosnian told us, "Serbs have been threatened that if they do not fight in the army their children would be killed."

An army like this is very unstable. It can only live on victories, bribery and corruption. The Serb army has to go on killing, if it retreats, it could disintegrate from internal contradictions and blows from the masses in Serbia.

◆ BOSNIA / CHINA / USA

At the beginning of the war there was considerable opposition in Serbia. A number of Serbian journalists issued calls for Serbs to desert the army and offered advice on how to do it. Large numbers of mothers protested at their sons being called up to fight. One estimate from the Women in Black/Anti-War Centre in Serbia said that 300,000 men had refused conscription between 1990 and 1992.

An opposition radio station broadcasts propaganda against Milosevic and the war and in recent weeks a general strike took place within Serbia. The Serbian authorities are facing great problems with the working class. With hyper-inflation, where workers' wages only cover the cost of the basics there is always the threat of a working class explosion. In Zagreb independent unions have developed, many workers are surviving on subsistence wages. As the Serb and Croat leaders make a war against Bosnia, they force the harshest conditions against their own workers.

Milosevic could not leave the Bosnians alone. A repressive state could not exist side by side to a state where Serbs, Croats and Muslims and others lived together - so they had to try and create Greater Serbia and that is only possible by destroying Bosnia.

Bosnia is extremely rich in raw materials and it has a concentration of industry and workers. If Bosnia is destroyed Bosnians would be killed or forced into slavery by Serbian chauvinists.

A LONG STRUGGLE

Bosnia has a long history of struggle against those who

wish to occupy or carve it up. The present day Yugoslavia was born in struggle against Nazi occupation, Nazi collaborators and the intrigues of imperialism and Stalinism. Churchill boasted in his History of the Second World War how at the end of the war he and Stalin outlined a plan to carve up Europe in which Yugoslavia was to be divided 50-50. What forced both Imperialism and Stalinism to retreat in Yugoslavia was the unity of the peasants and workers that had been forged in the struggle against the Nazis. The working class and peasants pushed Tito far beyond the relations he would have preferred and created the post-war state of Yugoslavia.

In a recent discussion with Bosnians now living in Britain they explained, "By 1980 Tito tried to force divisions, he said if you are Catholic you are a Croat, if you are Orthodox you are Serb. At the same time the 85% of officers in Tito's Yugoslavia army were Serbian. In Croatia 65% of the police were Serbian."

"They tried to split up Bosnia then, but at that time Serbs, Muslims and Croats lived side by side, they were friends. The real Yugoslavia was in Bosnia."

Johney Sarac, a Bosnian who has run six convoys to Bosnia already and who is joining the Workers' Aid convoy, said that "Bosnia was the main mining area in Yugoslavia, it was a workers area. Tuzla is the only place in the whole of ex-Yugoslavia where people hold together, everyone fights there shoulder to shoulder: Muslims, Croats and Serbs. The nationalists have tried every way to cause trouble but have not succeeded. In the last elections the nationalists only got 16% of the vote. Even Serbian Welfare Officers in Tuzla are helping everyone and people live in harmony."



It is not Lord Owen but the united resistance of many Bosnians who have thwarted the Serbian army's final solution



The Simon Bolivar Brigade was organised by Moreno and included Trotskyists, workers and peasants from all over Latin America

He said, "Tuzla is the real Yugoslavia. Many of the top bureaucrats have fled the area so many of the people organising the town will be much closer to the people than before."

It is for this reason that the workers aid convoy to Tuzla is of such great importance. Tuzla is a town with a long history of struggle both nationally and internationally. According to Indjiana Harper speaking at the launch of Workers Aid for Bosnia, miners in Tuzla always helped the struggle of miners abroad; "They didn't do it [support the strike] just for the striking British miners they had done similar things for the miners of Russia, Africa, South America, wherever they struck." Quoted in Workers Press.

Together with Tuzla, Zenica has the biggest concentration of workers in Bosnia. Many of the refugees have gone there. The hospitals, schools, firms, refugee services are well organised. Many of the old bureaucrats have fled, the ones that are left come under considerable pressure from workers. To help those in Tuzla is to help their fight in Sarajevo.

INTERNATIONAL WORKERS' AID

We believe that the fight against chauvinism in Bosnia should be helped in the same way that the international working class has mobilised in the past to aid other desperate struggles. Such as the international brigades that were organised to aid Spanish workers in the thirties and more recently to aid the struggle against Somoza in Nicaragua.

In 1936 the workers of Europe responded to the desperate situation that faced the workers of Spain. This support

has never been forgotten by the workers around the world. The Communist Party in Britain was forced by the response of workers in Britain to organise international brigades and the Independent Labour party also organised forces to go. The first forces in 1936 went from Germany, Italy, France and the Balkans. These helped save Madrid from early defeat by the fascist forces under Franco and gave the impetus for further foreign help.

The defeat of the Spanish workers was due to the policy of Stalin. The Stalinist secret service and the Spanish Communist Party killed many anti-fascist forces including those close to Trotskyism. None of that can be blamed on the workers from Europe, many of who gave their lives in the fields and towns of Spain. In fact 35,000 men served representing 53 nations.

There is a living tradition of the working class that is always trying to respond internationally but does not always find an expression. The Communist Party has disintegrated and many of those left do not support the current aid efforts. We would ask them to think again. To think what stirred them in their youth to join the Communist Party, it was not the policy of Stalin but the desire to struggle for socialism to continue the work of the October revolution in 1917 and to fight against the conditions in which they were forced to live.

To all those who supported the International Brigades we say you are betraying your own youthful desires if you now refuse to support the Workers Convoy. That is the living tradition of internationalism.

When the Sandinista organisation of Nicaragua issued

an international call for help, Trotskyists, lead by Moreno (leader of the International Workers' League), who was then based in Columbia, responded by organising another international brigade, the Simon Bolivar Brigade. It was formed in 1979. Many workers and peasants joined wanting to fight Somoza and the U.S. who were supporting Somoza. They were recognised as having carried important military work in the overthrow of Somoza and were some the first forces to arrive in Managua, the capital after the overthrow.

The history of that brigade is not well known in Europe. The Bosnians we have talked to said that they supported the Nicaraguan revolution in every way they could, giving regular amounts of money and following the course of the revolution.

SUPPORT THE CONVOY

The task for us, the working class, is to stop the aggression and defeat the Serbian army. The Serbian leaders, having concentrated all the arms that had previously been under the control of the Yugoslav army in Bosnia, said that it would take three days to take Bosnia. So why have they not done it?

In a letter just received from near Tuzla, a man writing to his wife in Manchester said: "*The youth here have decided to stay and fight, we do not accept any nationalist party. I am proud for what I am fighting for.*"

Those two sentences reveal why the Serbian army has not been successful. They are fighting not only for Bosnia but showing a way forward to the workers of the world

In a letter just received from near Tuzla, a man writing to his wife in Manchester said: "The youth here have decided to stay and fight, we do not accept any nationalist party. I am proud for what I am fighting for."

and all who suffer from repression: we are a force and we fight.

All this leads to a central point. The working class must raise direct support for the fighting Bosnians in the way it has before in our class history.

It takes £3,500 to put a lorry on the road. We are asking all labour organisations to find ways to put as many lorries onto the convoy as possible. If Tuzla is defeated it will be a blow against the international working class. As an international class we have to make a stand in Tuzla. We

must finish with watching the slaughter on television or just talking about, or finding reasons why we cannot do anything, we must go into action.

The Workers Aid convoy for Bosnia has met with great success along the road. There is a growing feeling in the British working class to aid workers and the communities in Bosnia. Many local papers are reporting on convoys that are going to Bosnia every month from many parts of Britain.

The West used to say that socialism had died in 1989 and 1990 but if that was the case the struggle for working class solidarity and unity would also have died in Yugoslavia. What this struggle testifies to is that workers will always keep the struggle for socialism alive.

This is a stirring for internationalism that will become stronger the more it is taken up by the working class. To build the convoy and continue its work is to help rebuild the international organisations of the working class and its leadership that will be equal to the heroism of those fighting in Bosnia today to maintain its unity.

**Workers Aid For Bosnia
Tuzla Convoy
"Report Back"
National Meeting**

**Saturday
30th October
Town Hall
Albert Square
Manchester
Hotline 071 582 5462**

The Exports of Slavery

In the third article of his series on China, James Lee, a survivor of Tiananmen Square, reports on the 'Laogai' prison camps.

There are hundreds of Laogai camps in every province in China, where the prisoners are engaged in different kinds of labour, ranging from agriculture, mining to manufacturing. Each camp has two names, an internal name and an external name. The internal name is the prison name, for example, Zhejiang Province No.4 Prison. The external name is the factory name, Hangzhou Wulin Machinery Works, for instance. All types of prisoners in Laogai camps are forced into slave labour and undergo so-called 'thorough reform', what the world knows more commonly as brainwashing, even those awaiting sentencing and the short-term prisoners in detention centres are no exception.

Most prisoners work for at least twelve hours a day and all are denied any civil rights. They are under the control of the Ministry of Justice or the Public Security Bureau and are treated as "objects of dictatorship of the proletariat" or "class enemies." Harry Wu, the author of *Laogai: Chinese Gulags* and who spent nineteen years in one of the camps, estimates there are between 12 and 16 million prisoners, including many political prisoners in the Peoples' Republic of China today.

Forced labour products from the Laogai are sold both in domestic and international markets. The exports are designed to earn foreign currency as a matter of national economic policy. Earnings, whether foreign or domestic, go to operate and expand the Laogai system itself.

In an article published in 1989 Yu Guoqiang, head of the Judicial Department of Zhejiang Province stated: "...the 'reform and re-education through labour' enterprises in our province will firmly develop their export-oriented economy, hopefully, the foreign exchange income from exports will increase by 20% compared with last year and will amount to US\$18.9 million."

It should be noted that some legitimate factories also produce goods which are sold under the same brand name as Laogai products. For instance, spanners and wrenches using the 'Diamond' and 'Iron Bull' brand names are produced in Laogai and non-Laogai factories.

When these products are mixed in a shipment to an overseas buyer, it is impossible to tell the difference between the Laogai and the legitimate products. In fact, according to the Laogai Research Foundation based in the United States, the Chinese government has tried very hard to hide the origin of the products by changing the factory names of the prisons, opening new sales offices, changing product brand names, and continuing the effort to integrate Laogai enterprises with other businesses.

The Foundation has also revealed how Hong Kong is used by the Chinese state-owned companies for its illegal trading operations and produced evidence that the Chinese officials have consistently been engaged in selling forced Laogai products in the United States. For instance, a Foundation official posing as a businessman at a trade show in Los Angeles found a Laogai made diesel engine, which is the subject of a US Customs Service Detention Order, still being offered for sale.

Underscoring their determination, the Chinese authorities at the show were also soliciting foreign investment in the prison enterprise.

Prisoners in Laogai camps continue to be deprived of their most basic human rights. They are beaten, given ill-treatment, or put into confinement with limited food and water, usually in a very small cell, if they break the 'working discipline' or cannot meet the required work quotas.

On 7th August 1992 the Chinese Government signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the US Government prohibiting the import and export of prison labour products. It has denied all allegations of exporting products of forced labour but, in fact, illegal forced labour products from China continue to enter overseas markets including the UK and other European countries.

There is very little public awareness of this issue and Western governments have made little effort to stop prison product exports from growing.

It is time this matter was raised again and given some priority on the agenda of human rights issues.

SV COMMENT:

Neither the USA, the British nor any other imperialist government will oppose the use of the Laogai camps because they are rushing into building all kinds of relation with the Chinese government now that the bureaucracy has committed itself to introducing capitalism.

Therefore, we call on the working class to raise its voice in action and condemn the labour camps. We call on the labour and trade union movement to help those Chinese activists who are campaigning to put an end to the atrocities. Only the joint action of the class inside and outside of China will put an end to these labour camps.

Blacks & Latinos UNITE IN L.A.

The following is a report of a recent conversation Socialist Voice had with Felix Salozar, a Salvadorian trade unionist living in Los Angeles who witnessed the 1991 riots at first hand.

Felix discussed the riots and some profound changes that are taking place in the city.

Felix is a member of the International Socialist League in the USA.

Los Angeles has the largest concentration of Salvadorians and Mexicans existing outside their own countries. Felix said that in addition to the 5.5 million Salvadorians living in El Salvador - a further one million live in L.A. as refugees - having escaped the murderous military junta in their home country.

He said that 'East L.A.' is the third largest concentration of Mexicans in the world; both in and outside of Mexico, third only to Mexico city and Monterey.

"Of course there are other minorities - there are Koreans, Vietnamese, Philippines, but the largest 'minority' groups are the Latinos and the Blacks".

Felix said it was very important to understand the social conditions imposed on the communities; chronic unemployment, where youth grow up having never worked, institutionalised racism and low paid jobs. "Schools and community centres have virtually been abandoned by the city. Teachers come from the city, they try and teach, but conditions are so poor that only one in four pupils stay in school."

The levels of poverty that were endured were as bad as anything you would find in Central or South America, Felix emphasised.

"L.A. is known as the bank robbery capital of the world."

"Before the riots gangs confronted each other. There was fighting between Blacks and Latino's, most gangs are racially organised". Felix described the unpublicised violence particularly against the Blacks in 'South Central L.A. He said that most of the business, particularly the liquor stores are owned by wealthy business people - "and they don't employ Blacks". "There are more liquor stores in South Central L.A. than in four states of the U.S.A. put together, and they are all owned by 'outside elements'."

"One month before the riots, a young Black woman was accused of stealing from a liquor store and a struggle broke out and she was killed. This type of incident would happen often particularly in the Latin communities. The riots in Los Angeles in 1991, following the acquittal of police charged for the assault on Rodney King, were a turning point in the forging of new links between oppressed racial groups in the city. When the rebellion came Blacks and Latinos felt they could do something together".

Felix described that on the day the riots started, the crowd that had built up outside the police headquarters was made up of Blacks, Chicano's (Mexicans born in the U.S.) and Mexicans: all the oppressed sections of the community identified with the beating of Rodney King.

"Things were getting very hot outside the police building. The police attacked the crowd to try and disperse us, but it didn't work. There were further attacks and some were arrested. It was four or five o'clock in the afternoon, even though the city was still busy the crowd began fanning out and attacking businesses. It started as a protest against police brutality. The police attacked again and the people were not going to tolerate it."

"By 6 pm it had spread to almost every part of the city. The media and police tried to explain it as a group of crazy Blacks disrupting the city - if that was so, the police would have controlled them. But it was not - the people were coming out - every corner had people gathering on it. The feeling was the same as the civil war in El Salvador, where the masses took to the streets."

"The fires and looting were directed against business, they were not one racial group fighting another. It didn't matter if the businesses were Black owned, Korean, Salvadorian or white - they got set on fire."

"I went into the street to try and avert unnecessary violence. On our corner there is a drop-in centre. Things were being taken but we had an opportunity to talk to the rioting people and we prevented it from being set on fire."

"One man asked me, 'I've never stolen anything, but I haven't worked for six months and I have no food - shall I take some food?' I told him, 'Do what your stomach tells you to do.'"

"On the second day of the rioting a group of three or four Blacks came to us and said, 'Blacks and Mexicans together; come and embrace us.' They were educated with pictures of Malcolm X and Martin Luther King. This was very inspiring."

Felix explained that with the community having had to organise into gangs to survive, he was worried they could be easily influenced by Fascist groups. But the feeling that dominated was the need to unite to fight a common enemy. He said, "It shows that the gangs have a great possibility to become a revolutionary tool."

"There has been a big change. Since the riots, there has been a cease fire between the gangs and the level of violence between them has been greatly reduced."

"A new kind of leadership has developed away from the traditional politics and away from the church. People are trying to find a way out and looking for leadership."

"It will be no surprise in the near future to see a new kind of politically militant organisations coming out of the Hispanic and Black communities."

IN MEMORY OF ANIBAL TESORO, AN ARGENTINE TROTSKYIST

Anibal Tesoro, also known as Anibal "Moliere", Hernán Felix and by many other pseudonyms, was a member of the Argentine MAS (Movement Towards Socialism). He was an accomplished revolutionary journalist and was dearly loved by friends and the hundreds of comrades with whom he had shared his hopes, frustrations and cheerfulness in more than thirty years of struggle in the Trotskyist movement.

Anibal was born in 1941 into a family of socialist ideas who lived in a Bonaerense, a village near Rojas. He began fighting as a revolutionary in 1959 when he was studying as a medical student in Buenos Aires. He joined a small but determined revolutionary group of students who had made connections with fighters in the workers movement and who later joined "Workers Word" whose paper sometimes sold 50,000 copies.

Soon after joining the party he commenced writing and collaborated in the production of a journal of which the legendary "Vasco" Bengoechea was editor. Since then, with only short interruptions, he participated, including during the times of dictatorship, in all the party papers in Argentina: Palabra Obrera, La Verdad, Avanzada Socialista, Unidad Socialista, Opción, Solidaridad Socialista. He also contributed to the press of the international.

As a rank and file member or as a member of the central committee Anibal always encouraged members of the

party to assist the workers' organisations and struggles. He participated in many strikes. He was active in the capital, in the regions around Buenos Aires and in other parts of Argentina.

He was prepared to take on any tasks but his main skill was as a revolutionary journalist, especially in explaining the political positions of the party in a profound and lively way. Because he had his finger on the pulse of the working class and was able to see the changes taking place in their lives and consciousness he could explain the ideas of Trotskyism in a penetrating way which could be understood by ordinary workers.

During the dictatorship in Argentina he was based in Colombia and helped in founding the IWL-Fl. In 1978 he married Eleonora, daughter of Nahual Moreno, founder and leader of Argentine Trotskyism. He left three small children.

He was in France for a short time in 1981 and contributed to the building of the party in Spain.

Anibal was until the end a convinced and consistent revolutionary and devoted the main part of his adult life to the fight for socialism and the revolutionary party.

This year he went to Russia to help the international. He died on the soil that saw the October revolution trying to understand the complex developments opened up by the revolutionary developments of the past few years.

50th Issue / Fifth Anniversary Appeal

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