

LABOUR LEADERS BETRAY BOSNIA

BY CLIFF SLAUGHTER

AFTER Gorazde, will it be Tuzla and every other UN 'safe area' in Bosnia surrounded by Serbian armies?

Gorazde received no protection from the United Nations. The people of these towns are being handed over by the 'great powers' in a blood sacrifice to Serbian leaders Milosevic and Karadzic in the interests of a 'negotiated peace'.

This will carve up Bosnia, complete the racist 'ethnic cleansing', and hand the spoils of war to the Serbian regime.

Responsibility for the Bosnian workers' plight lies with the leadership of the working class, internationally: the Stalinists who for so long controlled the workers of Yugoslavia, eastern Europe, the Soviet Union and China, and today's remnants of that bureaucracy; and the 'Socialist' and Labour leaders throughout the world.

Deserted

They have deserted the Bosnian workers. They have refused to organise the great resources of the working-class movement in solidarity with the Bosnian workers. They have slavishly tailed behind their own governments, their capitalist masters, their UN.

They are responsible. To turn the situation, an offensive against these false leaderships is necessary, a reconstruction of the working class and its internationalism, in and through the fight for solidarity with Bosnia. Either we do this, or a first new victory for fascism in Europe is in the making in Bosnia.

The Workers International to Rebuild the Fourth International has led the organisation of the Workers Aid convoys to Bosnia with this purpose. In every country Workers Aid supporters must organise demonstrations, strikes, pickets, etc., etc. These demonstrations must target the reactionary working-class leaderships who have betrayed Bosnia.



Workers Aid for Bosnia convoy members with Tuzla people in the town

Human life is cheap in Gorazde

GORAZDE's people are being exposed to shelling, sniper fire and machine-gun fire. Water and sanitation systems had collapsed, and food distribution had been halted by sniper fire, as confirmed by a UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) spokesperson.

'Countless numbers of women, children and the elderly are staying outdoors with nowhere to go.'

Gorazde's hospital had taken a direct hit on its roof, and aid workers reported sniper fire being directed at ward windows. Built to hold 65 patients, the hospital was sheltering at least 200 wounded. The only anaesthetist, wounded in the leg some days previously, was among staff struggling to cope.

'Human life is the cheapest thing in Gorazde right now,' an

amateur radio operator said. 'Life is measured in seconds not years. There are wounded people trapped on the left bank of the river. NATO planes are flying overhead but doing nothing.'

As 60,000 people were trapped in the UN's so-called 'safe haven', it was reported that 30 villages around Gorazde had been 'torched' — Serb General Mladic's own word when giving the order to his troops.

The Serb onslaught on Gorazde and its environs is massive racist 'ethnic cleansing', with the acquiescence of the 'great powers'. Before the war, eastern Bosnia had a majority Muslim population. The Bosnian government has always insisted such conquered areas must be returned.

'As recent events show,' says

Anthony Borden of the Institute for War and Peace Reporting, 'the Bosnian Serbs are not going to relinquish conquered territory for a song . . . any future resistance to Serb domination, any realistic effort to "reverse ethnic cleansing" . . . will not derive from a negotiating table, but from the strategic military base that Gorazde could provide.'

'Wipe out Gorazde and the fate of eastern Bosnia is sealed. Clear these enclaves, and the path to a pure Serbian state is open.'

'If Gorazde is the Serbs' final solution for the Muslims, it is also the last straw for the involvement of the great powers in the region and their peacemaking role. . . All the signs are that the world is preparing to legitimise the Greater Serbian state.'

Workers International to Rebuild the Fourth International
LOBBY TUC GENERAL COUNCIL

Wednesday 27 April

Assemble 8.30am

Congress House, Great Russell Street, London WC1 (tube: Tottenham Ct Rd)

No to ethnic cleansing!

Defend Gorazde!

Lift arms embargo on Bosnia!

Workers Aid for Bosnia
Convoy confirms urgent need for northern route

TWO Workers Aid for Bosnia convoys — 36 trucks with 400 tonnes of aid — went to Tuzla, Brcko and surrounding villages during the past month.

The convoy team met representatives of the civil and military authorities, the trades unions, and professionals in the university, the hospital and sport. They all confirmed the importance of the campaign to open the northern route from Orasje, on the border with Croatia, to Tuzla.

Trades unions officially represented on the convoys were: the Graphical, Paper and Media Union (Britain), a teachers' union in France, the firefighters' union (Spain), and the Slovenian miners' union.

Financial donations and solidarity letters were received from trades unions but they did not send trucks and aid of their own. The full burden of organising these convoys was placed on the small campaign team, assisted by Bosnians in Germany, Sweden and Slovenia.

Campaign sections and supporters were asked to send their aid to the Kreka miners' union. However, some trucks from Germany were sent to organisations that their drivers felt represented them, e.g. Caritas (Catholic), Merhemet (Muslim) and to Brcko — their hometown. The Slovenians took their aid straight to their family villages.

Distress

This caused disappointment amongst the miners and distress for the Workers Aid for Bosnia team. When they saw the trucks arriving the miners expected family parcels, but found that most aid was being distributed elsewhere.

Dot Gibson, representing Workers Aid for Bosnia appeared on television to speak about this problem. She also took part in a radio programme with Fikret Sujlik, president of the Kreka miners, and a Slovenian miner to discuss the aims of the campaign. She stressed that Workers Aid for Bosnia would continue to fight for the European trades unions to come to the aid of the workers of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

On this occasion a rally could not be held, but Workers Aid drivers met and discussed with many people in Tuzla town centre when they distributed 45,000 campaign leaflets. Many people returned to take bundles of the leaflet for their workmates and neighbours.

A further six-truck Workers Aid convoy is now on its way from Sweden to Tuzla with medical aid.

THIS WEEK:

Bosnia:

A reactionary slander, page 2
Reports from Tuzla and the Workers Aid convoy, pages 4&5
Gorazde exposes betrayal of UN's policy, page 8

Where will NHS rationing end?; Bus privatisation, page 3
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Workers Press

A reactionary slander

AS THE Bosnian towns of Tuzla and Gorazde came under murderous Serb artillery fire again last week, certain individuals in the British trade union movement launched their own pernicious attack, against Workers Aid for Bosnia and its convoys.

It seems to have started in the Haringey association of the National Union of Teachers (NUT). Only two weeks ago Workers Aid convoy members were in Tuzla, hearing about the desperate need for food, medicines and teaching materials for the town's children. Last year each schoolchild got a gift from the West: 'one pencil, and one notebook'. As for school meals, 'they are infrequent and merely symbolic', a Tuzla council leader admitted.

Teachers in Tuzla are appealing for solidarity from their colleagues overseas (see pages 4&5). But some people are more interested in spreading poison, by slandering Workers Aid and sabotaging international solidarity. The rot has spread from the NUT into some other unions. And we know who is spreading it.

* * * * *

ON 1 February, Haringey NUT secretary Tony Brockman wrote to the union's solicitors asking advice on a motion supporting Workers Aid. He claimed that in a talk to the association on 25 January, London bus driver and Transport and General Workers' Union member Vaughan Thomas, a member of the first convoy, had indicated 'that a proportion of funds raised would be spent on arms'.

Vaughan Thomas has told Workers Press that he made no such statement.

We understand Vaughan was asked by Brockman whether funds would be used 'solely for humanitarian and not for political purposes'. Vaughan explained that Workers Aid did have political aims, including the lifting of the arms embargo against Bosnia. Clearly, this in no way implies that Workers Aid itself is buying arms.

But Brockman had advised the association's treasurer not to make any payment of funds to Workers Aid. And on 3 February he received the reply from union solicitor Graham Clayton: 'As to the use of union moneys for the purchase of arms, it is completely beyond me to see how the use of union money to finance an armed militia achieves the pursuit of a matter affecting the interests of the trade union movement...'

The wording is careful enough to avoid accusing Workers Aid of actually spending money on arms or to say that it's raising an 'armed militia', but in these matters suggestion is enough. The solicitor warned that the treasurer might risk legal action by a member if she signed a cheque.

Now it appears certain Stalinists are putting the story around in the Transport and General Workers' Union that Workers Aid has carried 'tons of armaments' to Bosnia! This is a complete and utter lie.

On 1 March, London secretary of Workers Aid Mike Cooke, himself a former member of NUT's Haringey association, wrote to Brockman about the 'money for arms' story: 'I can assure you, as someone who has been involved closely with the work of the campaign and who participated in the second convoy at Christmas, that no such use of funds has been made and there are no plans to use the money collected in this way.'

Mike Cooke pointed out that 'to involve ourselves in physically taking arms on our convoys would be endangering more than necessary the lives of those who take part...'. To date, Mike has received no reply to his letter.

Convoys going to Tuzla have to travel through UN and Croat HVO-occupied territory, and at least six checkpoints, facing inspections by police, army and customs on the journey from Split. Any attempt to carry anything not on the documents could lead to confiscation of all the load.

That's not all. If hostile forces such as Serb Chetniks picked up the slander against Workers Aid, trades unionists and young people taking part in its already dangerous mercy missions could be riding to their deaths. In any case, stopping vital food and medical supplies from reaching the people of Bosnia amounts to the same thing.

For the Stalinists, setting people up for murder is nothing new. In the 1930s, they accused Leon Trotsky and other leaders of the October Revolution of the most fantastic conspiracies against the Soviet state. During the Spanish civil war they accused the militant workers of Barcelona of being 'fascists'. These Big Lies, trotted out by the 'Daily Worker' and by right-wingers too, assisted frame-ups, torture and murder of revolutionaries.

In the 1950s, the Stalinists denounced Yugoslav leader Tito as an 'imperialist agent' and 'Trotskyist', declaring Yugoslavia was a fascist state. They supported the frame-up and executions of leading Communist Party members in eastern Europe, and the military suppression of the Hungarian workers.

* * * * *

ARE we 'raking up past history' too much? No, just pointing out the political pedigree of the lies against Workers Aid. Now, using the same old Stalinist smear-methods, some Stalinists have enlisted with Milosevic and Karadzic, not to mention the Foreign Office and UN arms embargo.

Serb artillery mercilessly pounds Gorazde's defenceless people. Those who fear lest the Bosnian people acquire arms to defend themselves, and who try to sabotage international solidarity, are shown up as accomplices of slaughter.

And we might as well warn the Stalinist liars: the rest of the world, including the workers' movement, has changed, even if they haven't. Workers, East and West, are combining their experiences, and will know how to deal with them.

WE WELCOME LETTERS

SEND THEM TO: WORKERS PRESS,
PO BOX 735, LONDON SW8 1YB
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Letters

Prerequisite for the party

DOES the mention of the need for a new party suggest failure of the WRP? I have been waiting for some considerable time to learn how this new party may emerge.

I like Terry Brotherstone's 'John Fordun' column but I wish he would give us more politics. For example, what progress the WRP is making in Scotland considering that Scottish Militant Labour gathered 500 people in Glasgow to demonstrate their intention to boycott VAT on fuel, and they will be contesting seats in the local elections.

'Correct' policy is wonderful and so is numbers. All chiefs and no Indians is an intolerable position.

I was pleased to read Phil Edwards's report on the teachers' union conference (Workers Press 9 April). But there was no mention of the

position that the WRP was putting forward to the National Union of Teachers. Do you have a toe-hold in that organisation?

Until you can claim substantial membership in the various trades unions, talk of a Fourth International is an irrelevance.

For an all-embracing 'new party'!

John P. Mathieson
Fife

Macedonia puzzle

ATTILA HOARE ('Letters', 9 April) evidently relies on your readers not remembering what I wrote in your 19 March issue, namely, that the frontier between Greece and what is now 'ex-Yugoslav' Macedonia was fixed in 1913, i.e. before World War I, and not by 'Versailles', in either the broad or the narrow sense of that expression. Hoare brought 'Versaille' in, I sup-

pose, just for effect, as a good boo-word. This method is all too familiar.

Actually, I don't have a view on the proper settlement of the Greco-Macedonia problem. I merely pointed out that, since the 'ethnic cleansing' of Asia Minor in 1922 and the resettlement of the Greek expellees in Aegean Macedonia, there has been a Greek majority in that region. Whether this factor should be treated as decisive is, of course, another question.

But what does puzzle me, though, is why, after rebuking me for allegedly supporting Greece against 'ex-Yugoslav' Macedonia, Hoare can go on to suggest, in his letter of 12 March, that I may 'defend Holy Russia's historic mission to protect Slavdom'.

Some say the Macedonians are south Serbs, others that they are west Bulgars, but everyone agrees that they are Slavs, whereas the Greeks are not!

Brian Pearce
New Barnet

Workers Press £3,000 Monthly Fund

In so far: £1,387.16

AS THE United Nations exposes more clearly than ever its complicity in creating the conditions for a potential vicious massacre of the people of Gorazde — a UN so-called 'safe haven' — we must step up the political, moral and physical fight for the workers' movement to come to the aid of Bosnia.

Workers Press is very much in the forefront of this and so we need to ask, yet again, that readers, supporters, Workers International members — everyone — make a real effort to improve our performance on getting the fund in. We've only managed £184 in the last week when we need £700.

On top of our responsibility to Bosnia, we have the Workers International election campaign in South Africa, which is a real step towards building a working-class alternative to the bourgeois African National Congress, allied with the Stalinist South African Communist Party and the Congress of South African Trade Unions.

And comrades from the Workers International are attending a workers' conference in the Ukraine.

What about Britain? Many people ask this question. Since our small resources have been concentrated on the sharp contradictions of the 'world

situation', some may feel that we've let drop the fights that are happening around VAT on fuel and the government's offensive on the 'welfare state'.

But in the experiences around the Workers Aid convoy to the mining town of Tuzla in north-east Bosnia, we've been learning about the difficulties and opportunities of uniting the disparate people in the working class in Britain. For many years the Stalinists called for 'unity' of the working class. But their 'unity' meant ultimately unity under bourgeois leadership, unity at any cost, unity in inaction.

The question we are working through is how the working class can become united around the key actions needed to assert its own interests, so it can take power. There is no blueprint for this — it must be developed in the fight to make the working class conscious of its international and revolutionary task, the overthrow of capitalism.

This won't satisfy many of those who ask the question about Britain — but, they must take up their responsibility and write in about these questions, in letters or reports. Too few already do this. Join our fight, give some money, involve others.

Mike Cooke

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

COMING SOON

WEDNESDAY 4 MAY Workers Aid for Bosnia public meeting 'How to Defend Bosnia and Defeat Fascism'. 7.30pm, Langley Green Community Centre, Crawley, Sussex. Includes report back on recent convoy to Tuzla. Invited speakers Phil Edwards, a teacher and secretary of Tower Hamlets trades council (in personal capacity); and Vaughan Thomas, a busworker who went on first convoy last year.

Construction Safety Campaign Diary

MONDAY 25 APRIL Hammersmith coroner's court, 25 Bagleys Lane, London SW6 (tel. 071-371 9935), 9.30am. Inquest into death of John Gear (34), who was killed after a trench collapse in August 1993 while working on a water ring main repair.

WEDNESDAY 27 APRIL Tower Bridge magistrates' court, London, at 2pm. Start of HSE prosecution of British Rail and Tilbury Douglas over the St John's station bridge disaster which should be referred to

the Crown court. Nicholas Scott (22) and Frank Warren (42) were killed and four others injured, one seriously, during demolition work in June 1992. Despite film/video evidence, the Crown Prosecution Service has turned down manslaughter charges against both companies and any identified individual. Now only a fine is possible, rather than a prison sentence under a jury trial.

THURSDAY 28 APRIL Workers Memorial Day. National CSC demonstration, march and lobby of parliament over deregulation of safety laws. Assemble Euston station at 11am. March leaves 12 noon and goes through central London to the Temple. Meeting at 2pm at Church House conference centre, Dean's Yard, Westminster. To be attended by relatives of those killed at work, trade union leaders, MPs.

FRIDAY 6 MAY CSC demonstration at Dover at official opening of Channel tunnel, in remembrance of eight British workers killed on the project.

WEDNESDAY 12 MAY Ludlow magistrates' court. HSE prosecution

of Bromfield Sand & Gravel over a serious accident involving a fork-lift truck.

SATURDAY 21 MAY CSC annual general meeting. 10.30am-5pm, Lyndhurst Hall, Warden Road, London NW5.

TUESDAY 14 JUNE St Pancras coroner's court, Camley Street, London NW1 (tel. 071-387 4884), 9.30am. Inquest into death of John McLaughlin (45), killed when roof collapsed in January. Christopher Nelson (48) was severely injured in the accident. They were working on extension to car showroom in Finchley Road.

WEDNESDAY 15 JUNE St Pancras coroner's court, Camley Street, London NW1 (tel. 071-387 4884), 9am. Inquest into death of Tony Fishenden (27), killed in August 1992 while carrying a scaffold pole near a railway line; a train passed a caused the electric current to arc to the pole. Family's solicitor requested that BR director for safety be put in dock, but coroner refused. After judicial review the case has been put back to the coroner. DPP turned down manslaughter investigation. Inquest may be interrupted by further challenges from family solicitor.

Construction Safety Campaign

WORKERS MEMORIAL
DAY 28 APRIL 1994
CALLING ALL WORKERS

STOP EMPLOYERS GETTING AWAY WITH MURDER!
JOIN US ON OUR MARCH TO COMMEMORATE WORKERS' MEMORIAL DAY AND LOBBY PARLIAMENT TO PROTEST AT THE GOVERNMENT DE-REGULATION EXERCISE.

In the last ten years 1,300 construction workers have been killed on sites, 40,000 have died of industrial disease and countless thousands have been injured. In the same period, over 5,000 workers from all industries have lost their lives at work.

Government figures say that 70 per cent of these deaths are due to employers' negligence. The government is going through a de-regulation process to weaken health and safety laws that will inevitably lead to more deaths, more accidents and more occupational ill health.

PROTEST
MARCH
ASSEMBLE
EUSTON
STATION
11am.

Leaves noon
LOBBY OF PARLIAMENT
2.30onwards
Enter by St Stephen's Gate

PUBLIC MEETING
Church House Conference
Centre, Dean's Yard,
Westminster from
2pm-6.30pm

WE WANT WORKERS FROM ALL INDUSTRIES TO JOIN OUR MARCH THROUGH LONDON

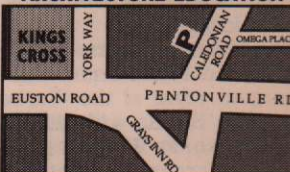
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Where will NHS 'rationing' end?

THE refusal of hospital treatment to old people on grounds of their age is a warning to the whole of the working class about what Tory health 'reforms' mean.

Johnny Grey, a 73-year-old retired musician with chronic arthritis, was told by Brighton Health-care Trust that he was too old to receive physiotherapy.

Fred Steadman, a 79-year-old Barnet man, was refused treatment by the Royal Free Hospital in Barnet because it classes everybody over 70 as geriatric. He was offered treatment at another hospital on the grounds that the Royal Free had no contract to carry out geriatric work.

It is clear these are not iso-

Labour health spokesman David Blunkett responded to these revelations by saying that he was not opposed in principle to rationing of health care but that this should be carried out in accordance with nationally laid-down guidelines and not left to individual doctors to make decisions.

The fact is that the health service is strangled by the drug monopolies, which milk the NHS for millions each year.

It is burdened with an enormous bureaucracy of highly paid officials, many of them Tories appointed by their friends in the government.

It is these matters that the

working class must investigate. The drug companies must be nationalised under workers' control and their vast resources used to produce for the needs of the sick and not the needs of profit.

Question

The question arises: where will this end? Will babies born with handicaps be refused treatment on the grounds that there are 'more urgent cases'?

We know what happened in Nazi Germany where the state deemed millions of people not only unfit for medical care but had them done to death in slave

labour camps or the gas chambers.

Health chiefs last week ordered an inquiry into why a critically ill pensioner was moved between three hospitals because of the shortage of intensive care beds.

Irene Smith, aged 67, was so unwell she knew nothing of her 20-mile round-trip during her five weeks of treatment for pneumonia.

Her son said that, while she had been well treated, the family was furious at the moves.

'They are desperate for money for ventilators and intensive care facilities,' he said.

Minimum wage

ENGINEERING workers' leader Bill Jordan has rejected as 'irresponsible' the demand for a £4 an hour minimum wage.

Speaking at the union's national committee in Dundee last week, AEEU president Jordan said that such a call would hand the Tories a propaganda victory on a plate.

Jordan, who is paid somewhat more than £4 an hour, said that 'after 15 years in opposition the Labour Party needs our support, not our orders'.

Jordan's statement comes when the Tories have abolished wages council legislation that offered at least some protection to the very lowest paid.

One in five jobs in hotels and catering, shops, hairdressing and clothes machining now pays less than the level set by wages councils — which was around a paltry £3 an hour.

Trade union leaders such as Jordan not only attack the millions who are forced to work on less than subsistence wages. They also attack the higher paid workers by ensuring that the employers have a pool of dirt-cheap labour available with which they can batter down the wages of all workers.

BY THE EDITOR

lated examples. The British Medical Association last week said that there was now a two-tier health service and discrimination against patients was a commonplace because of a cash shortage.

Bus sell-off set to lose money in capital

BY ROY THOMAS

LONDON BUSES managers are making real efforts to persuade the workforce to join them in management/worker buy-outs in the privatisation now being prepared.

But London's bus crews and engineers see little prospect of such buy-outs ever resulting in them getting their money back and London Transport's attacks on workers wages and conditions in early 1993 have left a deep hatred and justifiable mistrust of management.

Pushed

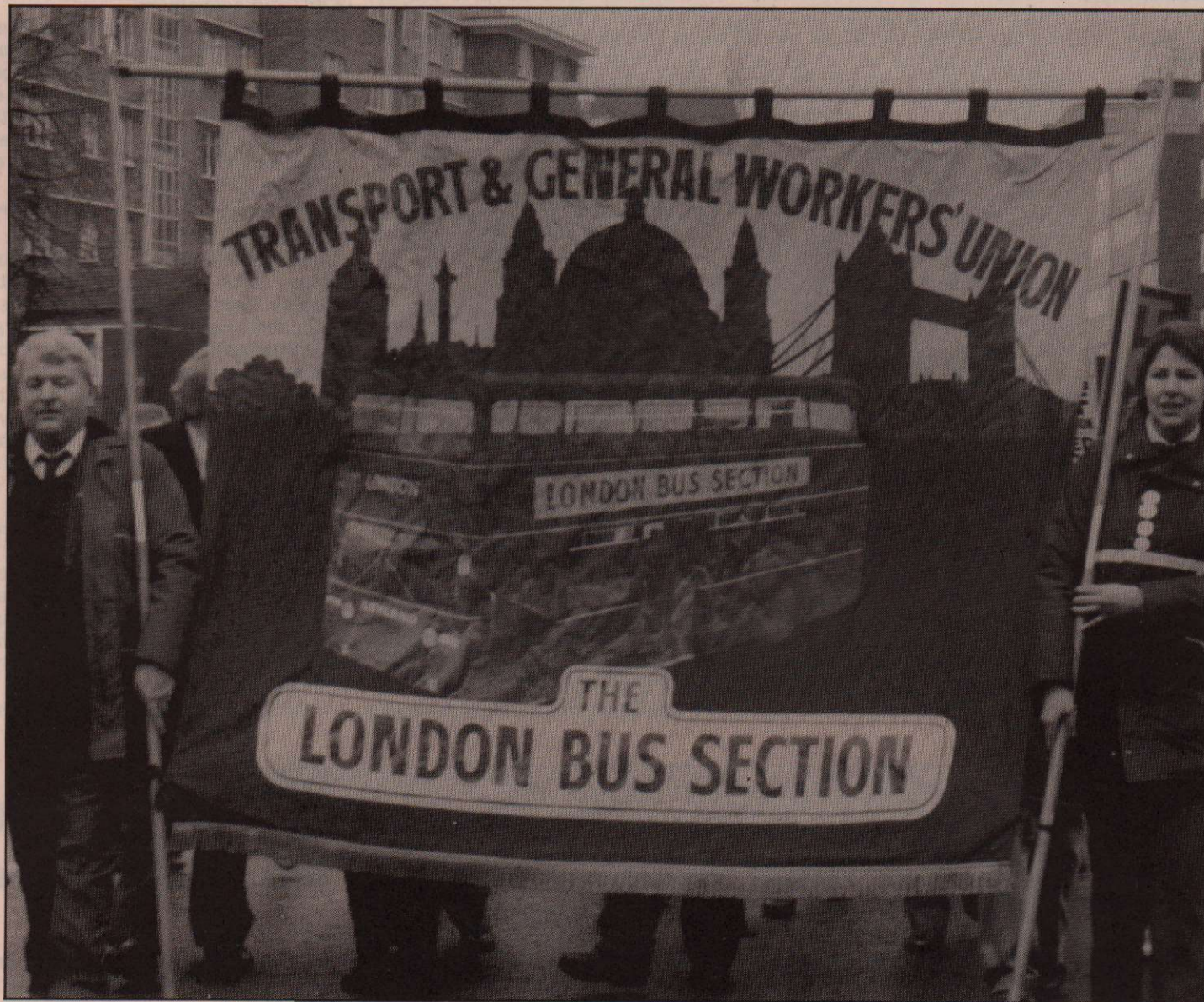
Some bus drivers have told Workers Press that they would look forward to and would enjoy seeing London bus managers pushed out of their jobs by a take-over.

'Any new boss will need bus drivers,' they say, 'but they won't need these managers.'

Transport and General Workers' Union busworkers in London have already threatened a capital-wide strike to defend pension rights in the privatisation.

Accountants Price Waterhouse, advisers to the government on the privatisation, say that many provincial operators are interested in buying into London and they expect competitive bidding.

These operators may not



Action against the attack on wages and conditions last year: it left a deep hatred and mistrust of managers

have understood the mood of some of the workforce, which in south London, in the week the managers were talking of buying the company, put in for a 12.5 per cent wage increase and 35-hour week.

In north London, TGWU ste-

wards have said they will not get involved in helping managers buy the company. One of the private bus companies which is sure to try to move in is 'Stagecoach'.

This company is funded by Canadian banks and is a multi-

national bus company with 4,500 buses. More than 1,000 of these buses operate in the Far East and Africa. They have 14,500 staff, of whom more than 7,000 work outside Britain.

Last year, Stagecoach bought East Kent Travel,

Gleethorpe Transport and Western Travel. They look for a profit margin of 15 per cent per annum.

They won't get that in London! Like others who buy a London bus company they could lose a lot of money. But then that was why all the private bus, underground, tram and trolleybus companies were nationalised in 1933.

There will be no chance of a get-rich-quick privatisation on London buses if workers are firm in defence of wages and their rights to safe working conditions.

Parents denied justice for racist murder

THE Crown Prosecution Service has twice refused to take to court cases prepared by the police against white young men for the murder of Stephen Lawrence, who was stabbed to death at a bus stop in Eltham, south-east London.

The fatal attack came after Stephen had been the object of a filthy stream of racial abuse. The British National Party headquarters is in a boarded-up 'shop' in neighbouring Welling.

Stephen's mother Doreen Lawrence said that she was angered at the CPS decision, but also that neither she nor her family had been surprised by it. They believed that for a long time the police have failed to carry out a proper and thorough investigation into Stephen's murder.

Stephen's family has offered a reward of £5,000 for information leading to the arrest and charging of the racist killers.

The family solicitor, Imran Khan, has said that the most likely option is a private prosecution.

It would seem that Home Secretary Michael Howard's 'clamp down' on 'lawlessness' does not extend to racist murders in the area of the BNP HQ.

Merger creates 'unease' for union officials

THE proposed GMB general union and Transport and General Workers' Union merger seems to be running into problems.

After many meetings of five working groups of members of both unions' executives, the TGWU executive agreed to continue merger talks but the 70-strong GMB executive voted overwhelmingly against.

A GMB contact tells Workers Press that there seems to be some unease among his union's full-time officers that the extent of rank-and-file control over policy questions in the T&G would not suit them!

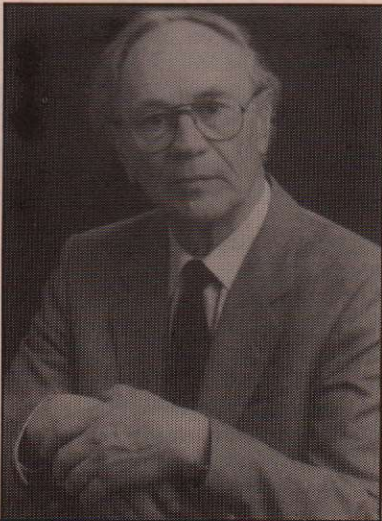
Workers International to Rebuild the Fourth International

Memorial Meeting
Tom Kemp
1921-1993

Conway Hall
Red Lion Square
London WC1

Friday 3 June
7.30pm

We invite all Tom Kemp's comrades, family and colleagues to join in commemorating the life of an outstanding Marxist, a dedicated teacher and a fearless fighter for the working class and the rebuilding of the Fourth International.



Leicester Education Alliance conference

The Degrading of Knowledge in Education

Saturday 21 May, 10.30am-4pm

Vaughan College,
St Nicholas Circle, Leicester

Details from Paul Henderson, Department of Sociology, Leicester University, Leicester LE1 7RH (0533 707730 or 0533 522748)

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Please send me information about the WRP

Name date

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Trade union (if any) Age (if under 21)

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Workers Aid for Bosnia

The latest Workers Aid for Bosnia convoy returned to Zagreb, the Croatian capital, on 12 April after its journey to Tuzla, an important working-class centre in Bosnia. CHARLIE POTTINS, who was on the convoy, here tells of his impressions of the life of the ordinary people.

Below, TOM BATTERSBY gives an account of the great difficulties involved in negotiating the mountainous southern route to Tuzla, which the convoy took, and calls for the opening of the easier northern route

FROM my window, I look down on a patchwork expanse of allotments which people are busy weeding and hoeing. It is Easter Monday and a sunny late afternoon in Tuzla. Along the riverside, whole families are working their vegetable patches, or breaking for a picnic tea. Even on the steep hillside behind the miners' institute, where trees have been felled for fuel, men are cutting furrows for cultivation. Outside the Bank of Tuzla that morning a man had been leading three small goats to graze on the lawn. Sound ecology, saving petrol and making protein, I thought. A shaggy pony came trotting briskly down the street with a cartload of firewood. Over the bridge on the main road a peasant is grazing his cow on the central reservation. The countryside has come into town. But this peaceful-looking pastoral scene to delight any 'Green' isn't out of William Morris's 'News from Nowhere', it's news from somewhere in Europe: Tuzla, where working people and their way of life are tenaciously holding out under siege. 'Did you paint your eggs for Easter?' Tihomir's neighbour asked him. 'No,' he regretted, 'and how about you? Have you baked your baklavas for Bayram?' (a Muslim festival). They both laughed. Eggs, like electricity, flour, and festive

fare, are in short supply in Tuzla. But not good humour and neighbourliness. Tihomir's Muslim neighbour hadn't managed her baklavas this year, but, having heard he'd got visitors, she came around that morning with hot home-made *bureks* (meat-filled pastries) and *urmashitza* (sweet cakes) for our breakfast.

Gunfire

When we arrived there'd been gunfire in the hills, and there were plenty of pockmarked blocks of flats and public buildings, as well as shattered cottages, to show where Serb artillery shells had landed. But on a Saturday night the loudest noise was from a rock concert, outside which more young people than could possibly have got in were stood in groups chatting or larking about. It could have been any town, except that next morning many of these youngsters would be back in khaki battle-fatigues, doing their military service. We drank some slivovitz with Ninella, 20, and her friends. The laughter was flowing. Ninella was taking part in a shooting competition the next day, to which she invited some Workers Aid comrades. One of our lads asked jokingly whether she prac-

tised with wooden Serbs popping up as targets. 'Not Serbs,' she admonished with upraised finger, 'Chetniks.' 'All Chetniks are Serbs,' her army friend added, 'but not all Serbs are Chetniks.' Consistent with their concern for accuracy, Ninella won top prize in the shooting competition next day. Up in the hills, I suspect, she has accounted for quite a few Chetniks. Tihomir, with whom I stayed, studied in England, and proudly showed us a souvenir — a National Union of Mineworkers' badge. His dad and elder brother were miners. Now he teaches mining engineering in between serving as an army officer. 'It's not a Muslim army,' he stresses, 'there are lots of Croats and Serbs serving.' He says the war is for survival, not glory.

Suspects

Tihomir doesn't like the way the Bosnian government is promoting 'Muslim identity' in schools, and Muslims to important positions. He suspects the government in Sarajevo doesn't care about Tuzla, 'because we never voted for [President] Izetbegovic's party'. But he is proud of the young men in his unit. 'They all take care of each other, from whatever background they come.' On our way to Tuzla, we had passed through Varež, a small mining and industrial town set in a deep river-gorge. Rusting machinery and rolling stock reminded me of some depressed towns in Britain. On the steep hill out of town, we

Impressions of a city at

Workers Aid for Bosnia's recently returned convoy brought back this appeal for help from Tuzla university

Dear professors,
The University of Tuzla is the youngest university in the republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina. It was founded in 1976 and comprises the following faculties: medicine, chemical engineering, electrical/electronic engineering, mechanical engineering, mining engineering, geology, philosophy, defectology, and economics. During the two-year war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the universities have been functioning under very adverse circumstances. Isolated from the world, with all their reserve supplies depleted, and surviving in difficult conditions, the lectures at the university are held thanks to the lecturers' enthusiasm, the faith of the students in the future of their country, and the need for education.

In order to bring it closer to you to help us in the future. We also need additional institutions to. We ask for journals, books, stationery, paper that you help to your institutions professors and a. Every form of contribution to our future. In anticipation

Vice-r

were stopped briefly at a Bosnian army (BiH) military checkpoint. The soldiers checked our papers, and read our leaflets. A young military policeman in battle fatigues came over to our minibus, clutching a Workers Aid leaflet. 'You are from England, Germany, Spain . . .?' We agreed. 'International workers' solidarity?!' That's it, we said. His eyes lit up. 'That's great!' he beamed. Then he noticed we had a spare seat. Could we help this old lady? She appeared from the roadside, not exactly old, but plainly exhausted, a little woman carrying a big sack of flour up a steep mountainside, trying to reach her family near Tuzla. That night, we stopped on

another mountainside, because one of our vehicles couldn't make it. Over towards the hills to the east we could hear big guns, then nearer in the woods, what sounded like rifles. The Bosnian woman, anxious to see her children, wept silently, accepted a consoling hand from a comrade, and a cigarette. There she mumbled a few prayers, from which liturgy I'd no idea, but I gathered she included us all. The following morning, we reached a customs checkpoint just outside Tuzla. While we were checked for contraband, from a school across the road being used for refugees, a crowd of small children swarmed over in the rain to beg sweets. Many had no proper shoes and, we learnt, no parents.

Truck su

FOR those of us on the just returned Workers Aid for Bosnia convoy, the campaign to open the northern route to Tuzla — our major aim, as it is much shorter, easier and would provide a lifeline to the town — has taken on a new and profound dimension. Both personnel and vehicles seemed to age ten years in two weeks during the journey to the town, along the southern route via Split on the Adriatic coast. Deprived of food or diesel according to preference, frozen after too many nights on mountain tops, it was a dishevelled bunch that pulled into Zagreb, the Croatian capital, after our journey to and from Tuzla. In short, the southern route is dangerous, slow and frustrating. It is only 410km from Split via Kamensko, Gornji Vakuf and Kladanj to Tuzla. Chetniks control the main roads that used to connect the city to the rest of the former Yugoslavia. So the Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) army and the UN Protection Force (UNPROFOR) have carved military roads over two mountain peaks, joining a series of minor routes together. 'Route Triangle', as one road is called in UNPROFOR-speak, seemed to be the steepest and worst

road I had ever travelled: more or less a two-way dirt track leading away from the coast and climbing well above the snow line then falling down to Prozor. It is nothing however compared to 'Route Skoda'. This part of the trip begins with not too steep a climb. It is just the surface that's the problem. It's a case of counting the road in the potholes, not vice versa. A little way beyond Varež, which is about 70km north-east of Prozor there's a tunnel that has a stream running through it. This has completely eroded what was a poor unpaved stretch anyway. The trucks fall in and out of the huge ruts, throwing people first up to the ceiling and then down almost through the bottom of the seat. **Respect** I have a new-found respect for the men and women who made our lorries. With every corner, you think: surely we can't get over under/up/down that! However, with the help of some well-organised pushing, levering and filling-in we did. The southern route saved its *tour de force* until the end: Mour Milankovic, home of hairpins and



Convoy members being bid farewell in Tuzla by representatives of the Kreka miners

ons of war

maintain the level of teaching and the European standard, we request in any way possible now and in the wish to collaborate with your education when the circumstances allow us

our aid in terms of magazines/equipment (especially computers), for computers, etc. We also request wards arranging possible visits to which would be very useful for the sistant professors of our university. llaboration and help would mean a activities.

of your response. Best regards.

Sincerely,

Dr (Prof) Enver Mandzic
Director for International Co-operation
University of Tuzla, 75001 Tuzla
Bosnia and Herzegovina

alive either. Twice the soldiers at the customs post tried to chase them from the yard, twice they swarmed back.

Here Edna, from Workers Aid, came into her own. She doesn't speak Bosnian, and the refugee kids don't know Geordie, but by some magic she soon had the entire crowd of kids dancing in a circle, then forming a conga behind her to run round the rainswept customs yard, then laughingly forming a circle again... For a few moments the war was forgotten. And it must be magic, because the sun came out.

The few mothers who watched listlessly from over the road, victims of ethnic cleansing and who knows what other horrors, seemed

to brighten up too. There's a colliery next to the customs post, and from over the fence some miners accepted Workers Aid leaflets and cigarettes and laughed at the children's antics. A soldier from the customs post handed us cups of slivovitz. It was never like this at Dover!

In Tuzla on Easter Sunday, people walked to the Serb Orthodox Church, repaired and repainted after suffering Serb army shelling, perhaps deliberate. But as Tihomir told us: 'They don't need a target. They just fire into a town, knowing they'll hit something, maybe a house.'

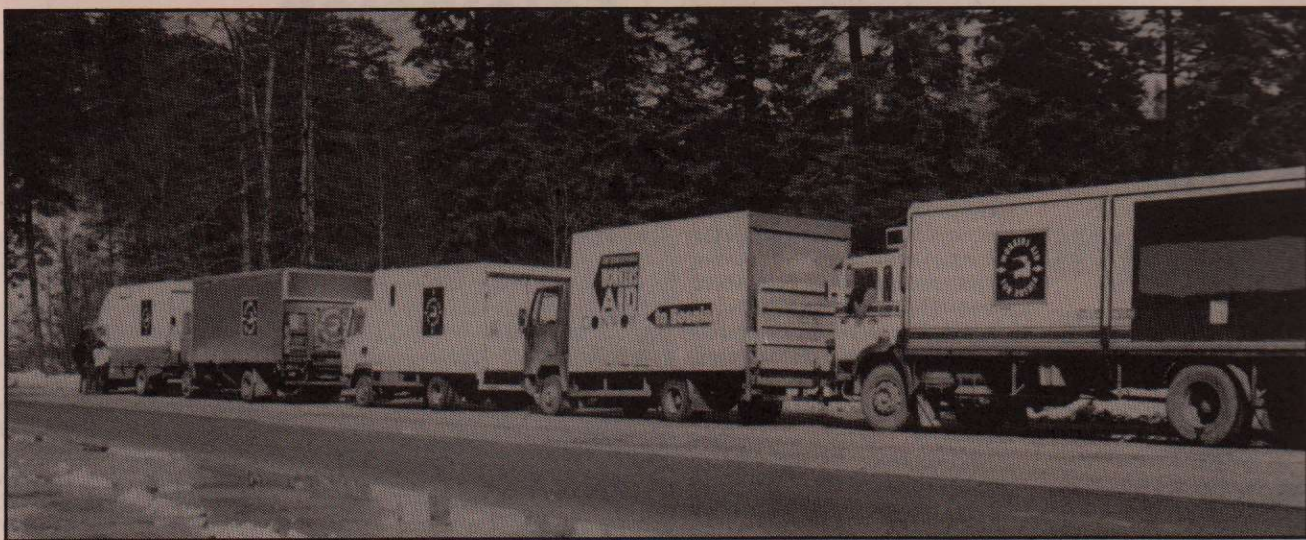
Running

He remembers running with his wife and small son, trying to reach a shelter, and seeing four children killed, and a piece of still-warm brain on the snow.

On notice-boards in Tuzla, outside mosques and churches and the town hall, there are deaths notices — some with the green crescent of Islam, some with black crosses, some with the socialist Red Star. The latest is a cameraman from the local television station.

That night, while the power is back on, we turn on the television and watch Gorazde being shelled, big guns pounding workers' flats, flames and clouds of smoke, and a woman sobbing.

On our way back, we hear that Tuzla too is under fire again. We think about some of the friends we've made. And hope we can make people in Britain understand.



Workers Aid trucks on southern route (top); Mount Milankovic was particularly hard, needing willing hands (above)

urfing at Vares

one-in-three climbs. Once negotiated, only 40-50km of road lies between you and Tuzla.

Getting off it, or even onto it, is no joke though. At the very summit sits a bunch of Swedish soldiers whose chief armament is a large wrecker. Every day this reverses down and tows up vehicles that do not have the gears to make it unassisted.

Our convoy needed their help,

journey is highly debilitating. Almost everyone lost their composure at some point.

To paraphrase Engels in his funeral oration for Marx: humanity must first have food and water, shelter and heat before it can begin to truly live.

Open the northern route! Save Bosnia and Herzegovina from genocide, fascism and ethnic partition! Open the northern route! Save

The Kladanj hold-up was different because of a Bosnian truck driver. As a Swedish armoured personnel-carrier tried to zoom through, it was caught between a fence and a Workers Aid vehicle.

Firstly the fence owner was unhappy. He said that if they went forward they'd kick it over. So the Swedes piled out to have a look. All action-man uniforms and sunglasses (it was raining).

Hero

The hero of the hour chose this moment to step in. He claimed that the UN had smashed his indicator as they had gone past. The UN told him to go away.

In response he lay down under the wheels of their armoured beast. The UN soldiers were angry and cocked their rifles, pointing them at the driver.

Workers Aid for Bosnia lived up to its name however. Certain individuals put themselves between the irate Swedes and the lorry driver. Stalemate, with a big jam developing. Nonplussed, the UN troops uncocked their weapons.

The Bosnian, scenting victory, demanded 200 Deutschmarks compensation or he'd be there until they ran him over.

Open the northern route to Tuzla!

With nationals of several western European countries watching, the Swedes were at a loss. The agreed price was DM50. This in a region where average wages are DM2-DM5 per month.

The man moved. The Swedes moved. A Workers Aid delegation helped commemorate this victory over imperialism with a bottle of the local spirit, Slivovitz.

Delighted with his wealth, the driver toasted the end of the UN. After one or two more toasts he admitted that his indicator had been broken for several weeks.

THE hotel where we stayed in Zagreb is owned by a Bosnian and is often full of wounded Bosnian and Herzegovinian soldiers recuperating in Croatia.

This sounds fine — a hotelier doing his patriotic duty. However, both we and the troopers paid dearly for our stay. Everyone is charged 20 Deutschmarks per night. Workers Aid paid for us; the Bosnian government paid for the soldiers.

The people on the Workers Aid convoy last Christmas tell a story from New Year's Eve. A drunken soldier harangued our corpulent host. The wounded man told him

exactly what he thought of the big, new Audi car and the big, new suits. The owner was incensed.

He produced a pistol and waved it at the trooper, who eventually had to leave. He also pointed it at the Workers Aid members who had supported the veteran's outburst.

Watching this man deal with his staff completed the picture. He is rude and aggressive. The sullen looks and grimaces that they give when his back is turned suggest that they agree with the soldier.

The point of this is straightforward. Bosnia, like anywhere else, is not a single issue. It is a developed, complicated society. Since the start of capitalism's reconquest of the country, those like this hotelier have grown in number.

Exploited

This is why a humanitarian effort alone is not enough. If aid is all that we bring, then we simply help to oil the wheels; we simply help to turn this country into yet another exploited and unhappy place.

Unless the solidarity of working men and women is established, then it is not the Bosnian people we are helping but the profiteers, both legitimate and illegitimate.

Tom Battersby

'A humanitarian effort alone is not enough. If aid is all that we bring, then we simply help to oil the wheels; we simply help to turn this country into yet another exploited and unhappy place.'

especially the big bus full of aid brought by the Spanish contingent. The slope and the corners combined to make the pulling-up of a coach quite special.

Despite the brutal *realpolitik* practised by their chiefs, I for one am grateful to those Scandinavians who spend a cold and bored six months, counting the days until they go home.

The cumulative effect of the

the Workers Aid convoy drivers!

ON THE way back from Tuzla, near Kladanj we hit a traffic jam caused by the UN. There's nothing unusual about that. On the road in we waited for four hours at Prozor because of Britbat, the UN British battalion. One of their lorries refused to stop and got stuck on a corner.

John Fordun

Nastiness and film criticism: II

WELL, that's all right then! Home Slimeball Michael Howard said that, despite an emergency Downing Street meeting to amend his Criminal Justice Bill, it was what he had wanted all along. The shadow home secretary, Tony Blair, sanctimoniously averred that what was important was the satisfactory outcome, not who should take the political credit.

Michael Grade, the Channel Four chief many creative people admire, thought the right compromise had been achieved. Liberal MP David Alton — Mr Video Nasty himself — declared himself satisfied. One Tory newspaper even called it a triumph for democracy.

When the British Establishment unites in self-congratulation, check your wallet. You have probably been pick-pocketed, all your intellectual integrity nicked, and the wallet thrown on a garbage-heap once called 'Fleet Street'.

And when someone with the word 'censorship' in his job-description tells you that 'reason has prevailed', alarm bells should start ringing. 'I have a reputation,' purred David Ferman, director of the British Board of Film Classification, 'for being extremely strict on sex and violence.'

I'M SURE you know the one about the child psychiatrist. A mother takes her youngster to see a top practitioner at his Harley Street clinic. On the door is a brass plate, 'Michael Alton-Blair, Child Psychiatrist'. Underneath there is a crudely crayoned note: 'Gone to dindins. Back soon.'

The furore around the 'Alton amendment' to Howard's Criminal Justice Bill, and its withdrawal in favour of the 'compromise' government measure, recalled this to mind. As I remarked last week, one of the shots in Alton's locker when he forced Howard to act against so-called 'video nasties', had been a flimsy 'report' signed by 25 child psychologists.

It was billed as marking an historic shift in the attitude of the profession, a renunciation of its previous position that there was no proven link between 'video nasties' and violent behaviour amongst young people. The experts had rethought in the aftermath of the ghastly James Bulger incident, it was reported, when it had been suggested that viewing a video of 'Child's Play III' might have influenced one of the boy's pre-teenage slayers.

It then emerged that there was no real evidence for this alleged change of view, which was merely an endorsement of what Alton called his own 'common sense and adult' approach. It was left to Blair to sum up the role of scientific enquiry in the debate when he said that 'we can argue about the state of research [read: "nothing much is known"], but it is surely common sense that a daily diet of such violence' would have a bad effect on young minds.

No evidence was produced of any particular youth consuming video violence on a daily basis. Nor was it clear what sort of videos were being discussed. As film censor Ferman commented, 'video nasties' as originally defined (such as 'Driller Killer' and 'I Spit on Your Grave') have been illegal for seven years. All that the government was doing, he claimed, was enforcing existing laws against unscrupulous purveyors of gratuitous violence to young people.

If that were true, who could object? I certainly don't want to defend such people. But those who climbed aboard the Alton bandwagon were doing something more than that. They were creating the impression that by giving greater powers of censorship to 'responsible' people like themselves (and Ferman's board), they were acting against the causes of horrific violence. This is hypocritical nonsense.

Furthermore, they were seeking to 'restore confidence' in the capacity of the political system to secure the basic conditions of civilised existence for the mass of people who, understandably, do not want to be at risk from muggers, rapists and killers. But ordinary people are quite right to have lost confidence in 'the system'.

Behind it lies the laws of an increasingly crisis-ridden capitalist economy which finds no profit in providing the resources required to create the social conditions, the educational and cultural facilities, and the health-care (including mental health-care) required to advance our understanding of inhuman behaviour, and our collective capacity to begin to eliminate it.

WORKING PEOPLE, I suggested, must begin to develop their own forums within which to debate these questions and what needs to be done. But beware this use of the term 'common sense'. When politicians and 'experts' use it, they are often trying both to avoid their own responsibility to think seriously, and to defend their 'system' by appealing to the lowest level of analysis.

A serious discussion must develop out of a quite different outlook from that which can only lead to the trading of insubstantial opinions on how tough to be with porn-merchants. For one thing it must try to arrive at an independent understanding of what pornography is, and whether it is always harmful. It must reject the intelligence-insulting level of discussion of 'sex 'n' violence' that goes on in the tabloids.

Certainly the cinema, and its by-product, the video business, will be at the centre of such a discussion. We tend to talk about films either in terms of their aesthetic merits or their political value, without reference to the philosophical basis of our opinions. Before the advance of capitalist ideology began to break up knowledge into hermetically sealed separate spheres, thinkers did not make these distinctions between philosophy, aesthetics and the study of social and political behaviour.

By the time the need for film criticism came on to the agenda, this atomisation of knowledge was well established. Most film critics tend to operate with what they presumably believe to be objective standards of how good a movie is, but have little — beyond their own 'common sense' — to rely on when it comes to commenting on the socio-political role of the cinema.

Film-buffs — and that assiduous media-student Keith Flett — will no doubt complain that, once again, I show myself to be a Johnnie-come-lately, blinkered by the limitations of Workers Press, to a discussion that has been going on in other circles for years. But one reason why Workers Press is so important, is that its particular political orientation provides a unique basis on which matters, which may be old hat to those with special interests, can now be discussed to new purpose.

No apology therefore for spinning out this discussion a little longer. There is more to be said. But not next week, when I shall report on a recent visit to Dublin. **TB**

Television

Fairy-tale and a sharp portrait

Review by Tom Owen

IN THE wake of the recent 'Middlemarch' costume extravaganza, BBC2 repeated its fine 1985 production, also by Louis Marks, of 'Silas Marner (The Weaver of Raveloe)' (27 March).

'Silas Marner' is somewhat of an oddity in George Eliot's work. A short novella, rather than a 'triple-decker novel', it combines elements of the fairy-tale, a spiritual journey influenced by John Bunyan's 'Pilgrim's Progress' and 19th-century realism.

Entertaining

I must admit to a certain reticence as regards to English novelists of the 19th century and early 20th century. Dickens, for all his genius, is marred by his appalling sentimentalism, D.H. Lawrence by his messianic puritanism and Eliot by her tendentious and patronising moralism.

This is probably why I found the television production of 'Middlemarch' so entertaining; television drama does not

accommodate long authorial intrusions.

On one level 'Silas Marner' is a moral fable. Marner, a member of a dissenting puritan sect and subject to catatonic fits, is falsely accused of theft from a dying church elder. He is framed by his closest friend, cast out from his community, and rejected by his bride-to-be.

Marner is a weaver in a north of England town, an early proletarian. He leaves this town and wanders into the heart of rural England. Bereft of friendship and faith, he settles as a cottage weaver, and is seen by the villagers as an eccentric at best and a dabbler in black arts at worst.

Marner becomes fascinated by the gold he earns by his loom-labour and rapidly becomes a miser, besotted by the fetishistic power of his sovereigns.

George Eliot captures brilliantly the objectivisation of the worker and the increasing

domination of living labour by dead labour, that is capital. The actor, Ben Kingsley, in this version provides a superb portrayal of the distracted and alienated Marner.

Marner's humanisation comes about through a combination of preposterous fairy-tale coincidence and a sharply realised portrait of the declining and feckless squirearchy, who were cushioned by the protectionism of British intervention in the Napoleonic wars.

Marner is robbed of his hoard of gold by one of the squire's sons. He in turn finds the golden-haired daughter fathered by the other son, Godfrey Cass, secretly married to an opium-addicted barmaid.

Initially Marner mistakes the golden hair of the child for his lost fortune, but sees the child as a gift of providence.

The rearing of the child by the eccentric bachelor is enacted with great charm and

humour in this production. The child, Eppie, is the means by which Marner is 'humanised' and drawn into the social web of the village.

Although Eppie is made aware of her origins in the gentry, she declines the offers of her natural parents and chooses to marry within her social class.

Solidarity

The play shows this as an act of social solidarity and daughterly duty towards Marner. Put in the context of George Eliot's other writing on the English and German peasantry, I am sceptical about this interpretation.

The 'emnets and beavers', like the Tullivers of 'The Mill on the Floss', were always portrayed as the hapless products of some mysterious socio-biological destiny.

My advice to Eppie would have been the same wicked one which I always wanted to give to Eve in Milton's 'Paradise Lost': 'Don't tell Adam about the apple, and run off with Satan.'

Programme guide

Saturday 23 April 'The Men Who Kept the Lights On'. Ten years after the miners' strike, the men at all levels in the power industry reveal the secrets about their tactics during that crucial year (7.10pm, BBC2). **ARENA: 'Voices from the Island'.** Nelson Mandela and fellow ex-prisoners of Robben Island recall their experiences during their incarceration over three decades (7.50pm, BBC2).

Sunday 24 April ARENA: 'Cindy Sherman — Nobody's Here but Me'. The first documentary about the most influential woman artist to emerge in the US in the 1980s. Using herself as model, Sherman produced hundreds of photographs exploring female stereotypes. Here she reveals her working methods through private video diaries (9.55pm, BBC2).

Monday 25 April 'Soweto — A History'. Last programme in the series looks at the aftermath of the 1976 uprising, which saw successive states of emergency and imprisonment and death for thousands of the residents (10.55pm, Channel 4).

Tuesday 26 April ASSIGNMENT: 'Petra and the General'. Traces the rise and demise of Petra Kelly. Founder of the



Edwin Mahinda eyes Kenya's independence struggle in the film 'The Kitchen Toto'. 'Soweto — A History' looks at the aftermath of the 1976 uprising (Both on Channel 4, Monday)



Greens and leader of the Peace Movement, Kelly helped shape modern Germany (7.45pm, BBC2). **'Coal: Blackmail'.** First of six films charting a year in the industry when two-thirds of mining jobs were lost (9.50pm, BBC2). **OMNIBUS: 'Sir John Betjeman'.** On the occasion of the publication of a collection of the poet's letters, some of the original recipients reminisce about their illustrious correspondent. Includes comment and reading by Betjeman himself (10.55pm, BBC1).

Wednesday 27 April DISPATCHES. Using professional actors and transcripts from the proceedings of the Scott in-

quiry into the arms-to-Iraq scandal, this extended edition highlights some of the key exchanges (9pm, Channel 4). **'Good Morning Democracy: The Media Response to Change in South Africa'.** Examines the ways in which television, radio and advertising have operated under the censorship of apartheid, the present liberal interlude and how they will under the black domination of the political scene in the future (11.15pm, BBC2).

Thursday 28 April 'The Disorderly House of Windsor'. The story of the creation of the modern British monarchy, its marketing and its current crisis (9pm, Channel 4).

Selected films

RAGING BULL (1980). Martin Scorsese's brutal portrait of the life of boxer Jake La Motta. **Robert De Niro gives one of the great screen performances (Sunday, 10pm, Channel 4).** **THE KITCHEN TOTO (1987).** Writer-director Harry Hook's impressive account of Kenya's independence struggle, as seen through the eyes of a young Kikuyu (Monday, 12 midnight, Channel 4). **WE'RE NO ANGELS (1955).** Michael Curtiz comedy. Humphrey Bogart, Peter Ustinov and Aldo Ray as three escaped convicts who postpone their getaway to help a family down on their luck (Tuesday, 6pm, BBC2). **JJ**

How Reebok could foot the cost

THOUSANDS of workers have been on strike in Indonesia, demanding decent pay and conditions, and the right to independent trades unions. Among the products Indonesia exports is footwear, bearing well-known brand-names like Reebok, Nike and Adidas.

Pharis Harvey, of the US-based International Labour Rights Education and Research Fund, says there are about 25,000 workers in Indonesia's shoe industry, working for seven or eight large companies making their products under contract.

Unionise

'So the same companies may be producing for both Reebok and Nike. Adidas is there. They're all there. Converse is moving in.'

'If they want to unionise, then the SPSP, the Indonesian government-controlled union, comes in and sets up the union for them. Those who attempt

genuine, free union organising get fired, hauled off to jail or "disappear" and are occasionally killed.

Hover

'Wages in the shoe industry in Indonesia tend to hover between 2-3,000 rupiahs, about a dollar to a dollar fifty a day. There was recently a stoppage at Reebok.'

Last year, Reebok's human rights foundation looked at con-

ditions in the plants, and the company adopted a code of conduct. But spokesperson Doug Kahn said 'I don't know how far we can go on this.'

Asked whether Reebok couldn't simply tell its contractors to pay a higher wage, Pharis Harvey said they could. 'If Reebok doubled their wages, it could raise the cost of a shoe from \$79 to \$80 and nobody would ever notice it. There is now about \$1 worth of labour that goes into a shoe.'

'In 1991, Paul Fireman, the chief executive officer of Reebok, was paid at least two times as much as the entire workforce of the Indonesian shoe industry. Reebok has 25,000 workers in Indonesia. If you allow \$1.50 a day, for 300 days a year, you've got an annual wage of \$500 a person. Add a few benefits and bring it up to \$600 maybe. 25,000 times \$600 is \$15 million, and that's the most generous counting. Fireman made \$31,000,000 in 1991.'

Moonlighting MPs are no joke

'OVERWORKED', as they're always claiming to be, members of parliament may have a little more time to themselves, at the cost of a little less pocket-money, if the actors' union Equity gets its way.

Former Labour leader Neil Kinnock played himself in Channel 4's comedy 'Drop the Dead Donkey', Tory Sebastian

Coe appeared in 'The Brittas Empire', and Brent East MP Ken Livingstone performed in 'A Woman's Guide to Adultery'.

Confine

With four out of five of its members out of work, Equity wants the moonlighting members to confine their perform-

ances to the Palace of Westminster. A union conference resolution urges TV companies to stop using politicians in comedy or drama series.

An Equity spokesperson said there was anger 'when a politician who already has a full-time job and sometimes three or four part-time jobs takes work from our members'.

South African news

Pitched into election campaign

I was met at the airport by a leading comrade of the Workers International to Rebuild the Fourth International (South Africa) driven by a sympathiser — no member can afford a car!

We were immediately pitched into the election campaign. We had not gone far when the car pulled to a halt alongside a railway line. A solitary soldier sat holding his rifle upright with two hands. The comrade who had met me grabbed an armful of leaflets and disappeared over the line into the migrant workers' hostels there.

The driver nervously lit a cigarette and turned the car around. The soldier stared straight ahead.

The comrade returned breathless. 'These here are African National Congress hostels,' he said. 'Those over there are Inkatha. There have been many killings.'

In the centre of Durban the comrade told me of the meeting planned for Saturday, 10am. They had only got the resources to print 4,000 leaflets three days ago but despite the short time scale he was sure workers would attend.

In the event 12 workers made the 50km journey to the centre of Durban. Thirty-two years in the Trotskyist movement have equipped me with a degree of endurance where meetings are

concerned, but not sufficiently for Durban public meetings.

For over five hours the questions were relentless, with every aspect of the Fourth International discussed.

BY DAVE TEMPLE
IN DURBAN

Outraged

These are advanced workers, impatient with the simplistic explanations offered by the other parties and outraged at the bureaucratisation that has overtaken their once accountable unions. Whatever the outcome of the elections these are not workers who will be suppressed easily.

Packed meeting in Western Cape

THE Western Cape branch of the Workers International to Rebuild the Fourth International (South Africa) continued their campaign with a packed meeting in the canteen of the food manufacturer 'Bonny Bird'.

The workers at this factory are mainly those once classified 'coloured' by the apartheid regime. We were met at the gate by a friendly convenor who introduced us to the audience predominantly made up of women. Dave Temple addressed the meeting and explained that the Workers International stood for the building of a revolutionary party on an international basis that would address the real problems facing the working class.

He said that it was essential that capitalism was overthrown, and that only socialism could provide the working class

with the houses, health care and standard of living that justly belonged to it.

Temple warned that a government of national unity would be a government to suppress the working class. The interests of the working class were irreconcilable with those of the capitalists, he said.

Past investment in South Africa was based on slave labour and investment would only return if the working class was defeated.

In the course of the meeting three white managers came into the meeting and stood listening intently with sullen faces.

Many questions were asked by workers who intended to vote for the African National Congress and even when the workers' dinner hour was over there were still workers with their hands up.



There have been many killings in the 'new' South Africa

Interviews

'Attacks from management'

Ben works as a machine operator on the line in the Toyota plant alongside 7,000 other workers. For a basic eight-hour day he receives R350 (about £63 a week). He has worked there for five years.

My basic day is eight hours but I have a two-hour journey from the township each morning and a two-hour journey home. My house is one I built myself out of timber and mud. It has two rooms for myself, my wife and my two children. It has no toilet or running water. We take the water from the river — it's not pure but we have no choice.

At Toyota we in the main body shop are at present on strike. We are striking for the right to put our pension money into the union provident fund where we have some control over it instead of in the

private company fund. At the moment Toyota say if we take our money out they will only give us what we put in without interest.

We have had seven strikes in the last seven years. Five were wage struggles and two were for the reinstatement of victimised workers.

Our union is always under attack by the management. Whenever a shop steward proves he is a hard negotiator he is offered a staff job by the management. Other stewards are promoted to become big shots in COSATU and the ANC.

I am confused by all the promises we are being given by the parties in the election. What chiefly worries me is the security of my job.

We are promised job security, houses and schools. I would very much like all these things but I cannot believe it is going to happen.

'Union not giving good service'

John was a building worker but now works in a bakery.

I was an artisan in the building trade, but now the industry is totally casualised. They don't want skilled workers anymore.

In fact it is easier to get a job if you are unskilled. Artisans are just taken on on short-term contracts — the shorter the better for the employers. Some artisans only work for two months in the year. I got sick of

this so I took a job in a bakery.

My union is the Food and Allied Workers Union and I am a shop steward. FAWU is part of the Congress of South African Trade Unions.

I live 80km from Durban in a township. I built myself a four-roomed house of bricks and asbestos. There are seven of us in the house.

Our main problem in FAWU is that the union is not giving us good service. They say they don't have funds. Ten years ago the main campaigner in the union was a man called Jay Naidoo, now on the election list of the African National Congress.

Many other organisers have been promoted to COSATU. We are left with untrained organisers. These organisers come and go and are always complaining about their salaries.

In some cases, victimised workers have had to employ their own lawyers to put their case in the industrial courts. A case has to be filed within six months so if a worker does not have the money for a lawyer the case is declared void.

We, as shop stewards, have to face the workforce with these problems. They cannot see what is going on in the offices.

When we ask where our money is going the officials say to COSATU. Now my members are saying we should find another union to join that isn't in COSATU. We can't join another COSATU union because there is a rule against poaching members.

After the election most workers think that if COSATU sticks with the government — that is, with the ANC/South African Communist Party — then things will get worse in the union.

City Lights

Reality of falling jobs

'PART-TIME working provides a valuable opportunity for people to combine work with family responsibilities. It is wrong and damaging to denigrate part-time and other new patterns of work as "second rate".'

So said David Hunt, the employment secretary, in a paper presented to a meeting in Luxembourg last week of the European Union's social affairs council.

It was part of the continuing Tory effort to hide the real growth in unemployment and, at the same time, to demand greater 'flexibility' in the labour market.

Since the beginning of 1990 the number of full-time jobs has dropped by 1.2 million, while part-time jobs have risen by 309,000. One in four of those now working are employed on a part-time basis.

Rob Wilson, of the Institute of Employment Research at Warwick University, estimates that by the end of the century full-time employment is likely to drop by a further 400,000 (especially heavily for men) while the number of people in part-time work will rise by nearly three-quarters of a million.

It is this, combined with increasing numbers who drop out of the labour market — that is who have given up looking for work and therefore don't count in the official figures — which largely accounts for the drop in the number of people recorded as 'unemployed'.

At the last count Marks & Spencer employed a total of 51,897 workers. Of these 16,555 were full-time workers, and the rest — 35,342 — were employed part-time. In other words, something like two in three working for M&S are part-time workers.

Many of M&S's workers are employed for something like the equivalent of half normal hours. But this is far from typical. The greatest rate of growth is in part-time jobs involving fewer than seven hours a week.

Over the 12 months to the end of 1993, a survey commissioned by 'The Times' showed that the numbers employed in this 'band' rose by 154,000, while those part-timers working over 31 hours a week dropped by as many as 316,000. In other words a growing number of part-time jobs are very part-time and also very low paid.

Most part-time workers are women. Their hours worked have fallen from an average of 17.3 hours a week in 1990 to the present 15.7 hours a week.

The growth of part-time working with its low pay and lack of trade unionism is not a simply British matter. At American haulage depots members of the Teamsters' union are on the picket lines in their first national dispute since 1979. It is a strike aimed at stopping the employers from moving full-time truckers onto part-time working.

Global wealth poles

NEARLY one in three of the world's labour force is without a job or is earning too little to live decently, according to a survey conducted by the International Labour Organisation. The ILO calls this situation 'the worst global employment crisis since the 1930s'.

Around the world over 120 million are now officially regis-

tered as unemployed. But the figure is vastly higher, once the fraudulent character of the 'official' figures is taken into account — not to speak of the millions who have simply got tired of looking for work and have taken themselves out of the labour market.

On top of this official figure of 120 million, an additional 700 million people are earning wages that cannot support life. Thus the ILO finds that the average Ethiopian earns the equivalent of \$110 (£75) a year, about 20 pence a day.

According to United Nations figures, average incomes of the world's 5.5 billion people may have dropped last year for the fourth year running.

Perhaps Marx's ideas of 'im-miseration' — the tendency for poverty to grow at one pole of society while wealth piled up at the other — is not so out-of-date as many thought.

Shrinking state pension

FROM 1977-79 the single person's basic state pension was about a fifth of average male earnings; but now it has declined to under a sixth because of the government's policy of raising it each year in line with prices instead of earnings.

The married couple's pension has fallen over the same period from about a third of average male earnings to around a quarter of those earnings in 1993.

If this trend was to continue the pension would represent the equivalent of 7 per cent of average male earnings by the year 2050.

John Hills of the London School of Economics calculates that the basic pension now is equal to a smaller proportion of after-tax earnings than at any time since 1948.

Behind the trade deficit

BRITAIN's trade deficit with the rest of the world shrank sharply in January to £916 million; it was £1.57 billion in December 1993. The problem is that nobody believes the figures.

Certainly the City took them with a pinch of salt; normally sterling would be boosted by such a seemingly dramatic improvement, but in fact it hardly altered.

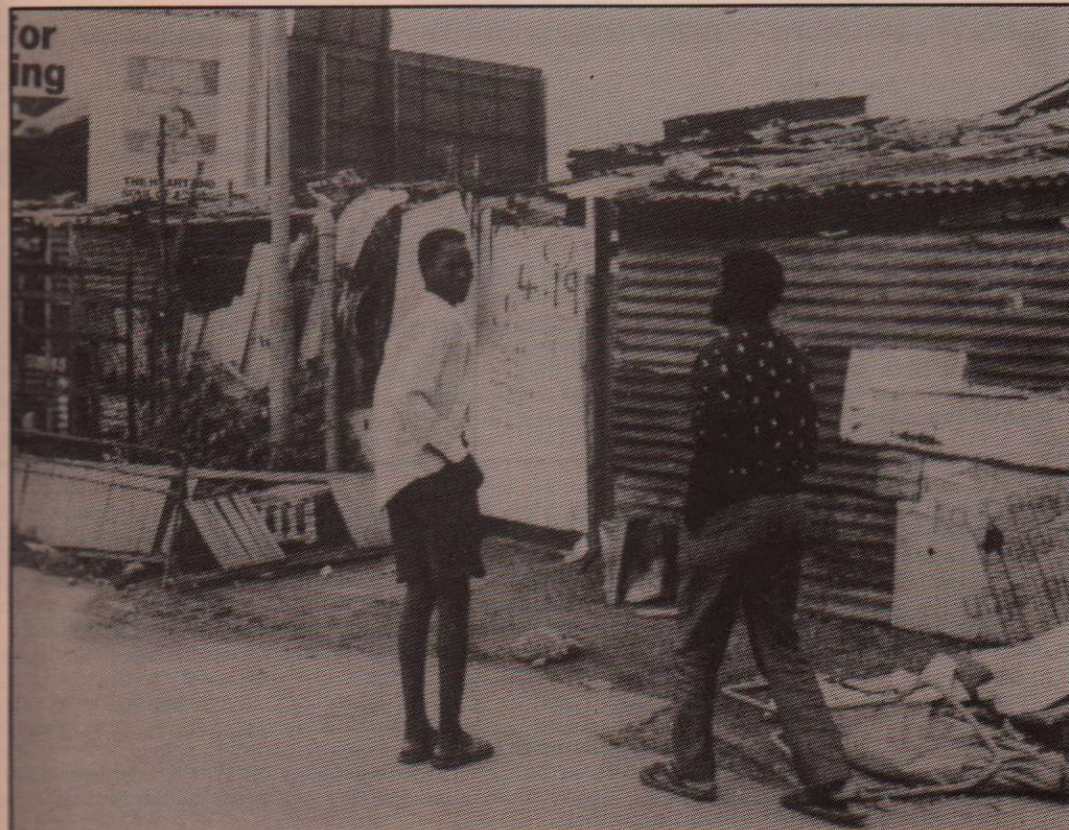
There is widespread scepticism that official figures do not truly reflect movements of goods across Europe's frontiers. It is thought that imports into Britain are seriously under-recorded.

In fact the underlying trend shows a serious worsening in Britain's payments position. In the last three months, imports have been running ahead of exports to the tune of £4.6 billion compared with the £3.7 billion gap in the previous three months.

Such levels of deficit cannot in the long run be sustained through borrowing from the international banks. In fact, these figures may lie behind the conflict between the governor of the Bank of England, Eddie George, and Kenneth Clarke, the chancellor of the exchequer.

George is digging his heels in against any reduction in interest rates while Clarke, looking for some short-term political relief from the Tory crisis, is pressing the case for one.

Threadneedle



Living conditions in a South African township: housing is one of the big issues in the election

Gorazde lays bare UN's Bosnia policy

THE Bosnian Serb attack on Gorazde has now exposed for the whole world to see the reality of the United Nations and 'great power' policy in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Under the very eyes of the UN forces and of the 'diplomatic' agents of Britain, the US, France and Russia, and in the face of NATO, the European Union and every government in the world, the Bosnian Serb troops, acting for the Milosevic regime in Belgrade, have advanced into Gorazde and begun a blood-letting and 'ethnic cleansing' that is killing and maiming thousands of Gorazde's people.

BY CLIFF SLAUGHTER

This brutal attack was completed only hours after Radovan Karadzic, the Bosnian Serb leader, had signed an agreement to halt the fighting and guarantee safe conduct. Even General Rose, the commander of the UN forces, was compelled to say publicly that the Serb leaders were using peace talks and agreements to prosecute the war.

What is the reason for the apparent 'helplessness' of all the most powerful political-military states in world history

to deal with the Greater Serbian nationalists.

Why are the representatives of these 'great powers' blatantly lying and making self-contradictory statements and initiatives (or lack of them)? How is it that one day Clinton says 'Maybe lift the sanctions on Serbia', and next day 'Maybe lift the arms embargo on Bosnia'? How is it that Russian negotiator Churkin condemns UN 'airstrikes' one week and positively commends them the next?

Above all, what is to be done? The world's press tells us that nothing can be done by the 'great powers'. But the question is: what is the international working class to do?

The Gorazde events have ex-

posed the inevitable outcome of the interests and policies of the imperialist powers and their Russian allies. They accept that the product of Stalinism's long rule in eastern Europe is the rise of nationalism and the emergence of the ex-Stalinist Milosevic as head of a fascist-nationalist Serbian regime as the strongest force in ex-Yugoslavia.

Divide

And they look for 'order', an 'agreement', which, in collaboration with Milosevic, can divide and contain the working class and guard against working-class revolution in the Balkans. They are not at all against an initial fascist victory to suppress the working class in Europe, east and west.

The recent negotiated withdrawal of Serbian heavy artillery from Sarajevo, the Bosnian capital, was in fact an acceptance of Serbian war aims.

Sarajevo remains under siege, and the gains the Serbs have made in the war are ready for use against Gorazde and Tuzla. The Croat-Muslim Bosnian federation agreement has been designed to give 70 per cent of Bosnia to the Serbs, with 'ethnic cleansing' (the eviction of tens of thousands of people from their homes) to be carried out under UN escort.

The Serb forces saw no reason to wait and are imposing their own timetable — but with



'Guardian' journalist Maggie O'Kane receives Workers Aid letter protesting UN role in Gorazde

the same aims as the UN itself. EU negotiator Lord Owen has pronounced: '[T]he Serbs' attack on Gorazde need not delay a diplomatic settlement of the war' ('The Times', 19 April).

The world capitalist press talks about 'another Munich', meaning that now, as with Chamberlain's sacrifice of Czechoslovakia to Hitler in 1938, the diplomacy is encouraging fascist 'aggression'.

Here it is necessary to insist on the basic element of politics, the class struggle. The capitalist powers and the aspiring capitalist class now in power in Russia cannot fight fascism. Fascism arises from the crisis of the capitalist system and, at a certain point, becomes neces-

sary for the preservation of it.

We in the Workers International have insisted for over two years that it is only the international working class, with policies independent of capitalism, that can resolve the conflict in Bosnia and defeat fascism.

But the working class is held back at every point from coming to the assistance, through solidarity action, of its Bosnian brothers and sisters. We initiated the Workers Aid convoy to Tuzla for this very reason.

It must be said loud and clear: the refusal of the trade union, Labour, Stalinist, and ex-Stalinist leaders to take sides with the workers of Bosnia and against nationalist 'ethnic cleansing', their rejection of solidarity, their support for the discredited and reactionary United Nations, is *criminal*.

It is this criminal leadership of the working class in every country that is responsible for the situation of isolation in which the workers of the former Yugoslavia find themselves.

These same 'socialist' leaders in the political parties and trades unions of the working class *still* say that we must not support either side, that Bosnian resistance is to be as equally condemned as Serbian aggression and 'ethnic cleansing'.

These 'socialists' have conducted a vicious campaign against the Workers Aid convoys on the grounds that it is organised by Trotskyists. They warn Bosnian workers against Workers Aid. They say: 'Workers Aid is using you'.

It is criminal sectarianism to oppose solidarity because you are against the (Trotskyist) politics of those organising the aid! And this sectarianism (the pro-

duct of Stalinism, as is Milosevic himself) is used to cover an opportunist policy of doing nothing whatsoever to support the workers of ex-Yugoslavia.

This is the situation now. The discrediting of the UN 'intervention' must be the starting-point of a determined political offensive to bring home the truth on which we have based our work for Workers Aid for Bosnia: that the working class internationally is the only force that can defeat reaction in ex-Yugoslavia.

In this fight, Workers Aid has won the support of many workers in most European countries and has broken through into eastern Europe, with support in Hungary, Slovakia, Russia, Poland and Ukraine, as well as Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia. We expected that slanderous attacks would come, and are ready for them.

The working class must be warned. The 'great powers' will be now even more determined to complete their deal with the Serb regime and to impose this on the people of Bosnia.

They cannot control the fascist and nationalist forces there; they cannot yet break the resistance of the Bosnian workers. This produces political crises for the 'great powers' at home. They can be defeated and working-class fighting solidarity brought to Bosnia — in material aid, in political support, in actions against our own governments — provided we re-organise and reconstruct the workers' movement.

It is a job that must be done in and through the fight for solidarity with Bosnia. It means organising to defeat the existing political and bureaucratic leaderships of the working class.

Indonesian workers challenge regime

ARMoured cars and riot police patrolled the Indonesian city of Medan last week, and hundreds of arrests were made, after 40,000 workers demonstrated and clashed with police there.

Workers' resentment over poor pay and conditions, expressed in strikes last month, exploded angrily after the discovery of a young striker's body in the river. Trades unionists believe 22-year-old Rusli had been beaten by police.

Murder

In Surabaya, a factory owner and manager are among eight people charged with the murder of 25-year-old union activist Marsinah, whose badly mutilated body was found last May in a forest 200 kilometres from her home. It was clear she had been sadistically tortured. The prosecution says bosses at PT

Catur Putra Surya were alarmed when Marsinah threatened to expose them for counterfeiting expensive watches.

But workers' rights activists say this is an elaborate cover-up for army officers involved in torturing and murdering Marsinah.

The military regularly intervenes in strikes, and Marsinah disappeared on the same day that 13 of her fellow workers, who had been dismissed for striking, were interrogated at military headquarters.

It was almost six months before supposed police investigations into Marsinah's murder produced any sign of results. During this time, horror and anger over her case had led to demonstrations throughout Indonesia. The murdered young woman became a symbol of workers' resistance, and was posthumously awarded a prestigious human rights honour.

American Trotskyist is badly beaten

BY JOHN ROBINSON

AN AMERICAN Trotskyist, Barry Lituchy, recently received a savage beating, and was subsequently hospitalised, during a New York demonstration calling for United Nations and NATO intervention in Bosnia.

Together with an elderly friend, John Ranz, an Auschwitz survivor, Barry was distributing leaflets directed against the UN and NATO. John was also injured by the group of thugs who — it would appear — were supporters of Bosnian President Izetbegovic's policies. Protests against this vicious

and cowardly attack have not been confined to New York. The Philadelphia Revolutionary Socialist Group, for example, has distributed a leaflet which says that the attack 'was reminiscent of the worst abuses of Stalinism in the workers' movement'.

Prevent

The leaflet concludes with a call for 'all who are sickened by such tactics' to make a concerted effort and 'prevent any repetition of this attack in the future'.

Workers Press certainly echoes these sentiments and sends its best wishes for a speedy recovery to both these injured comrades.

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Urgent South Africa election appeal

THE Durban branch of the Workers International to Rebuild the Fourth International (South Africa) is fighting a heroic election campaign in the most difficult and dangerous of circumstances.

The members are all workers who live in the towns surrounding Durban, the majority of them working in the huge factories that have developed in that area, each day travelling up to two hours to get to work.

Their every movement is fraught with

danger. On the one side they face the daily violence of Buthelezi's Inkatha Freedom Party, and on the other the intimidation of the African National Congress.

Problems

The only safe place they can meet is the centre of Durban, but since public transport to the townships ends at 6.30pm evening meetings are impossible.

Despite all these problems, these com-

rades are building a powerful branch of the Workers International and we must give them the resources to make their struggle safer and even more fruitful.

Please give generously to the election fund. The elections are during this week but any money sent will cover costs that have been incurred.

Rush money to: Workers International, PO Box 735, London SW8 1YB.

■ South Africa election news, page 7.