

International VIEWPOINT

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Five hundred years of resistance

**Italian
workers
reject
austerity**

**The British
economic
crisis**

**Palestinian
opposition
denounces
pull-out**



Diego Rivera. 1931

Anti-fascists visit refugees

AT the end of August three anti-racist activists from the Belgian city of Liège — Marcel Brose, Maurice Mordant and José Garcia went to Slovenia to visit the refugee camps of Bosnian Muslim refugees. The Belgian Trotskyist paper *La Gauche* (September 23, 1992) talked to them.

HOW has the Slovene population reacted to the conflict?

Marcel: Slovenia is outside the conflict now. The [Yugoslav] federal army has left. However, as soon as the war got underway in Bosnia, families of refugees started to arrive; they were lodged in the vacated barracks. There are currently 70,000 refugees here, a half of them children. The government has so far taken a very correct attitude and the population has spontaneously welcomed the refugees. However the increasing numbers of refugees may change this. Slovenia's population has suddenly risen by 3% — in a country that has lost its markets to the south and is ill equipped to win new ones in the west.

For me, the humanitarian issue is connected to another fight, against fascism. Things in the former Yugoslavia are clear; there has been territorial conquest and strong states have been established.

Our point of departure was a camp in the centre of the Slovenian capital, Ljubljana. According to our principle of aid without intermediaries we put our confidence in some people who divided up what we had brought, mainly among children who have lost their parents. The distribution is thus carried out by the refugees themselves. We have two small projects that we hope to carry through in our next visit; a clothes making workshop (lack of decent clothing is an important question for morale) and material for young people who want a space of their own.

But winter is coming and these barracks are in very poor state. Everything needs fixing: the sanitation, the heating. For big projects such as this we are making contacts with bodies such as the High Commission for Refugees.

In a camp at Postojna we found that tea-

chers have been trying to restart lessons. Sonja Lonkar, the head of the former CP's parliamentary group (renamed the Slovene Democratic Party) wants to help us to find camps which are hardly or not at all supported by the big international bodies.

We believe that the essential thing is to get active solidarity from workers. The engineering union in Liège has given us considerable aid. We hope that other union bodies will get involved. We must motivate the workers' movement. People over there are scared about the rise of the far right.

■ How does the situation appear from an anti-fascist perspective?

José: We had some ideas about the history of movements such as the Chetniks (Serb ultra-nationalists) and the Ustashe (Croat fascists). We had heard about "ethnic cleansing" — people being driven from their homes because they did not belong to a given nationality.

We wanted to know about what was happening on the ground. Speaking with refugees the reality became clear: populations of whole villages in Bosnia have been emptied with the aim of not only obtaining their military occupation but also of "ethnically cleansing" them.

■ What about the pacifist movement there?

There is no structured movement as in Belgium. Furthermore, the pacifists are divided among themselves over questions such as foreign intervention, the presence of the United Nations. Their contribution to peace is concentrated on helping the refugees.

■ And the far right?

For a long time there was a single approved version of historical truth in Yugoslavia. Now, with the coming of a multiparty system there is a widespread desire to revise this explanation.

Holes are appearing in the single truth. It has been discovered for example that thousands of rightwing refugees repatriated to Yugoslavia after the war were massacred by the Partisans. The far right is making use of this episode. Older people remember the fascist atrocities, but the young do not. This created profound ideological disarray which is added to the disarray caused by the social crisis.

There have already been anti-refugee demonstrations and clashes with skinheads. If the conflict goes on there is a risk that young Muslims will undergo a radicalization in the direction of religious fundamentalism — most of the aid at the moment comes from Muslim countries.

It is thus extremely important that the aid we provide is one clearly based on the forces of the left. ★

POLAND

Pinior still under attack!

ON AUGUST 28, 1992 the Polish justice ministry refused to overturn a verdict against Jozef Pinior, found guilty in October 1988 of organizing a strike the previous May in Wroclaw. The ministry explained that that there were no grounds for challenging the verdict that Pinior had insulted the officers who had arrested him in 1988, when, the ministry states, he had refused to leave enterprise grounds and resisted the police.

Jozef Pinior was president of clandestine *Solidarnosc* in the Wroclaw region after 1982 and a member of its national leadership from 1982 to 1987. He was several times imprisoned for his activities in the opposition to the Polish Stalinist regime. The verdicts accumulated then now prevent him from finding work in his field as a lawyer or a teacher in higher education. He has thus formally requested the justice ministry for an exceptional revision of these cases so that they be removed from his record. This has now been refused him.

In Poland this shocking decision has aroused a wave of protests, from many *Solidarnosc* enterprise committees and other social and political organizations. Members of parliament have joined the protest. One, M. Mazurkiewicz from the Social Democracy of the Republic of Poland (with origins in the former ruling Communist party), writes that, during 1982-88, the civil law had been employed against Pinior to find pretexts for "isolating in prison a representative of the leftwing democratic opposition who the regime of the time considered dangerous".

Those campaigning on Pinior's behalf in Poland need moral and material support (legal costs are high).

● Send letters of protest to: **Zbigniew Dyka, Minister of Justice, Ministerstwo Sprawiedliwosci RP, Al. Ujazdowskie 11, 00-950 Warszawa, Skr. Pocz. 33, Poland.**

With copies to: **J. Pinior, c/o Pracowniczy Fundusz Przemyslowy, Rekordzielnicza 16, 50-991, Wroclaw, Skr. Pocz. 1442, Poland (or fax no. (48 71) 51 20 07).**

● Send money for legal costs to: **Jozef Pinior, Bank Zachoc, Wroclaw, Poland, a/co no. 189200 01020386-017879-152-1 ★**