

ROSA LUXEMBURG STIFTUNG
BRUSSELS OFFICE

NICOLAS MOLL

SOLIDARITY IS MORE THAN A SLOGAN

INTERNATIONAL WORKERS AID
DURING AND AFTER THE 1992-1995 WAR
IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA



EN

NICOLAS MOLL

Nicolas Moll was born in Schaerbeek, Belgium, in 1965 and holds a PhD in Contemporary History from the University of Freiburg. He has been living in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, since 2007. As a freelance researcher, his interests include post-war legacies in South-Eastern and Western Europe and transnational civil society movements. He has written a number of articles on these topics and co-edited a book with Tobias Flessenkemper: *Das politische System Bosnien und Herzegowinas. Herausforderungen zwischen Dayton-Friedensabkommen und EU-Annäherung* [The political system of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Challenges between the Dayton Peace Agreement and EU rapprochement], Springer VS, 2018. He is currently preparing a comprehensive study on transnational solidarity movements in Europe during the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina and their discourses on Europe.

www.nicolasmoll.eu

CONTENT

INTRODUCTION	4
1 HOW IT BEGAN (1993)	16
2. ORGANISING INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY IN A TIME OF WAR (1994–1995)	26
Balancing national campaigns and international coordination	28
The core activity: the Bread Programme convoys and their challenges	38
The development of local projects	43
Political and strategic discussions and decisions	47
3. HOW TO CONTINUE IN POST–WAR BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA? (1996–1998)	62
The end of the Bread Programme and the growth of local projects	64
The two core projects: the trade union paper and women’s centre	68
How to support trade unions and other democratic forces in post–war BiH?	74
Developments in IWA’s organisational framework	81
4. FINAL INITIATIVES AND FADING OUT (1999–2000)	88
5. PRACTISING INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY: THE IWA EXPERIENCE	98
6. IWA’S LEGACY	110
BIBLIOGRAPHY	118
ANNEXES	124
Annex 1: Chronology	126
Annex 2: IWA’s organisational structure	132
Annex 3: Overview of IWA activities	141
Annex 4: The “Tuzla model”	146
DOCUMENTATION	150
GLOSSARY	252
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	258

INTRODUCTION



On the way to Tuzla: IWA truck waiting at an HVO checkpoint near Mostar, with Ulrik Kohl, 1994. (Photo: Thomas Proctor)

When the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) unfolded in 1992, it prompted widespread disbelief and astonishment in Europe. The wars in the former Yugoslavia, which had started in Slovenia and Croatia in 1991 before flaring up with particular violence in BiH between 1992 and 1995, were the first large-scale conflicts on European soil since the end of the Second World War. They took most people by surprise, all the more so because the prevailing atmosphere at the time, with the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the Cold War, was one of optimism and even euphoria about new possibilities for democracy and cooperation on the European continent and worldwide. For many in Europe, disbelief grew into dismay when reports began to emerge, in summer 1992, about the policy of ethnic cleansing and the associated atrocities perpetrated by the authorities of the self-proclaimed *Republika Srpska* led by Bosnian Serb nationalists. The war and the crimes committed quickly led to massive population movements: already in spring and summer 1992, hundreds of thousands of civilians were expelled and lost their homes, fleeing to other parts of BiH and partly to other European countries.¹

6 / How to respond to the war and the violence? The international community, chiefly European governments and the United Nations (UN), had rejected the option of military intervention in 1992. Instead, the UN Security Council had deployed UN troops in BiH, but they were given clear orders to remain neutral and not to intervene; their main mission was to facilitate the distribution of humanitarian aid being coordinated by the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR). After its declaration of independence in March 1992, BiH had been officially recognised by the European Community (EC) and become a member of the UN in spring 1992. But despite that, the international community refused to stand firmly behind the country's government, also rejecting its claim that the conflict was a war of aggression against BiH. Instead, the dominant narrative among Western governments was that this was an internal conflict due to "ancient hatreds" between Muslims, Serbs and Croats, in which all parties were equally guilty. This attitude was also reflected in the endless peace negotiations which the EC and the UN led between 1992 and 1995, in which they tried to find solutions that would be acceptable to the "three warring factions": the official Bosnian-Herzegovinian government, *Republika Srpska* and the Bosnian Croat nationalists who had created their own para-state called *Herceg-Bosna*.²

1 The wars in BiH and the former Yugoslavia have generated an enormous body of literature, but for an excellent introduction, see Baker 2015.

2 On the role of the international community during the war in BiH, see for example Burg / Shoup 1999; on the role of the UN more specifically, see MacQueen 2011.

Covered by numerous journalists, the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina had from the start become a major media event in Europe and beyond. As they watched it unfold on television, many viewers shared the feeling of not really understanding what was going on, even more so when the “war in the war” started in 1993, between the government and army of BiH on the one hand, and *Herceg-Bosna* and the Croatian Defence Council (HVO) on the other. For the majority of people in Europe, the war in BiH remained mainly a TV event; many felt that it did not really concern them or that nothing could be done about it. But at the same time there were also tens of thousands of individuals in countries across Europe who decided that they did not want to remain bystanders, just watching what was going on, but were determined to do something. This went way beyond professional aid organisations: many smaller civil society organisations and especially newly created, often informal, groups launched numerous activities and initiatives. These had various aims, sometimes connected, sometimes not: to help refugees outside BiH, to bring humanitarian and material aid to the affected populations within BiH, to support the democratic and anti-nationalist forces in BiH, especially at the grassroots level, and/or to protest against the attitudes of passivity or duplicity of their own governments.³

International Workers Aid (IWA) was one of the initiatives that emerged from these civil society mobilisations during the war in BiH. It was a highly original initiative in several respects:

 7

- 1) While many organisations focused on Sarajevo, IWA concentrated its efforts on Tuzla, a multi-ethnic industrial city in northern Bosnia which had a strong workers’ movement tradition and which remained during the war a stronghold for the defence of a democratic and multi-ethnic BiH.
- 2) Bringing together men and women mostly from the political left, IWA united humanitarian aid with political solidarity: it organised more than 30 convoys to transport food to BiH, mostly destined for the miners in Tuzla, for which it worked mainly with local trade unions. At the same time, it also undertook other, more structural, activities in Tuzla with the aim of supporting democratic and multi-ethnic groups and ideas.
- 3) While most BiH-related initiatives in Europe were organised at a national level, IWA was a genuinely international organisation, bringing together groups and individuals from various European countries, in particular Austria, Belgium,

3 For a general overview of these mobilisations, see Moll 2019.

Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden and the UK. These groups cooperated through regular international meetings and a coordination office in Stockholm, and established offices in Makarska (Croatia) and Tuzla run by IWA volunteers from different countries.

- 4) While some aid organisations pulled out of BiH once the war had ended, and others only arrived when it was over, IWA continued its work in Tuzla for several years after 1995.

This very brief description provides a first general overview of IWA, an organisation which wanted to show that “international solidarity is more than a slogan”.⁴ But how did this initiative unfold and develop? How did it strike a balance in its international cooperation between common approaches and the needs and wishes of the individual country groups? What did IWA understand by “practical solidarity” and how did it put this idea into practice? What challenges did it encounter? These are some of the questions that will be addressed in this study. The aim is to reconstruct and analyse the history of this original, but little-known initiative, in order to define the significance and importance of IWA’s commitment, and through this case study also to contribute to a better understanding of BiH mobilisations in Europe in the 1990s, which remain a topic largely unknown to the wider public in Europe. Even in academia, very little literature on these mobilisations has been produced to date, although some recent publications have addressed certain aspects of it.⁵

One of the reasons for this lack of attention is undoubtedly the aforementioned heterogeneity of these mobilisations. For example, while the peace movement in Western Europe in the 1980s had, for all its diversity, a common goal – to reverse NATO’s decision to deploy new missiles in Western Europe – and used demonstrations as its main form of activism, the mobilisations in the 1990s concerning the war in BiH involved a range of activities and had no common goal. They spanned

4 Quote from the IWA documentary *From Timex to Tuzla* by Tim Wise (1994).

5 There have been publications on these mobilisations in France (Madelain 2019) and Italy (Abram 2014 and Abram / Bona 2016). Besides these country-specific studies, see also more generally Schweitzer 2009, about the interventions of international civil society actors in the former Yugoslavia. In addition to the overview text mentioned in footnote 3, I also wrote an article looking more specifically at the interaction between international solidarity actors and their local counterparts in Sarajevo (Moll 2021). Regarding IWA, no academic literature has been published so far, but in 1996 an IWA member published a book about the war in Bosnia, in which one chapter is dedicated to IWA (Andersson 1996, 158–191). Otherwise, in 1999, the group Workers Aid for Bosnia, which was initially linked to IWA, published documentation about its work (Workers Aid for Bosnia 1999).

a wide spectrum, from groups that focused on humanitarian work to others that were active in the field of political lobbying, from those that defined their work as apolitical (“we just want to help the victims”) or that protested against “the war” in general to those that formulated explicitly political positions. There were also different interpretations of the war: some saw shared responsibilities for the origins of the war and the crimes committed, while others pointed clearly to Serbian and/or Croatian nationalism. Regarding a possible NATO intervention in BiH, some were in favour, others against. The same was true of calls to lift the arms embargo imposed by the UN on the whole of Yugoslavia in 1991, but which had become detrimental to the state of BiH because of the superior military might of *Republika Srpska*, backed by Serbia and the Yugoslav People’s Army. All the divergences in ideas and approaches also led to tensions between the various protagonists of these movements, as well as a lot of parallel work and activities with little coordination, even between those sharing similar ideas.

For this reason, it is also difficult to summarise this commitment under one name. The term “solidarity mobilisations” only captures one part of these movements, as for many it was more about aid, or about protest. Furthermore, solidarity could be understood and articulated in very different ways. As we will see, for IWA solidarity was at the core of its engagement and it developed a very coherent approach in this respect. But at the same time, IWA’s history also reflects some of the aforementioned contradictions and tensions, which makes it all the more interesting as a case study. Hopefully this publication about IWA will encourage research into other groups and lead to more case studies, helping to build up an increasingly detailed picture about these various mobilisations over the war in BiH.

The book is divided into two main parts, which are complementary. The first is a text analysing the history of International Workers Aid from 1993 to 2000. This proceeds chronologically in order to provide a better grasp of the dynamics, continuities and developments in the work of IWA. Within this general chronological structure, each chapter focuses analytically on several thematic aspects, aimed at imparting a better understanding of the work and spirit of IWA: its internal organisation, its activities, and its political and strategic questions and discussions. The second part is a selection of transcribed original documents (or extracts from such documents) dating from the 1990s, with short contextualising comments. These are structured around different topics that are also addressed in the text part. This will allow readers to go deeper into the topics developed in the text, giving them a more real-life insight, and hopefully a better feel for, and understanding

of, the situation and atmosphere of the time. Between these two main parts, the publication includes several annexes providing basic information about IWA in a more concise and systematic way: a chronology from 1993 to 2000, as well as overviews of IWA's main activities and its organisational structure, including the national groups involved in its work. Additionally, the annexes include a description of the "Tuzla model", which will help to understand the specific characteristics of the city on which IWA concentrated most of its efforts, as well as a glossary with some relevant terms related to IWA and the history of BiH in the 1990s.

The research is mainly based on the very rich archival documents produced within International Workers Aid in the 1990s, some of which are located in public archives, some in private collections. These mainly comprise minutes from the international meetings, reports from the IWA offices in Makarska and Tuzla, and other correspondence between the groups in the different countries and the international coordination office, as well as published documents such as leaflets and newsletters. The richness and diversity of the sources allows a thorough reconstruction and analysis of IWA and its development as an international solidarity initiative, but it also has one drawback: it means that the study contains relatively little information about how IWA was perceived and experienced by its Bosnian counterparts. The sources do include statements from IWA's cooperation partners in BiH, and the documents written by IWA members also regularly mention reactions to their work in Tuzla and elsewhere, which gives some insight into how IWA was perceived and experienced by its local partners on the ground. But another study would be needed to develop this topic further.

10 /

Learning about the history of IWA, and more generally about the solidarity mobilisations in the 1990s, can be seen as valuable in itself, as a way of increasing our historical knowledge. The war in BiH was a landmark event in Europe in the 1990s, and the solidarity mobilisations were an integral and significant part of that war. The fact that neither occupies a dominant place in Europe's collective memory makes it even more worthwhile to learn about them. However, this story should not be considered as a closed chapter of history with no links to the present day. The history of IWA can be connected to three issues with contemporary relevance, and can help to stimulate reflection on these topics.

Firstly, IWA and related groups were social movements, articulating their discontent with the sociopolitical realities they lived in and taking action in order to try to influence this situation. As such, despite and because of their diversity, they can and should be seen as part of the new social movements that have emerged in

Europe and worldwide in the last 50 years, which have become an important part of social and political processes in Europe and globally, and which aim to devise alternative ways of doing politics and of living together.⁶

Secondly, IWA was active in Bosnia and Herzegovina, a country that remains an open wound within Europe today: the Dayton Peace Agreement in 1995 only institutionalised the divisions created by the war, and to this day the political sphere continues to be largely dominated by nationalist forces. The question of how international actors – governments but also civil society groups – can support democratic and multi-ethnic forces in BiH therefore remains a deeply topical issue.⁷

Thirdly, with the Greek debt crisis, the refugee crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the general deepening of social divisions and economical inequalities, the issue of solidarity has become of the utmost interest again in Europe and other parts of the world.⁸ But even if solidarity were not currently a focal topic for the media, researchers and civil society organisations, it is nonetheless an issue of timeless importance. What should be done when other people are embroiled in war or other crisis situations? And how is solidarity to be organised in a democratic and practical way? These were core questions for IWA and they are fundamental questions that IWA's work raises today. Solidarity is always a struggle, and there are never final answers to these questions; they need to be continually revisited depending on the context. That is why the experience of IWA cannot by any means be copied and pasted to other situations. It can, however, serve as a stimulating source of inspiration and enquiry for people today who do not want to remain passive in the face of the problems experienced by others and are reflecting on how to practise solidarity.

6 For a recent overview of social movements worldwide, see Berger / Nehring 2017. This excellent book fails to mention social movements related to the war in BiH in the 1990s, reflecting the general scholarly neglect of the subject. While it does contain one brief reference to the campaigns of the peace movements “against the US-led interventions in the former Yugoslavia in the 1990s” (p. 510), this does not cover the main dimensions of the civil society mobilisations concerning BiH in the 1990s.

7 Among recent publications on the current situation in BiH and the role of the international community, see for example Bennett 2016.

8 See for example Bude 2019. On current solidarity movements in Europe and their transnational dimensions, see for example Lahusen / Zschache / Kousis 2021. For international solidarity movements in a historical perspective, see for example Christiaens / Goddeeris / Rodríguez García 2014 and Goddeeris 2010.

**BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA
DURING THE 1992–1995 WAR
AND IWA'S MAIN SUPPLY
ROUTE TO TUZLA**



SLOVENIA

• ZAGREB

CROATIA

Vukovar

BELGRADE •

SERBIA

MONTENEGRO

Posavina Corridor →

The front lines show the situation in spring 1995

Under control of the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina

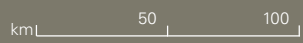
Under control of the Army of Republika Srpska (VRS)

Under control of the Croatian Defence Council (HVO)

Areas in Croatia under control of Croatian Serb forces

IWA's main convoy route from Makarska to Tuzla in 1994-1995

© Irfan Salihagić- Sarajevo, 2021



Adriatic Sea

Split

Makarska

Široki Brijeg

Mostar

Počtelj

Metković

Dubrovnik

• Bijać

• Prijedor

• Sanski Most

• Banja Luka

• Doboј

• Brčko

• Banovići

• Đurđevik

• Tuzla

• Žepče

• Jajce

• Travnik

• Zenica

• Kladanj

• Vitez

• Vares

• Srebrenica

• Bugojno

• Gornji Vakuf

• Visoko

• Žepa

• Livno

• Tomislavgrad

• Jablanica

• Kiseljak

SARAJEVO

• Gorazde

• Konjic

The war in Bosnia and Herzegovina – the most ethnically diverse of all the Yugoslav Republics (43% Muslims/Bosniaks, 31% Serbs, 17% Croats, 8% Yugoslavs and Others, according to the 1991 census) – started in March/April 1992, shortly after its declaration of independence. The independence of BiH, which followed that of Slovenia and Croatia in 1991, was supported by the main Bosnian Muslim party, the SDA, and the main Bosnian Croat party, the HDZ, which together formed the government of BiH in 1992, as well as by leftist parties, which were supported by citizens of all ethnicities or those who did not define themselves ethnically. Independence was categorically rejected by the main Bosnian Serb party, the SDS. Within a few months, with the support of the Milošević regime in Serbia and the Yugoslav People's Army, the SDS and the Army of *Republika Srpska* (VRS) had taken control of 70% of BiH territory by violent means. Their aim was to create ethnically homogenous Serb territories which would then join Serbia to form a "Greater Serbia" on the ruins of Yugoslavia, together with territories in Croatia that had been occupied by Croatian Serb forces since the 1991 war.

For most of the 1992–1995 war, the majority of BiH territory remained under the control of the VRS. Only parts of central and northern Bosnia, including Tuzla, were controlled by the BiH government and the Army of BiH, as well as the besieged capital Sarajevo, the Bihać pocket in the west, and the enclaves of Srebrenica, Žepa and Goražde in the east. Large parts of the south of the country, as well as several areas in central Bosnia, were under the control of the Croatian Defence Council (HVO) and the main Bosnian Croat political party, the HDZ. The latter were first allies of the BiH government, then became enemies during the "war in the war" which lasted from April 1993 until March 1994, whereby the HDZ, with the support of Tuđman regime in Zagreb, aimed to integrate Croat-controlled areas of BiH into Croatia ("Greater Croatia"). The SDA-led government in Sarajevo continued to advocate for the territorial integrity of BiH, but here too nationalist voices became stronger, seeing the defence of Bosniak/Bosnian Muslim interests as more important than upholding the multi-ethnic character of BiH.

The military situation then evolved in summer 1995. First, the VRS captured the enclaves of Srebrenica and Žepa in the east. Then, in Croatia, the Croatian Army took back all the Serb-held territories along the Bosnian border, and within BiH a common offensive of the HVO and the Army of BiH recaptured a significant part of the territories in the west (including Sanski Most and Jajce, which reconnected Bihać with central Bosnia). At this point, with the VRS controlling approximately half of the territory of BiH, and the Army of BiH and the HVO the other half, the US government imposed peace negotiations in Dayton (USA). They were conducted by the governments of BiH, Serbia and Croatia, with the last two also representing their nationalist allies within BiH. The Dayton Peace Agreement of November 1995 confirmed the existence of a common BiH, but in a very fragmented way and based on ethnationally defined territories: on the one hand the Serb-dominated *Republika Srpska*, and on the other the Croat-Bosniak Federation of BiH, comprising 10 cantons with mainly Bosniak or Croat majority populations.

The map shows the territorial situation in BiH during the war (before the changes of summer 1995) and also the main supply route for the convoys organised by IWA in 1994 and 1995, from its logistical base in Makarska to Tuzla. The convoys passed through areas controlled by the HVO and by the Army of BiH (which had officially become allies again after the end of the “war in the war” in March 1994, but with very strained relations). Depending on the situation on the ground, the convoys to Tuzla sometimes also took alternative routes in the south and in central Bosnia (for example through Gornji Vakuf), before joining the route to Tuzla via Vareš.

1.

**HOW IT
BEGAN (1993)**



One of the first three IWA trucks in Tuzla, November 1993. (Photo: Jenny Mees)

The story of IWA begins with a convoy and a split.

At a gathering in London in June 1993, trade unionists, socialists and other left-leaning individuals were informed about the terrible situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina and an appeal for help by trade unionists from the north Bosnian city of Tuzla to the working people of the UK. The idea was born to collect food and other material and to organise a truck convoy in order to bring it to Tuzla. Why Tuzla? One main argument was that it was a mining town that had shown solidarity with striking British miners in 1984–1985, by donating one day of their monthly pay to support them. Also, Tuzla was a multi-ethnic city that was resisting the attacks of the Bosnian Serb army and whose mayor also openly opposed all forms of nationalism, clearly advocating the importance of Muslims, Serbs and Croats living together in his city and beyond. The UK activists came together under the name Workers Aid for Bosnia and started to campaign for the convoy to Tuzla and to organise food collections in a number of cities.



18 /

Public meeting in London in September 1993 to support the convoy on its route to Tuzla. Screenshot from the documentary film "From Timex to Tuzla" by Tim Wise.

As these preparations were taking place in the UK, news of the initiative spread to other countries, where it struck a chord with trade unionists and others on the left who had been looking for something meaningful to do in response to the war in BiH, which had left so many in Europe feeling helpless and powerless. In Sweden, Denmark, Belgium, France and other countries, various groups formed to support and join this action, which consequently expanded into an international campaign. They also succeeded in collecting food, medical equipment and other material in

a very short time. A convoy of 10 trucks left the UK in early September and then split into two parts to drive to different places in Europe, where they collected additional material, and where they were joined by trucks, minibuses and other vehicles from other countries. The idea behind these stops was not only to collect more goods but also to raise public awareness about the situation in Tuzla and in BiH, and to underline that this was not just a humanitarian action but a political campaign. Public meetings and other activities were therefore organised at most of the places where the trucks stopped, in cooperation with local trade unions and Bosnian refugee organisations, including a meeting with representatives of leftist parties at the European Parliament in Strasbourg.⁹

In mid-September 1993, the various parts of the convoy gathered in Slovenia and then continued together to Zagreb. In all, there were 15 trucks and other vehicles, with around 60 drivers and accompanying persons from more than 10 countries. However, this is where the problems began. The convoy had been prepared with a great deal of enthusiasm, but the organisers had neglected much of the logistical planning needed to operate in a war zone. The shortest way to reach Tuzla was to drive through northern Croatia as far as Županja on the Bosnian-Croatian border, and then head south towards Tuzla, which was only 80 km from the border. The organisers asked the UN forces to escort them on this route, but the UN refused and also declined to give any other form of support. This road was considered much too dangerous, and the UN itself did not use it to transport humanitarian aid to Bosnia. Travelling to Tuzla along this northern route would have involved passing through territory controlled by the Bosnian Serb army, which was unlikely to agree to negotiations about letting through a convoy to Tuzla. Furthermore, in recent months the war in BiH had entered a new phase in which the Army of BiH and the Croatian Defence Council (HVO), formerly allies, had become enemies. This meant that, as well as passing through territory under Bosnian Serb control, the convoy would also have to travel through HVO-controlled areas in order to reach Tuzla, which itself was situated in territory controlled by the Army of BiH. What made the UN even less keen to provide any kind of assistance was the fact that the organisers of this unorthodox convoy were obviously operating outside of the UN mandate and were outspoken critics of the UN's role. Furthermore,

9 For a more detailed account of the launch of the initiative and the convoy through Europe, see ABA, KtB, 2: Steve Myers, "International Workers Aid. Report to Manchester, National Conference 30.10.93 / International Meeting 31.10.93"; Workers Aid 1999, 1–29 (focusing on the British side of the initiative); Andersson 1996, 160–165; Woods 1998a. The next two paragraphs are also based mainly on these sources.

they could be considered as complete amateurs – which they indeed were, in the sense that, for nearly all those involved, it was their first convoy to BiH and they lacked any experience of war situations.

The organisers of the international convoy protested vehemently against the UN's stance, blockading the entrance to its headquarters in Zagreb for a day, but the UN remained adamant. The situation within the convoy became more and more chaotic and confused, partly because so many different groups were involved, both on the ground and in the home countries. Finally, the convoy continued on its own towards Županja. As they approached the border with Bosnia, the members of the convoy were for the first time confronted with the reality of the war: "There were shellings and a really tense atmosphere. Nobody on the convoy was really prepared for this. We were all exhausted and afraid."¹⁰ The HVO, which controlled this border area, refused to let the convoy through, and it went back to Zagreb. Stuck there, the majority of the truck loads were distributed to refugee camps around Zagreb. There were some very practical reasons for this: many drivers could not stay away any longer and had to go back to their home countries. However, the drivers and passengers of three trucks decided to carry on and try to reach Tuzla another way, via the much longer "southern route": they headed to Split on the Adriatic coast where they arrived on 25 October, the idea being to reach Tuzla by entering BiH from the south.

20 /

Amid this complicated and chaotic situation on the ground, the convoy's organisers called a meeting in Manchester in late October to discuss and decide what to do. Around 200 British delegates gathered, including a number of Bosnian refugees, and also around 30 representatives from the other countries. This is where the split occurred, between Workers Aid for Bosnia (WAB) on the one hand and what would then officially become International Workers Aid (IWA), an independently organised network, on the other. So what happened? What were the reasons for the split? There are different interpretations, but after an examination of the sources, the events can be reconstructed and explained as follows.¹¹

10 Interview by N.M. with Ulrik Kohl, who participated in this convoy, 13.12.2020.

11 See especially Andersson 1996, 166–168; Workers Aid 1999, 27–28; PA Bachmann: International Workers Aid, "International report no. 7, 11.11.1993", by Steve Myers; PA Gysin, 1994: Letter from Geoff Ryan, Socialist Outlook, to Hanspeter Gysin, 25.2.1994.

At first sight, the main question was whether the campaign should concentrate on getting the northern route opened or try to find alternative solutions to get the trucks to Tuzla. At a meeting of the British delegates on 30 October, the majority agreed that the campaign should focus on the opening of the northern route, with a strong anti-UN emphasis. This also meant rejecting attempts to reach Tuzla via the southern route. Most of the international representatives, who were heavily outnumbered, as well as several British activists, agreed with neither the decision nor the way it had been prepared and taken, and felt that their opinions had not been taken into consideration at all. The international delegates held their own meeting the next day, 31 October, where the consensus was to continue the international campaign but in another way and on their own. Politically, the focus remained on supporting workers and other forces advocating a multi-ethnic society, with the formulation of four principles: "Solidarity with the workers of the Balkans! No to ethnic cleansing and ethnic partition! Solidarity with the multi-ethnic Bosnia! Asylum rights for all those fleeing the war in ex-Yugoslavia!" The aim was to provide "political, material and humanitarian aid to those forces in ex-Yugoslavia who are against the war and the national-chauvinism".¹² But criticising the UN and their own governments was not seen as priority, whereas it was a centrepiece of WAB's campaign. Organisation-wise, the aim was to leave a large degree of autonomy to the various national campaigns, to take common decisions in a consensual way, and to give full support to the three trucks trying to reach Tuzla via the southern route. Most of the international delegates agreed with these ideas and with the decision to continue on their own, with the exception of the Hungarian representatives and the official delegates from WAB, who left the meeting.

12 Minutes of the international meeting in Manchester, reproduced in the documentation part, doc. 1.

While the formal reason for the split was the dispute about the northern route and the attitude towards the UN, at a deeper level it was about a power struggle and different opinions on how the campaigns should be organised and decisions taken. Most delegates from other countries did not accept the methods of the WAB leaders, which they considered as authoritarian and sectarian. In the end, it was a split between more decentralised, consensus-oriented and more centralized, hierarchical ways of working, as well as between a value-based but pragmatic and a more ideological approach. WAB accused IWA of capitulating to the UN, but IWA's position was that fulfilling the promise to bring aid to Tuzla was essential, and that certain compromises needed to be made to achieve this, without betraying the basic values of their commitment.¹³

In the meantime, the three trucks which had reached Split continued on their way and tried to drive to Tuzla via the southern route. Two of these trucks had come from the UK, the other from Sweden, and the drivers and passengers were a diverse mix of four men and one woman, from four different countries: Mick Woods and Terry Moore from the UK, Jenny Mees from Belgium, Mohammed Abdulzade from Sweden, and Tim Wise from Australia. As they made their way from Split through the territory of BiH, they had various encounters with UN troops: some advised them to give up, some agreed to include them in their convoy, while others refused to help them. Once they had entered Bosnian territory, the most critical moment was when the three trucks reached one of the HVO checkpoints near Vitez. Like the Bosnian Serb army, the HVO was known to regularly obstruct and rob humanitarian convoys. But after a few hair-raising moments and with some of the goods having been damaged, the three trucks managed to get through the control, partly by claiming that they were taking the material to a Croat municipality in BiH. On the evening of 8 November, the convoy finally reached the outskirts of Tuzla. This was a very special moment: "Tears came to our eyes as we

13 The power struggle in Manchester was heightened by the fact that many of the individuals involved were part of small leftist groups that were constantly fighting each other. The leaders of WAB mainly belonged to the Workers Revolutionary Party (WRP), a Trotskyist organisation known to be very ideological, while many of the international representatives belonged to other groups within or close to the Trotskyist Fourth International, which defined themselves as anti-totalitarian and non-sectarian. In the letter referenced in footnote 11, Geoff Ryan describes how the WRP took control of WAB during the Manchester meeting and that this was heavily criticised by British activists from other groups, who subsequently left WAB and worked with IWA instead; he emphasises that the main problem was "the refusal of the WRP to accept democratic structures for the campaign, both in Britain and internationally". See also the account by Ulf B Andersson reproduced in the documentation part, doc. 2.

saw this sign: Tuzla.”¹⁴ They had succeeded – more than two months after they had left their home countries, and three weeks after they had left Zagreb, after so many delays and complications, and after being told so often that it was currently not possible to get to Tuzla.



Jenny Mees (middle) with miners during a visit of the Kreka Coal Mine in Tuzla, November 1993. (PA Jenny Mees)

The crew received a very warm welcome in the town, from the trade union representatives, from the municipal authorities and from the local media. The situation at this time was very critical: Tuzla had so far managed to protect itself and the surrounding region against the attacks of Bosnian Serb nationalists, who held the territory to the west, north and east. But since the “war in the war” had started between the Bosnian government and *Herceg-Bosna* in spring 1993, with the latter controlling the southern access roads, the region was cut off from all sides. This meant that supplying Tuzla with food and other necessities such as fuel had become more and more difficult. By the end of 1993, everything was in short supply in the city, which had 130,000 inhabitants and was also hosting more than 60,000 refugees who had fled or been expelled from eastern and northern Bosnia in 1992. UNHCR had started bringing aid and supplies to Tuzla in 1992, and a few humanitarian organisations like Oxfam were also operating in the city in 1993, but their aid was destined primarily for the many refugees in Tuzla, and not for the local population. And since the outbreak of the “war in the war”, the UNHCR convoys had been taking place only very irregularly, while convoys from civilian organisations had not reached the city for many weeks. It was against this backdrop that IWA with its three trucks arrived in Tuzla. The

14 Quote from the documentary *From Timex to Tuzla* by Tim Wise.

amount of food they brought was very small in relation to the number of people living in Tuzla and their needs, but it was more than anything the symbolic and moral value which was deemed essential. “Big small transport,” ran a local newspaper headline, while Tuzla’s mayor, Selim Bešlagić, said: “You arrived here with three lorries. It’s not much and will in no way relieve our distress here. But the quantity isn’t important. What counts is moral support. We cannot tell you enough how important these three lorries are for us.” The president of the Trade Union Council of Tuzla, Fikreta Sijerčić, highlighted another reason why this arrival was so meaningful: “It is very important because this is the first visit from Europe to the trade unions.”¹⁵

Galvanised by the news of the successful arrival of the convoy in Tuzla, the campaigns in various countries started preparations for a second convoy, and the groups that had agreed to work together under the IWA banner met again in Copenhagen in December 1993. To avoid the improvisation and chaos of the first convoy, they decided to establish a logistical centre with a warehouse in Split, from which the transports to Tuzla could be planned and organised. In addition, while confirming the autonomy of the national campaigns, they also decided to set up an international coordination committee, and to meet again two months later, this time in Amsterdam.¹⁶ The foundations were laid for the practical organisation of continuous support for Tuzla, and for the structural framework to organise this support in a cooperative way between the different national groups.

24 /

Meanwhile, IWA also embarked on the preparations for the next convoys, and it quickly became clear that their work would entail huge administrative battles. When, in December 1993, Eva X Moberg from the Swedish campaign investigated what needed to be done to get things moving and sought advice regarding all the necessary authorisations as well as possible cooperation partners, she reported the reaction of big Swedish NGOs that were delivering aid to eastern Bosnia: “They explained that they are not in the position to help us if we want to deliver the aid ourselves. The solution, according to them, is to do ‘like everybody else’ – drive down to any UNHCR warehouse outside of Bosnia, unload

15 For a detailed account of this trip by one of its participants, see the documentation part, doc. 11. See also the account by Jenny Mees in Andersson 1996, 166–170, and Woods 1998a. The quoted newspaper is *Tuzla List*, 29.11.1993, the quote by Bešlagić is from an interview with him by Jenny Mees in November 1993, reproduced in the documentation part, doc. 34, and the quote from Sijerčić is from the documentary *From Timex to Tuzla*.

16 ARAB, AK, 18: Minutes of the IWA meeting in Copenhagen, December 1993.

and let them do the rest of the job.”¹⁷ But delivering aid “like everybody else” is precisely what IWA did not want to do. They wanted to do it their way, by choosing what to give to whom, and by establishing direct contact between those who gave and collected the goods and those who received them. They considered this an essential part of a genuine project of human and political solidarity.¹⁸

17 ARAB, AK, 18: Report by Eva X Moberg, no date [December 1993].

18 On IWA’s general understanding of direct aid and solidarity, see also the documentation part, doc. 4.

2

ORGANISING INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY IN A TIME OF WAR (1994–1995)



IWA convoy at a UN checkpoint between Mostar and Jablanica in 1994.
(Photo: Michel Wenzer)

In 1994 and 1995, IWA developed into a structured though informal network, with regular international meetings of the representatives of national campaigns and also with the creation of a permanent coordination office to ensure communication between the international meetings. On the ground, a logistical centre was opened in Split in early 1994, which moved some months later to Makarska, and in autumn 1994 an office was also opened in Tuzla. The core activity of IWA at this time consisted in the organisation of convoys to Tuzla, transporting food collected by the different national campaigns, and with the Coal Miners' Trade Union in Tuzla as the main target group and cooperation partner. But IWA soon expanded its operations by organising and supporting other activities in Tuzla. Throughout this period, IWA was confronted with a series of challenges: disparities between the national campaigns, communication and logistical problems regarding the organisation of the convoys and of the work in Makarska and Tuzla, all amid a very stressful and unstable war situation, and questions regarding strategic and political priorities. In spite of this, IWA managed to maintain and develop its activities, mainly thanks to the commitment of the national campaigns and an organisational structure that allied autonomy for the national groups with international cooperation, and which functioned in a very democratic and flexible way.

BALANCING NATIONAL CAMPAIGNS AND INTERNATIONAL COORDINATION

Underpinning IWA were groups in different European countries with their own activities and organisational structures, which IWA called "national campaigns". These coalesced around a common goal – to support anti-nationalist and democratic forces in BiH and especially Tuzla – and also had a common basis of action, organising various activities such as street actions in order to collect food and money and to draw attention to the situation in Tuzla. They also tried to involve and secure support from trade unions and other groups and organisations in their home countries. At the same time, the groups differed greatly in terms of their organisational status in their respective countries, how they operated within society and the range of their activities. Most IWA groups had formed in the second half of 1993, for example *Arbetarkonvojen* (Workers' Convoy) in Sweden and *Konvoj til Bosnien* (Convoy to Bosnia) in Denmark, both of which developed very strongly in their countries: thus *Arbetarkonvojen* included 30 local groups and had a permanent office in Stockholm. Some pre-existing groups also joined IWA, such as *Una penna per la pace* (A Pen for Peace) in Brescia, Italy. In other countries, it tended to be more informal groups of individuals: Belgium,

for example, had a very active group, mostly comprising women in Flanders, some of whom were already involved with Bosnia prior to IWA, while in Switzerland two activists went on to establish an NGO called *Solidarität mit Bosnien* (Solidarity with Bosnia) in 1995. In Germany, several groups in various towns and cities joined to form a very loose network, IWA Germany, in 1994–1995, before most of them dropped out, and an informal group of several individuals carried on the work. A body called *IWA-Förderverein Deutschland e.V.* was also set up, but mainly as a means of collecting donations rather than to operate as a real association.¹⁹

The activity range and sociopolitical set-up of the groups also varied depending on the country. Some campaigns managed to collect a lot of goods, material and money within a short time, while others achieved more modest results. Some were very well supported by various trade union sections and also had good links to political parties, especially in Sweden and Denmark, whereas several other groups struggled to forge links with official trade unions in their countries.²⁰ However, none operated in isolation within their own country: all developed contacts with other groups within the heterogeneous landscape of BiH support movements. IWA Belgium, for example, worked closely with the Brussels-based Verona Forum for Peace and Reconciliation on the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia, which brought together anti-war groups from the former Yugoslavia and the rest of Europe. Sociologically, the individuals involved in IWA were mainly a mix of trade unionists, activists, students, workers and unemployed persons. Politically, some were part of the Trotskyist Fourth International, while others had no party affiliation or were close to other socialist tendencies.

19 For a more detailed overview of the different countries and groups involved in IWA, see Annex 2 and the documentation part, docs. 16, 17 and 18.

20 In Denmark, for example, more than 120 trade union sections were members of *Konvoj til Bosnien* in 1994 (ABA, KtB, 6: List of members 26.10.1994). By contrast, the Italian IWA branch stated in November 1994 that “we tried to involve Italian trade unions in our activity but again with very little success” (ARAB, AK, 18: IWA, *Una penna per la pace*, Brescia: “Short report on occasion of the meeting in Munich”). The strong sociopolitical set-up of the two Scandinavian groups is also apparent from the fact that in Sweden *Arbetarkonvojen* managed to secure government funding for several projects in Tuzla, and that in Denmark *Konvoj til Bosnien* had good contacts with several leftist parties, such as the Red Green Alliance, for which Søren Søndergaard and Jette Gottlieb, two very active members of the Danish IWA branch, got elected to the Danish Parliament in 1994.

Beyond the different national groups there were many active individuals from diverse backgrounds. Take Jenny Mees and Mick Woods, who had been part of the first convoy in November 1993: Mees was at that time employed at the small Trotskyist Parti Socialiste Ouvrier in Brussels, and then got very involved in launching and developing IWA in Belgium, with a particular focus on developing activities for and with women in Tuzla. Woods had been working as taxi driver in London, having been a political activist on the British left for 20 years. He then moved to Makarska in 1994, from where he drove around 20 convoys to Tuzla during the war.



Mick Woods (left) and Ulrik Kohl at the back of a IWA truck, 1994. (Photo: Michel Wenzler)

30 /

Or take Ulf B Andersson, who was working for a trade union magazine in Stockholm, and who became one of the driving forces of the Swedish IWA branch *Arbetarkonvojen*. Or Ulrik Kohl from Denmark and Franziska Bachmann from Germany, both aged around 20 in 1994 and not long out of secondary school: Ulrik Kohl remained for most of the war in Croatia and BiH, organising the work in Makarska and then also building up the IWA office in Tuzla, where Franziska Bachmann became the first volunteer in autumn 1994; she returned to work in Tuzla in summer 1995, while also starting her studies in Germany, and represented IWA Germany at most of the international IWA meetings until 2000. There were many other individuals involved, from a variety of personal and professional backgrounds, who decided to take time and energy from their “normal” lives and invest it in IWA. There were differences between the individual members and also between the different national groups, in terms of their political views for example, but what united them all was a desire to support Tuzla, trade unions and other democratic and multi-ethnic forces in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and a willingness to work together to achieve this end.

IWA as an international structure was not a formal or registered organisation, but rather an informal network whose constituents jointly defined their rules and modus operandi. Despite, or rather because of, the significant disparities between the national groups, IWA developed a very inclusive approach which took into consideration the specificities and differences of the national campaigns. For the running costs of the IWA offices in Makarska and Tuzla, a common budget was agreed upon twice a year for the upcoming six-month period, with contributions determined according to the financial means of the different groups. For the second half of 1995, for example, the agreed contributions were DM 900 for “very small campaigns” such as Switzerland and France, DM 3,000 for “medium-sized campaigns” like the Netherlands and Austria, while Denmark contributed DM 8,000 and Sweden DM 11,500.²¹



International IWA-meeting in Amsterdam, May 1996, from right to left: Jenny Mees, Franziska Bachmann, Mattias Kåks, Lucien Perpette, Roland Rance, Alan Thornett. The numbers on the board are the monthly financial contributions of each national group to the common IWA-budget. (Photo: Hanspeter Gysin)

At the same time, when joint decisions were taken, all countries had the same number of votes, regardless of the strength of the campaigns and how much they contributed materially and financially. Significantly, when in September 1994 someone queried whether richer campaigns should have more of a say than others, the idea was barely even discussed, let alone accepted.²² Decisions were often taken in consensus, or by a majority of votes cast – but during the discussions there was an obvious effort to find and define consensual approaches. Usually,

21 PA Woods, 2: Minutes 9th IWA meeting in Aarhus, 17–18.6.1995. Contributions were calculated in German marks (DM), which was the currency of reference in Europe at that time and widely used in BiH and Croatia.

22 ARAB, AK, 18: IWA's 6th international meeting in Stockholm, 10–11 September 1994.

during the international meetings, working groups were constituted in order to work on proposals which would take into account different opinions, and these were then put to votes. If a topic was very controversial, the protagonists were required to sit down together to work out a common proposal.²³

After the meetings in Manchester and Copenhagen in late 1993, a further eight international meetings took place during the course of the war: in Amsterdam, Makarska, Brescia, Stockholm and Munich in 1994, and in Aalbeke, Aarhus and Vienna in 1995. This also illustrates the international and participatory character of IWA, which aimed to involve everybody.²⁴ The major decisions were taken during these meetings, and if something urgent had to be decided between meetings, “referendums” would be held by fax – the main communication tool at this time.²⁵ While IWA had set up a coordination team at the outset, it soon became clear that a more substantial method was needed to coordinate the work between the campaigns and between the international meetings. At the meeting in Brescia in 1994, the decision was therefore taken to create a permanent coordination office, and it was the Swedish IWA branch *Arbetarkonvojen* which took on this function.²⁶ The establishment of the coordination office in Stockholm had very practical advantages: *Arbetarkonvojen* had office space provided free of charge by the trade union SAC, and thanks to a government programme to support unemployed persons in the NGO sector, the Swedish branch could employ two full-time staff in its office, which allowed it to cope with the additional workload. In general, the other national campaigns were run by volunteers, often without proper offices, who also had other commitments and time constraints.

23 See for example the minutes of the IWA meeting in Austria in 1995: “Those who made the two proposals work out the points where a consensus is possible and those points where no consensus is possible. They make new proposals they present on Sunday. The meeting will vote for these proposals.” (PA Gysin 1995: Minutes of the “International IWA meeting, Annetal, Hainfeld, Austria”).

24 The venues were usually suggested by IWA members in these countries, who were then responsible for the logistical preparations for the meeting. The importance, for inclusivity, of the choice of meeting locations was apparent at the end of the Vienna meeting in October 1995, when the participants agreed that the next venue in January 1996 should be Madrid, as this “would help to integrate the activists in Spain” (PA Gysin 1995: Minutes of the “International IWA meeting, Annetal, Hainfeld, Austria”). Apparently, the IWA activists in Spain did not have the capacity to organise this meeting, as it finally took place in Berlin.

25 For the international meetings and the referendums, see also the documentation part, doc. 5.

26 ARAB, AK, 18: IWA, Minutes of the meeting held in Brescia, 24–26 June 1994.



The IWA office and warehouse in Makarska, with one of the IWA trucks in front of it, 1994. (Photo: Agneta Falck)



Inside the IWA office in Makarska, 1995, with Michel Wenzler (left), one of the convoy leaders, and Peter Öholm, from the office staff. (Photo: Hanspeter Gysin)



Goods stored in the IWA warehouse. (Photo: Lone D. Rasmussen)

Also key to all the communication and cooperation processes within IWA were the field offices. The Makarska office opened in spring 1994, followed by the Tuzla office six months later. Makarska and Tuzla were the destination points of the IWA campaigns and convoys: the trucks from different parts of Europe usually headed first to Makarska, from where the goods were taken on to Tuzla and distributed. However, besides their logistical role and other functions, the two offices also became essential for communication within IWA: they regularly wrote and sent reports, on average one per week, about the situation on the ground and ongoing activities, often with proposals about what should be improved, and these reports were then sent to the Stockholm coordination office whose task was to dispatch them to the national campaigns.²⁷ The offices in Makarska and Tuzla were run by IWA volunteers who had the time to come to one or both towns for several weeks or months, and who worked in stressful and often improvised conditions with a lot of tasks and issues to tackle.²⁸

Besides their essential functions for all the logistical operations of IWA and the communication within the network, the two offices also played a crucial role in forging a common IWA identity, despite all the differences between the national campaigns. IWA volunteers from all countries were working in, or at least passing through, both towns, and the Makarska and Tuzla offices were also financially the most significant common IWA projects: while each campaign had to find its own money for its activities at home and for transporting the goods to Makarska, the common budget contributions decided at the international meetings were mainly used to cover the running costs of these two offices, like paying the rent and the expensive costs for fax and telephone.²⁹

How did communication and cooperation between the different IWA actors work? Reading the reports, whether from Tuzla and Makarska or from the national campaigns, one regularly comes across complaints and criticisms about lack of communication, for example that national campaigns were not reporting about their activities, or that reports from Makarska and Tuzla or other information had not been shared by the Stockholm headquarters, or that they were not read.

27 All together around 50 "Split reports" (sometimes also called "Makarska reports") were written and sent between April 1994 and January 1996, and more than 60 "Tuzla reports" between 1994 and 1998. Some reports are reproduced in the documentation part, see docs. 13, 15, 19 and 20.

28 For a more detailed insight into the work done at Makarska and Tuzla, see in the documentation part the documents mentioned in the previous footnote as well as doc. 14.

29 For one example of a common budget decided by IWA, see the documentation part, doc. 7.

At the international meetings, communication issues were a recurring topic, as shown for example by the minutes from the international IWA meeting in Aalbeke in March 1995: “We had several times longer and smaller discussions about our communication problems, the lack of feedback, in short our chaotic behaviour.” The author went on to note that this is a “problem we have discussed so often”.³⁰

At the same time, when one analyses all the reports and the work that was done, it must be said that, despite all the communication issues, the cooperation proceeded remarkably well, especially given the circumstances: this was before the internet was widely available, the main communication system was fax, it was in a war situation, it involved groups from 10 or more different countries, nearly all those involved were volunteers without previous experience of working in war situations, and there was a high level of psychological and physical stress. That difficulties and frustrations appeared under such circumstances was inevitable – but it is remarkable to note that a tension never escalated to a conflict of such proportions that it would have endangered the organisation. This is certainly due in part to the fact that IWA developed a very open culture of discussion, where people said what was on their mind and did not hesitate to express disagreements, but were at the same time also aware of the common ground and the need to find constructive approaches for the apparent challenges. Criticism was sometimes sharply articulated, for example towards the coordination office, but in the end the desire to be constructive was always stronger than the temptation to let a conflict escalate.³¹

The internal communication problems were never completely resolved, mainly because of “lack of time and personnel [...]”. There are proposals to do something about this, like a PR person would be wonderful, but for now it is just impossible. The only thing to do is to take personal initiatives and to phone and fax not only (but of course first) to Makarska and Stockholm but also to each other.”³² But when problems did arise, they were brought up and discussed. This applied not only to communication, but also to many other issues, especially logistical

30 ARAB, AK, 18: Minutes of international IWA conference, Aalbeke (B), 4–5 March 1995.

31 Given the factionalism in the international left at this time, such constructive cooperation was far from self-evident. In a French presentation paper about IWA, the author emphasised that one of the reasons that made IWA with its decentralised and non-hierarchical structure viable was that “the various components of IWA [...] have shown, towards each other, a very appreciable mutual respect”. (Moch-David Archives: Jean-Michel Annequin, “Une expérience originale de solidarité européenne”, n.d. [Autumn 1994] [Translated from French by N.M.].

32 ARAB, AK, 18: Minutes of international IWA conference, Aalbeke (B), 4–5 March 1995.

problems, and a constant effort was made to address issues and improve the situation, even if these solutions then turned out to be less than satisfactory, and were often only partially implemented, if at all. As the budget for the Makarska office was never sufficient, IWA had agreed to introduce the so-called “Split tax”: each campaign that brought a convoy to Makarska had to pay a certain amount in relation to the amount of the load, which for example helped to pay the rent of the warehouse where the load was stored. At the meeting in Brescia in 1994, all IWA members had agreed to raise this tax in order to cover the increasing costs of the Makarska office, but several of the smaller campaigns subsequently realised that they could not afford to pay this additional money, and by common agreement the Split tax was lowered again.³³ This example also illustrates the flexibility of IWA’s way of working, and again the willingness to take into consideration the needs and limitations of the smaller campaigns and to find solutions acceptable for all. In general, the strong Swedish and Danish presence within IWA – these countries being characterised by cultures that emphasise consensual rather than antagonistic organisational approaches – was certainly one reason why, despite all the difficulties, IWA stood up very well to the various challenges it faced.

36 /



Loading goods in Maksarska in one of the trucks to Tuzla, with (from the right) Ulf B Andersson, Peter Öholm and Annette Joelsson, 1994. (Photo: Agneta Falck)

33 ARAB, AK, 18: IWA, Minutes of the meeting held in Brescia 24–26 June 1994 and IWA’s 6th international meeting in Stockholm, 10–11 September 1994.

Regarding the geographical distribution within Europe, for the first two years of its existence, groups and individuals from more than 10 European countries were involved in IWA, although not all of them for the whole time and not all in the same way. Eastern European countries were not represented, which reflects a more general trend: within the BiH solidarity mobilisations after 1992, groups from Eastern Europe were less present and active than those from Western Europe. And the initiatives which existed in Eastern Europe were not necessarily keen, after the fall of socialism, to join an organisation like IWA: in December 1993, a Czech group contacted IWA and said they would be interested in cooperating, but that they would not be able to formally join: "Although the programme of Workers Aid would interest our refugee and Czech members, the political climate is different in the post-stalinist countries, and we cannot associate ourselves directly with something bearing a title like Workers Aid."³⁴

In Western Europe, the countries where it was most difficult for IWA to get established were, significantly, those where Workers Aid for Bosnia was strong. This was especially the case in the UK, where some individuals remained loyal to IWA but found it very hard to get active because WAB was so dominant on the leftist Bosnia scene. And while WAB was and remained a British organisation, it also had well-established cooperation partners in France – *Secours Ouvrier pour la Bosnie* (Workers' Relief for Bosnia) – and Spain, with the Catalan group *Ayuda Obrera* (Workers' Aid): as these groups were very strongly embedded in their country or region and had ties with several trade unions, this left little space for IWA to undertake its own work. Nevertheless, even in France and Spain, individuals were active within IWA during the war and attended international meetings. It was often not easy to tell who was or was not part of IWA as there was no formalised membership and some participants were clearly constituted groups while others were very informal. Internally, one criterion for considering a country to be part of IWA, including the right to vote on budgetary questions, was if it paid a contribution to the common budget.³⁵

34 ARAB, AK, 18: Letter by a Czech activist in Prague to IWA meeting in Copenhagen, 11–12 December 1993.

35 See the minutes of the Munich meeting in 1994: "The minimum for all national campaigns is 200 DM per month. But all countries pay what they can. If they pay less, they cannot decide on points of budget distribution, or have only consultative votes." (PA Woods, 3: Munich IWA meeting minutes. Report from 11.1.95). But on the voting rules too, IWA remained generally flexible and decided from meeting to meeting how to proceed.

There were also changes in the number of represented countries: some groups were not active from the beginning (Switzerland, for example, joined in autumn 1994), some stopped being active (Austria in 1996, for example), and some participated in activities on a very irregular basis, as was the case with several individuals from Greece. Despite these fluctuations, there was generally a great degree of stability and continuity in the participation of most of the country groups, and also many of the active individuals, with various ups and downs. This again underlines the fact that, despite all the difficulties, the majority of groups and individuals involved developed a real connection to their commitment and to IWA as a common structure.

THE CORE ACTIVITY: THE BREAD PROGRAMME CONVOYS AND THEIR CHALLENGES

After the first convoy, which reached Tuzla in November 1993, IWA had decided to launch a new campaign and to prepare a second convoy for spring 1994. But this was only the start: by the time the war ended in December 1995, around 30 IWA-organised convoys had travelled from Makarska to BiH, with Tuzla as the main destination. The procedure was usually as follows: national campaigns collected goods, and put them in trucks which drove to Makarska, where the goods were unloaded and put in a warehouse. Then the goods were driven to Tuzla in three trucks that IWA had acquired, and brought to the warehouse of the Coal Miners' Trade Union, from where their distribution was organised in the following days. The majority of the convoys were dedicated to the Bread Programme, which IWA had decided to make its main activity. The original idea had been to bring flour, oil, sugar and yeast powder to Tuzla so that local bakeries would prepare the bread which would then be distributed to miners' families. But before the spring 1994 convoys got started, IWA was informed by the Coal Miners' Trade Union that the bread factories were not operating because of lack of fuel, and that it would be better to distribute food parcels directly to miners and their families. IWA agreed to this. The name stayed the same, although no direct production and distribution of bread was involved.³⁶

36 PA Woods, 5: Miners' Trade Union Board, Fikret Suljić, Tuzla, to Swedish Workers Aid, Eva Moberg, 23.2.1994; and ARAB, AK 15: IWA Makarska, Report/proposal for the Munich meeting, 19.11.1994 (which refers to the decision of the Amsterdam meeting in February 1994).



IWA convoy on the way to Tuzla, in Počitelj (south of Mostar), 1994. (Photo: Thomas Proctor)

The collection, transport and distribution of the food parcels and other goods entailed a never-ending succession of practical challenges, and much of IWA's work and energy went on trying to address these challenges and find appropriate solutions.

The first question that was regularly discussed and debated, especially at the beginning, was: what to collect and bring to Tuzla? Groups in different countries often acquired very different goods, depending on what people brought them, during street actions for example. This meant that what arrived in Makarska was often very disparate, with many different items of varying quality, often in very divergent quantities. This made it more complicated to prepare equal distribution amounts, which was crucial for IWA in order to avoid some recipients getting less than others, or receiving different items. Additionally, the loads sometimes contained food which the staff at Makarska deemed "culturally insensitive", and often the transported goods were not properly marked, which created yet more work for the Makarska team.³⁷ With the Coal Miners' Trade Union in Tuzla it was agreed that the transport should focus on some basic products, essentially flour, oil and sugar, which were then distributed in standardised amounts in Tuzla. The Makarska and Tuzla offices therefore repeatedly urged the national campaigns to take more care about what they were sending and how. The transported goods did indeed become more uniform over time, although not always to the satisfaction of the Makarska office, as the national campaigns often had neither the time nor the capacity to prepare everything in a way that would have satisfied those who received the loads in Makarska

37 See for example ARAB, AK, 15: Split report 24, 18.11.1994, and IWA Makarska, Report/proposal for the Munich meeting, 19.11.1994.

and then Tuzla.³⁸ Some of the money collected by the national campaigns was used to buy flour directly in Croatia, which had the advantage of avoiding transport costs from the home countries.³⁹ When the situation improved in Tuzla and basic products became available again, it was suggested that flour, for example, should be purchased there in order to support the local economy. However, the idea was not implemented in the end because “how can we check so what we buy is not humanitarian aid” brought by others and resold on the black market?⁴⁰ Although collecting goods in the home countries created various practical problems, while raising money offered more flexibility, IWA did not want to stop the direct collection of goods in the home countries since the experience of the national campaigns was that many people were more drawn to giving goods than just donating money, and this very practical assistance was indeed fundamental to IWA’s idea of direct solidarity from people to people.

A second challenge was linked to the transports themselves. After the experience of the first convoy, IWA continued to use the so-called southern route. This ran for approximately 300 km between Makarska and Tuzla, which meant driving through Croatia and BiH, and in the latter through territory controlled by the *Herceg-Bosna* authorities and also by the BiH government. This required an incredible amount of administrative work to obtain all the necessary authorisations to drive to Tuzla with a convoy, involving negotiations with many different bodies, from UNHCR to the authorities of Croatia, *Herceg-Bosna* and BiH, including their different customs services. Each convoy needed new paperwork, and it could take days or weeks to secure all the necessary authorisations, and even then an additional document might be demanded at a particular control point, meaning that the convoy had to turn back.⁴¹

IWA’s most nerve-racking experiences were with the *Herceg-Bosna* authorities. Their office for issuing convoy permits was situated in Široki Brijeg, which meant that IWA representatives from Makarska had to drive there regularly in order to

38 Ibid., or for example ARAB, AK, 16: Tuzla report 15.9.95 (no. 5, part 1), which talks about the problem of the delivered food being of different sizes (e.g. oil bottles). This “might seem a small problem to you” but creates problems for equal distribution, so please “make sure in campaigns to collect one litre bottles”.

39 For example in 1994 with money collected in France, see PA Mir Sada: Avec Tuzla, n.d. [autumn 1994], and in Sweden: PA Bachmann: Stockholm Coordination Office, Newsletter 15.7.1994.

40 ARAB, AK, 16: Tuzla report 17.3.1995.

41 On the laborious paperwork for the convoys, see for example the Split report from 15.11.1995, reproduced in the documentation part, doc. 15.

negotiate with them. The usual practice of the *Herceg-Bosna* authorities was only to let humanitarian convoys through if they gave them 25% of the loads. Many organisations complied, but IWA refused on principle to give in to this blackmail. As a result, the authorities regularly delayed or refused to issue the authorisations needed to pass through the territory they controlled, to which IWA usually reacted by sending protest letters.⁴²

Besides the administrative difficulties, the transports also entailed physical dangers, especially when passing through BiH to reach Tuzla. This often involved travelling on small mountain roads, which were dangerous at the best of times, let alone during a war. Over the course of the war in BiH, a number of humanitarian convoys were attacked and robbed. The worst incident happened in June 1993, when a convoy of more than 100 trucks was attacked by HVO units in central Bosnia; seven people were killed and much of the cargo was looted.⁴³ Fortunately, nobody from IWA was hurt during any of its convoys, but the trips were a stressful experience, as even with official authorisations, HVO soldiers in particular would sometimes stop trucks and steal part of the load. The most serious incident occurred in November 1994, although not in HVO territory: during an IWA convoy bound for Sarajevo, two loaded trucks came off the road on the treacherous Igman mountain and were then robbed by soldiers of the Army of BiH.⁴⁴



On the way to Tuzla,
November 1995.
(Photo: Jorge Lattof)

42 See also below pp. 50–51.

43 On this convoy, see for example Balkan Investigative Reporting Network: <https://balkaninsight.com/2017/05/12/bosnian-wartime-aid-convoy-attackers-evade-justice-05-11-2017>.

44 ARAB, AK, 15: Split report 25, 28.11.1995, and ABA, KtB, 1: Protest Letter IWA Makarska to BiH government, 28.11.1994. This loss was all the more dramatic for IWA as these two trucks represented two thirds of its fleet.

Another problem was the quality of the trucks. For its convoys from Makarska to Tuzla, IWA had acquired two trucks in Germany and one in Belgium in 1994, and then in 1995, to replace those lost on Igman, two in Sweden and one in Denmark. But these were older models which were not really adapted to cold winters or hot summers and several of them regularly broke down, with spare parts sometimes having to be fetched from Berlin.⁴⁵

Despite all these difficulties, the convoys in general managed to reach their destination. This, and also the fact that nobody was hurt, can certainly be attributed to the fact that there was one group of drivers working for IWA, who stayed with the logistical staff in Makarska for at least several weeks, often longer, and who drove the same route multiple times: they could thus accumulate experience in driving the mountain roads and handling checkpoints, the frequent truck problems and other tricky situations.⁴⁶ Also, after the loss of its trucks on Igman, IWA found a temporary solution while waiting to acquire replacements: it joined forces especially with the French humanitarian NGO Atlas, which brought IWA's goods to Tuzla free of charge. At IWA Makarska, this raised the question of whether it would make more sense to make this a permanent arrangement: "Advantages: Efficient, quick, saves a lot of money, we can concentrate on raising funds and collecting goods + do some political work," notes a report from Makarska from January 1995. However, it goes on to highlight the disadvantages: this would eliminate "the very personal and unusual contact we have with our friends in Bosnia and especially Tuzla" and would make "our organisation more a humanitarian aid organisation (quite anonymous) and less a solidarity organisation". Additionally, "a more direct political problem might be that Atlas, like many other organisations, do not really mind giving away a percentage of the load to Serbs or HVO, something we have always refused".⁴⁷

42 /

Once the goods had arrived in Tuzla, the third challenge began – distribution. Who to give to? And how? How to ensure that the aid arrived where it was supposed to arrive? IWA was clear that it wanted miners to be the main beneficiary group, and that the distribution should be organised through and by the trade unions.

45 See the documentation part, docs. 14 and 15.

46 Regarding the dangers encountered, it should also be mentioned that the route from Makarska to Tuzla, while it did not pass through areas controlled by the Bosnian Serb army, came very close to them at several points, and there was occasionally also shooting and shelling at the IWA convoys. For the route, see the map on page 13.

47 ARAB, AK, 4: "Report from the fortress of misunderstandings", by Eva X Moberg, Makarska, 10.1.1995

But the biggest union in Tuzla, the Coal Miners' Trade Union, had more than 12,000 members, who worked at three main locations in and around Tuzla: Kreka, Durđevik and Banovići, each of them consisting of several pits. It was obvious that the loads brought by IWA were far from enough for everybody. In agreement with the union, IWA decided to focus mainly on one area – the Kreka Union. Nevertheless, some loads also went to other pits, and when smaller quantities were brought by the trucks, the question was whom to prioritise: Unemployed miners? Families who had lost somebody in the war? Other groups?

At the international meeting in Munich in December 1994, the “problems of distribution” were one of the topics addressed, and the meeting agreed that “the number of beneficiaries must be cut down. There has been not enough food for a target group of 12,500 people, and the monitoring of the distribution has been impossible. Therefore we concentrate – as originally planned – on the Kreka Union.”⁴⁸ Another challenge was how to distribute the goods and how to make sure they reached the people they were intended for. IWA wanted to strengthen the Coal Miners' Trade Union, not to bypass them, and had therefore agreed with them that they, not IWA, would be in charge of the distribution. But rumours soon began to emerge about goods turning up on the black market, and some miners complained that they had never received anything. This worried IWA a great deal, and it responded by raising the issue with the union and monitoring more closely the distribution methods and the lists of recipients compiled by the union. This task became easier after the IWA office opened in Tuzla, meaning that an IWA representative was physically present on the ground.⁴⁹

THE DEVELOPMENT OF LOCAL PROJECTS

While the food convoys constituted IWA's core activity in 1994 and 1995, it soon launched a number of other activities, among them various projects on the ground, in Tuzla, which often went beyond the delivery and distribution of humanitarian aid. This was especially the case after the opening of the Tuzla office, as there was now a person on site who could get directly involved and who could help the different IWA campaigns with developing and implementing activities. IWA saw

48 PA Woods, 3: Munich IWA meeting minutes. Report from 11.1.1995.

49 The distribution and monitoring issues linked to black market rumours were major discussion topics at the IWA meetings in Stockholm in September 1994 (ARAB, AK, 18: IWA's 6th international meeting in Stockholm, 10–11 September 1994) and in Munich in December 1994 (PA Woods, 3: Munich IWA meeting minutes. Report from 11.1.1995). See also the documentation part, doc. 14.

these local projects as an integral part of its efforts to support democratic forces and promote the idea of multi-ethnicity in Tuzla. These additional activities were also aimed in part, but not exclusively, at trade unions in Tuzla. They generally resulted from discussions between IWA activists and representatives of trade unions and other organisations in Tuzla, which made the former aware of how many needs there were to address in the war-torn city.

One area where IWA became particularly active during the war was support for women. Several campaigns had initiated the organisation of a specific women's convoy in November 1994, bringing hygiene products, and then IWA Sweden organised a big campaign for women's parcels: more than 20,000 of them were collected and brought to Tuzla in several convoys in the first months of 1995.⁵⁰ IWA Belgium also acquired a mammogram machine for the early detection of cancer, after it heard that the hospital in Tuzla was in urgent need of such equipment. After many transport and coordination problems, the machine was delivered, in the end, not to Tuzla but to a hospital in Zenica, with two other mammogram machines and an ultrasound machine being delivered to a health centre in Tuzla a year later.⁵¹ IWA forged especially close ties with the Tuzla Women's Association and with the association Heart to Heart, which brought together women from the Kreka Trade Union. With them, it also discussed the implementation of more structural projects, such as supporting the local production of shoes to be delivered to the women of the Kreka Union. IWA also decided to back the idea of a women's magazine, and succeeded in bringing together several women's associations from Tuzla for this project. They agreed that they would set up a non-commercial, independent and non-nationalist newspaper, aimed at "all women, no matter what they wear, or what religion they belong to", which would strengthen the voice of women in the public sphere. However, getting this project off the ground proved much more complicated than expected, as there were many disagreements and also rivalries between the associations involved, and the first issue was not published until summer 1996.⁵²

50 See the documentation part, docs. 25 and 26.

51 See PA Gysin 1994: IWA Flanders, Report about convoy and meetings in Tuzla, November 1994.

52 ARAB, AK, 4: Initial material for the realisation of the possibility of starting a non-commercial women's paper in Tuzla [1995] (with the quoted sentence); PA Bachmann: "Report about the women's paper, which finally has a name: Pogled Žene", 27.2.1996.

Other activities were launched in the youth field, initially in a very informal way. While Ulrik Kohl and Franziska Bachmann were in Tuzla in autumn 1994, working at the newly opened IWA office, they set up a youth group and a girls' group for secondary school pupils. The girls' group met intermittently, when there was no shelling, in order to chat, listen to music and take part in activities such as a self-defence course. The idea soon arose of getting more involved in the youth field, as many young people lacked places to gather and opportunities to do activities together. IWA Sweden raised money to support the local youth centre *Dom Mladih*, and in 1995 it acquired various pieces of equipment for the centre.⁵³ Other contacts included discussions between the teachers' union in Tuzla and *Konvoj til Bosnien* in particular, about how to support schools and teachers, and between IWA and the Coal Miners' Trade Union about the creation of a trade union magazine.⁵⁴

Not all ideas were implemented, and some faced significant challenges, as with the women's magazine. When considering what IWA achieved in Tuzla during the war, it is not enough to look only at what it directly organised or supported: several projects were also implemented by other organisations in cooperation with IWA, or they started as IWA projects but then developed on their own.



The "Ship to Bosnia"-container ship M/S Aväng in the harbour of Split, December 1995. (Photo: Michel Wenzler)

Two examples may be given to illustrate this. Student Yannick du Pont and his group Youth Solidarity with former Yugoslavia (YSY), based in Amsterdam, joined IWA in 1994. In April of this year, Yannick du Pont travelled for the first time to Tuzla, where he decided to focus on cooperation with the University of Tuzla.

53 PA Woods, 4: "The youth project in Tuzla – a short report", 11.1.1996.

54 A more detailed overview of the different projects launched by IWA in Tuzla during (and after) the war can be found in Annex 3.

Seven months later, YSY organised a tour to several European countries (Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, France, Austria) for a delegation of three students and three professors from the University of Tuzla. This was not officially a joint IWA project, but other IWA members helped with the organisation of the tour.⁵⁵ Another example is Ship to Bosnia, where in November 1995 a container ship left Gothenburg with food, medical equipment and other material on board, including a fire engine provided by the Swedish farm workers' union. The ship then stopped in the harbours of Aberdeen, Antwerp and Barcelona to load more goods which had been collected there mainly through trade union sections. It arrived in Split in December 1995, and in the ensuing months the goods were brought to Tuzla and other towns in BiH. This very broad project had been launched by IWA Sweden and the Swedish dock workers' union in late 1994, and in an IWA referendum the national campaigns had agreed to consider it as a joint IWA project. It was then implemented in close cooperation with several IWA campaigns and especially the IWA office in Makarska, which helped with the logistical organisation of the distribution. But at the same time, Ship to Bosnia also had its own organisational structure and became a project in its own right, involving a lot of other organisations beyond the IWA network.⁵⁶

46 /

The multiplication of ideas and projects for Tuzla generated a lot of discussions within IWA. Does each project make sense? And even if it does make sense, are we able to do it? Many ideas seemed worth supporting, but IWA could not do everything, and some wondered whether the expanding number of projects was not deflecting from IWA's main focus, namely the food convoys and the work with the trade unions. "There are many other projects being talked about at the moment," wrote Mick Woods, for example, in August 1994. "I suggest we ask ourselves the following questions: 1. Are these projects likely to mobilise outside our present support? 2. Are these projects in line with the working class/trade union orientation of our campaign? 3. Will these campaigns detract from or strengthen our core project?"⁵⁷

55 YSY produced a brochure about this tour: SPARK Archives: "University of Tuzla – Delegation project, November–December 1994", published by YSY in 1995.

56 The preparation and implementation of Ship to Bosnia led to some tensions between IWA Sweden and other IWA members who criticised the project for the lack of political clarity, the choice of some of the partners involved, and the lack of communication. PA Gysin 1996: Brief minutes of decisions taken at IWA conference in Berlin, 13–14 January 1996.

57 See the documentation part, doc. 14.

The question of what to focus on was addressed at several international IWA meetings, such as that in Aalbeke in March 1995: “We had a discussion about priorities and drowning in the different projects so that there is no time and energy left for the priority, the bread project. We thought here was a real danger indeed, but also engaging more people around different projects attracts also people and sections for trade unions (like the teachers’ trade unions).”⁵⁸ In the end, IWA agreed that, in addition to the Bread Programme, which would remain the core activity, IWA itself would focus on certain priority projects, while national campaigns could continue to focus on other activities they wanted to support, and that the IWA offices in Makarska and Tuzla would help them if they were able to do so and not overwhelmed by other work.⁵⁹ This is another example of how IWA succeeded in balancing the interests of IWA as a general network and the individual campaigns.

POLITICAL AND STRATEGIC DISCUSSIONS AND DECISIONS

As well as discussing what to focus on within Tuzla, IWA also debated whether its general focus should remain on Tuzla alone or should be extended to include other parts of BiH. At the Brescia meeting in 1994, some expressed the concern that “IWA [...] is not and cannot be an ‘only Tuzla’ issue”.⁶⁰ Some within IWA supported the idea of building up relations with the BiH Trade Union Confederation based in Sarajevo. In practice, this meant: should IWA send convoys to other cities as well, especially to Sarajevo? There were political and pragmatic arguments for doing so. Once the trucks had brought their loads to Tuzla, they were driving back empty to Makarska. While Tuzla lacked many things, it had reserves of coal and salt, which were scarce elsewhere. Wouldn’t it make sense to fill the empty trucks with these goods and take them to other towns in BiH, and wouldn’t this be a way for IWA to help re-establish connections between different trade unions within BiH, which had been greatly weakened by the war?

58 ARAB, AK, 18: Minutes of international IWA conference, Aalbeke (B), 4–5 March 1995.

59 Ibid. The relevant extract is reproduced in the documentation part, doc. 6.

60 ARAB, AK, 18: Annexes to the minutes of the Brescia meeting, enclosure c).

IWA agreed to organise one “symbolic” convoy to Sarajevo, which set off from Tuzla in November 1994 with coal donated by the trade unions of Tuzla for their comrades in Sarajevo. However, the convoy never arrived as the trucks had an accident and were then looted by soldiers of the Army of BiH before they could reach Sarajevo. Another attempt was organised a year later, in September 1995, this time starting from Makarska with food and other goods. This convoy made it to Sarajevo, where it was received by the president of the BiH Trade Union Confederation, Sulejman Hrle. Two weeks later, another IWA convoy went to Bihać in north-western Bosnia to deliver various goods, together with a delegation of the TU Confederation from Sarajevo. The siege of Bihać by the Bosnian Serb army had been broken shortly before so that it was now possible to gain access to the town.⁶¹

Generally speaking, however, these convoys to other cities in BiH remained the exception rather than the rule. The question of whether to change this was again discussed at the Vienna meeting in October 1995, where some proposed further strengthening the links with the BiH Trade Union Confederation and investing in more convoys and efforts to this end. But in the end, the meeting confirmed the “support [...] for multi-ethnic forces in the town of Tuzla” as “our common political line of work”. The meeting also agreed on the possibility of “convoys to others towns/regions of Bosnia when specifically asked by a Bosnian trade union”, and in that case the national campaigns would decide by referendum if they wanted to support this. However, this formulation in itself shows clearly that the priorities had not changed.

48 /

What was the reason for IWA maintaining its strong focus on Tuzla? From the discussion at the Vienna meeting, several arguments emerge, first and foremost the political and symbolical importance: “Tuzla is everything: trade union, multi-ethnic society. You find it nowhere else in Bosnia.” When one person replied that “Sarajevo is a multi-ethnic city too” and that starving people were now much common in Sarajevo and Bihać, the argument was developed further: “Tuzla was chosen as the focus of our work not only because it was suffering. It was a symbol of the multi-ethnic resistance to the nationalist project. Not just because it is a multi-ethnic city, as a lot of places in Bosnia are. Tuzla is not under the control of the SDA, not a centre of nationalism. It is a symbol of the future we hope to see in all of Bosnia.”

61 On the convoys to Sarajevo and Bihać in 1995 see PA Woods, 4: Report “Sarajevo convoy”, 23.9.1995, and Split report 47, 15.10.1995.

A second series of arguments was of a more practical/symbolic nature, referring to the links IWA had forged. Even one person who argued that IWA's focus should not be so strongly on Tuzla admitted: "Our roots are there and it would be stupid to cut off the roots." As Tuzla had been IWA's main focus from the outset, it would also be difficult to explain the change to IWA's supporters in the home countries. As one participant put it: "In Austria we have done a lot of work to bring into public that symbol of Tuzla. Now turning around and arguing in a different way for us would be very hard." And he added: "I also want to keep Tuzla as our main project because of all our contacts with the people there."

A third argument was the scepticism expressed by some towards the BiH TU Confederation, among other things due to ongoing power struggles there and sometimes unclear political positions. "In Tuzla we are on safe ground" whereas with the TU Confederation "we are not so sure".⁶² Last but not least, concern was also expressed that developing links with other cities might create problems in Tuzla. This was particularly apparent with the Bihać convoy, where IWA representatives realised that the TU leadership in Tuzla had reacted critically because the TU leadership in Sarajevo had used it for their own PR campaign.⁶³ Beyond the general political rivalry between Tuzla and Sarajevo, the latter being dominated by the leading Bosniak/Muslim party SDA (Party of Democratic Action) and Tuzla by the social-democrat opposition to the SDA, there were also power struggles within the trade union movement in BiH, at different levels, including between the Coal Miners' Trade Union as the biggest union in BiH, and the TU Confederation based in Sarajevo and led by Sulejman Hrle.

62 PA Gysin 1995: "International IWA meeting, Annetal, Hainfeld, Austria"; larger extracts of the minutes are reproduced in the documentation part, doc. 31.

63 PA Woods, 1: Theo Mewis, Report "Seminar organised by the German trade union DGB and the BiH TU federation", in Visoko, November 1995, which mentions "the tension between the Tuzla TU people and those in Sarajevo. The first group accuses the second of using their work and contacts, for instance Ship to Bosnia, to have some kind of real means to appear and have some attention. IWA had a similar experience with the convoy to Bihac where Sulejman Hrle and Fatima Fazlic went together with the convoy to find out if it was possible to rebuild some structure in Northwestern Bosnia and at the same time had a successful appearance. But that behaviour isn't appreciated in Tuzla where the TU people see this as competition for themselves. And from their point of view, they are right."



View of the industrial zone of Tuzla, 1995.
(Photo: Hanspeter Gysin)

In the end, for IWA it was also about being realistic: as a relatively small organisation, it was not possible for it to do everything, and it seemed better to focus on one city than to spread itself too thinly. As someone argued in Vienna: in Tuzla “we can do small things but correct things”.⁶⁴ IWA kept in touch with the TU Confederation in Sarajevo, but its main cooperation partners remained, by some margin, the Tuzla trade unions. Tuzla was unquestionably felt to be the city that most closely matched IWA’s vision and spirit, even if some IWA members had over time become more critical about the situation there: “The multi-ethnic society is still there, in Tuzla. It has changed, and it has come under stress. But it is still there and there are still forces in the local government, all kinds of civic organisations are for this multi-ethnic Bosnia. We do not have to change our opinion about Tuzla.”⁶⁵

50 /

A particularly controversial topic within IWA was the so-called HVO project. As negotiating with the *Herceg-Bosna* authorities in order to pass through their territory proved to be so stressful and time-consuming, the question of what attitude to adopt towards the HVO was discussed several times during the IWA meetings. A majority regularly rejected the idea of complying with the HVO’s blackmailing demands, as in Aalbeke in March 1995 where the meeting agreed “to go on as before, – so not pay whatever they ask, but bombard them with faxes and protests” whenever they refused to issue the authorisation papers.⁶⁶

64 PA Gysin 1995: Minutes of the “International IWA meeting, Annental, Hainfeld, Austria”.

65 Ibid. For more explanations about the specific situation of Tuzla during the war, see Annex 4: The Tuzla model.

66 ARAB, AK, 18: Minutes of international IWA conference, Aalbeke (B), 4–5 March 1995.

But from spring 1995, the *Herceg-Bosna* authorities systematically refused, for several months, to give IWA-convoys permission to pass through their territory, prompting more intense discussions at the meetings in Aarhus and Vienna later in the year. The IWA Makarska office came up with the idea of organising a convoy to a town within HVO-controlled territory. Though they did not actually like the idea, they argued that “we are at the point that we must ask ourselves if we want to spend 2–3 months solving problems and not drive convoys at all. In my point of view it is better to give them something and then have the possibility to drive smooth to Tuzla.”⁶⁷ The proposal was to bring only goods that were not destined for Tuzla, and to choose a town that was not mono-ethnically Croat. But others were vehemently opposed to such a project, considering it a capitulation to the HVO and contrary to IWA’s principles. After intense discussions, the Makarska office’s proposal was finally accepted.⁶⁸ And so in mid-October 1995 a convoy with two trucks drove to the area of Usora, between Dobož and Žepče. The location had been chosen after thorough research: not only Croats but also Muslims lived there, IWA had established good links with the Red Cross operating there, and it was in cooperation with the Red Cross that the goods were then “distributed to people in special need, for example handicapped people, both Croats and Muslims”.⁶⁹ It was to be IWA’s only project in a territory that the HVO regarded as a “Croat community”, as one month later the war ended: this changed the transport conditions on the ground, and shortly afterwards IWA decided to stop its regular convoys to Tuzla anyway.

The debate about the HVO project illustrates the important issue of a potential tension between IWA values on the one hand and pragmatic solutions on the other. IWA was very aware of this tension, and always tried to find a way to balance both. Another example of this is the relationship between IWA and the UN. Many within IWA were critical of the UN and its policies on BiH. But, as a discussion paper for the meeting in Copenhagen in December 1993 put it: “Operating in Bosnia-Herzegovina at the moment implies that some kind of contact with the UN is necessary [...] Two subjects are crucial: Information – access to the news on the spot, and UNHCR ID cards which facilitate the transport through the war zone and increase the security for drivers or passengers on the convoy. We believe it is possible to fight for a goal which is diametrically opposite the goal

67 PA Gysin 1995: Tuzla report 16.06.1995.

68 PA Gysin 1995: “International IWA meeting, Annental, Hainfeld, Austria”.

69 PA Woods 4: Split report 48, 30.10.1995.

of the UN, at the same time as we are using/cooperating with UN agencies in a skilled and clever way.”⁷⁰

On the ground, the Makarska office and later also the Tuzla office became official “implementing partners” of UNHCR. While some IWA activists tried to keep contacts with the UN to a bare minimum, others developed good relationships, which could prove very useful for practical matters as well as for facilitating the convoys. When IWA opened its office in Tuzla, it did not have a fax machine and used the one in the UNHCR building instead, and UN-accredited IWA members were allowed to access helicopter transport from Tuzla to Split. Also, in winter 1994/5, when IWA had a shortage of its own trucks after the Igman incident, some of the women’s parcel loads were brought to Tuzla by a UNPROFOR convoy.⁷¹ However, when shortly afterwards a Swedish IWA activist accepted help from UNPROFOR in Tuzla for the project he was implementing, this was criticised by other IWA members. In general, IWA had an attitude but no strictly defined guidelines on how much to cooperate with the UN, as summarised in a report from Tuzla: “For political reasons, IWA’s relations with UN [...] are understood to be ‘polite but not friendly’ – this has however, as far as we know, never been formulated, and in reality we are more mixed up with parts of UN that we maybe like to think.”⁷²

52 /

Cooperation with the UN was also possible because the main aim of IWA was to help Tuzla, not to criticise the UN. Ultimately, the decisive question for IWA was always: what helps Tuzla and our work there? Cooperating with the UN was seen as a necessary and also useful tool to achieve this aim, but at the same time IWA did not wish to get too close. A similar approach can be seen in IWA’s attitude towards the European Community. Most IWA members were very critical of the EC, not so much because of its position on BiH but because they considered it a capitalist enterprise. On the other hand, the EC had a lot of funds that could help to support IWA activities in Tuzla. Already in early IWA discussions, several talked about the possibility of seeking EC/EU funding, but it was also clear that they did not want to go beyond certain limits. For example, a working group at the meeting in Stockholm stated: “IWA only considers taking money from subsidies if

70 ARAB, AK, 18: “Discussion paper for IWA meeting in Copenhagen 11/12–12 [1993]” by Ulrik Kohl and Eva X Moberg.

71 PA Woods, 4: Split report 31, special edition for international meeting in Aalbeke, 4–5.3.1995

72 PA Woods, 4: “The youth project in Tuzla – a short report”, 11.1.1996.

we can stay completely free in our political action.”⁷³ In very practical terms, IWA’s EU-critical attitude also meant that it was unwilling to distribute food donated by the EU: “In consensus the meeting agreed not to apply for EU-sponsored food, since we don’t want to distribute the 12-star banner in Tuzla.”⁷⁴ At the same time, IWA did not want to exclude the possibility of funding for other activities, and so adopted a flexible approach: “The meeting could not reach an agreement on whether to apply for money for IWA expenses outside Tuzla (trucks, offices, travel expenses etc.). We concluded that the national campaigns are free to apply for EU money if they want.”⁷⁵

The question of the relationship with the EC came up again in autumn 1995: the EC Task Force (ECTF), an organisation based in Makarska responsible for distributing humanitarian aid from the EU, had donated several tonnes of brown beans to the IWA Makarska office. The latter initiated a referendum proposing to include these goods in the planned convoy to Bihać, in support of Bosnian and Croatian trade unions. However, they did not specify that the bean cans were marked with the EU flag. At the following international IWA meeting in Vienna, members of several campaigns reacted very critically when they heard this: “We are not only a humanitarian organisation. We won’t bring propaganda for the EU. It is a political question.” The meeting agreed on the following decision: “It is too late to stop it. We have invested energy and money and made promises to the people. So that business goes. It is no big deal. We do not agree with it. Don’t let it happen again in the future, and it is finished.”⁷⁶ Some months later, the Makarska office received another donation from the ECTF, comprising several tonnes of peas. They again triggered a referendum, this time specifying that the pea cans were marked with the EU stars, and proposing to include them in a planned convoy to Sarajevo. Two thirds of the IWA groups that responded agreed with the proposal, and the Makarska office decided to include the goods in the convoy. It is “better to take the peas to Sarajevo than to throw them away” had been the pragmatic argument of those supporting the proposal.⁷⁷ At the same time, IWA had in both cases remained true to the general decision not

73 ARAB, AK, 18: “Minutes IWA meeting Stockholm September 94, Group B – proposals”.

74 PA Woods, 2: “Minutes 9th IWA meeting in Aarhus 17–18.6.1995”.

75 Ibid.

76 PA Gysin 1995: Minutes of the “International IWA meeting, Annental, Hainfeld, Austria”.

77 PA Woods, 1: IWA Makarska, “Split Report... the last one”, 29.1.1996.

to bring food bearing the EU flag to Tuzla, and had instead chosen destinations which were of less importance for IWA.

IWA was able to develop essentially pragmatic approaches because it was a group with political values, principles and aims, but not an ideological group in the dogmatic sense of the term. The vast majority of its members were on the left: they included libertarian socialists, anarchists and social democrats, as well as several from the Trotskyist Fourth International, but the majority were from groups that defined themselves as anti-totalitarian and non-sectarian. Significantly, in 1995 in Germany, several members left the group because they considered IWA as “counter-revolutionaries, conservatives and imperialists” – and significant too is the relief expressed in the report of one of the remaining IWA members from Germany: finally “we see some real chances to come out of that left-wing swamp” and to work more seriously, instead of having “a lot of theoretical discussions”.⁷⁸ Theoretical discussions were not characteristic of the international IWA meetings, which were often dominated by very concrete practical and logistical questions, because there were so many of them to settle. Compared with these, debates about political issues such as the current situation of BiH or of the trade unions took up less space. But these topics were also regularly addressed and discussed, and even the logistical questions were, as we have seen, thought about and discussed in terms of their political implications.

54 /

IWA’s non-dogmatic approach is also apparent in a small, but significant detail: reading the reports sent from Tuzla, Makarska and Stockholm to the national campaigns, one is struck by the fact that they never quote Trotsky or Marx, but often feature quotes from musicians such as Neil Young, Jimi Hendrix, Tom Waits or Pink Floyd.⁷⁹ *Sretno*, the salutation of miners in Tuzla and the former Yugoslavia, meaning “good luck”, was frequently referenced within IWA, and the term “comrades” was regularly used when communicating with each other, but not in an excessive way. At the same time, IWA members also regularly referred to themselves as “freaks”.⁸⁰ In general, the various reports often testify

78 PA Gysin 1995: Minutes of the “International IWA meeting, Annental, Hainfeld, Austria”. The specific occasion prompting criticism of IWA as “imperialist” was its refusal to condemn the NATO bombings in BiH in autumn 1995 (see also the documentation part, doc. 32).

79 See for example PA Woods, 4: Tuzla report 23.6.1995 and Split reports 4.7.1995 and 18.7.1995

80 See for example PA Gysin 1998: Minutes of the IWA meeting in Basel, March 1998

to a sense of humour and self-irony.⁸¹ IWA was a left political group, but one that did not make itself out to be bigger than it was, that retained a sense of perspective, and that was always ready to question its own approaches. This emerges clearly from the minutes of its international meetings, for example.

Another issue regularly discussed within IWA was one of the most heated topics at that time concerning the war in BiH, namely the military question: should the arms embargo be lifted, and should there be a military intervention by NATO? In its four principles, IWA had not addressed the military dimension of the war. However, following their experiences in Tuzla, where they had been, for example, in contact with the multi-ethnic Miners' Brigade within the 2nd Corps of the Army of BiH defending Tuzla, several IWA members started to doubt if this was the right attitude. They raised two specific questions: Shouldn't IWA take a clear stand against the UN arms embargo, which was clearly detrimental to the Bosnian government and the Army of BiH? And shouldn't IWA also regularly deliver food or other goods to the multi-ethnic army brigade in Tuzla?⁸²

At the meeting in Aalbeke, a discussion took place regarding possible cooperation with the Army of BiH in Tuzla: "Should we support the BiH army as the multi-ethnic force par excellence? [...]. But, after discussion we all agreed that IWA should not take any stand in this question. This is not our task and

81 See for example ARAB, AK, 16: Tuzla office for IWA international coordination office: "Comrades and sweethearts, we are working on everything you have asked us to do, but we haven't had enough time. Please excuse... Also, almost a hundred chetnik shells have hit the town surrounding the IWA Tuzla office since we received your last orders, which sincerely speaking, hasn't improved the working conditions. (We're going to make a complaint to our union about that...)" ; or PA Gysin 1994: IWA Logistics Makarska to IWA Stockholm, 19.7.1994: "To: all aspiring working class heroes in International Workers Aid. From: A few lonely bureaucrats in Croatia".

82 See for example a proposal made in 1994 by Ulrik Kohl and Franziska Bachmann: "Target group is the approx. 200 women in the newly founded Women's Association of Armija BiH 2nd Corps, which was the first female structure inside the Armija. All women in the Armija are volunteers, most have administrative, kitchen or medical tasks [...]. The group is ethnically mixed. IWA Tuzla has previously supplied this group with a small shipment of hygienic material, that was not addressed to any specific group. – We propose a six-month programme where IWA supplies hygienic material for all women in the group on a monthly basis." (ARAB, AK, 18: Untitled paper with proposals for 5 programmes for IWA in Tuzla, point "e) Armija" [November 1994].

we jeopardise our whole work by doing so.”⁸³ The discussion about the arms embargo at the next meeting in Aarhus ended in a similar outcome: “There was also a discussion about the arms embargo. Most people thought that it must be lifted, in order for the Bosnian people to defend themselves, although it should not be an IWA issue. We would lose a lot of our back-up by being too radical.”⁸⁴ IWA therefore continued to keep a low profile on the military question, mainly because adopting positions that were “too radical” would have frightened too many supporters and donors in the home countries. It is also very doubtful that there would have been unanimity within IWA on this very sensitive topic. However, IWA also let the national campaigns decide for themselves whether they wanted to formulate more explicit positions on this question within their national contexts. This was the case in the UK, for example, where IWA members were very outspoken in protesting against the arms embargo. Similarly, in Sweden and Denmark, some of the local groups took part in demonstrations calling for the lifting of the arms embargo.⁸⁵

For many, their experiences in BiH led them to consider other points of view and to integrate them into their thinking. In late 1995, for example, one German IWA member very critical of NATO stated that “in Bosnia I have changed a lot of positions”, adding that, viewed from Germany, NATO bombings in BiH were bad, but “if you are in Sarajevo you see that terrorists are on the mountain. Then you see the airstrikes and you say: it must be positive.”⁸⁶ An awareness of these contradictions and an acknowledgement that opposite points of view

83 PA Gysin 1995: Minutes of international IWA conference, Aalbeke (B), 4–5 March 1995. Some months later, several IWA members had growing doubts about the multi-ethnic character of the BiH Army. On this, see the documentation part, doc. 32. One of the arguments against supporting the BiH Army in Tuzla was that the UN considered it illegal to deliver humanitarian aid to military forces, and that by doing so IWA would have risked losing its access to UNHCR accreditation cards. Interview by N.M. with Ulrik Kohl, 13.12.2020.

84 PA Woods, 2: “Minutes 9th IWA meeting in Aarhus 17–18.6.1995”.

85 For the UK, see for example *Socialist Outlook*, no. 73, December 1994, p. 1 “Bloodbath in Bihac – Defend Bosnia! Lift the arms embargo!” and p. 5: Alan Thornett, “Lift the Bosnian arms embargo”. At the meeting in Aarhus, the Danish representative mentioned a demonstration in Copenhagen in favour of the lifting of the arms embargo and added: “This demonstration was only a statement by the local Copenhagen group, not IWA as an organisation.” (PA Gysin 1995: Minutes of the meeting in Aarhus). And at the meeting in Vienna, the Swedish representative noted that “some groups made campaign for lifting arms embargo, Swedish campaign has no clear standpoint on this”. (PA Gysin 1995: Minutes of the meeting in Austria)

86 PA Gysin 1995: Minutes of the “International IWA meeting, Annental, Hainfeld, Austria”.

had their legitimacy was another reason why IWA did not formulate overly radical positions.

Another issue that regularly raised questions within IWA was striking a balance between humanitarian and political work. The food and other material brought to the miners and other groups in Tuzla was seen and defined as being part of IWA's political work, but some wondered whether the humanitarian aspect was overshadowing the political one. "In Austria there were some problems because the people had the impression IWA worked too much on the humanitarian side, not enough on the political side."⁸⁷

Other members also expressed scepticism, especially those who were working on the ground in Tuzla. IWA was giving aid to the trade unions and miners, but was not really talking about political questions with them. Wasn't it important to engage much more in discussions with the trade unions about their political work, about their future in Tuzla and in BiH? The development of local projects on the ground, in addition to the convoys, was one response to this concern, but some also saw the danger of a "very deep division between our 'humanitarian' work for trade unions and 'political' work for other forces".⁸⁸



At the Miners Institute in Tuzla, 1994, with (from right to left) Mick Woods, Marinko Jakovac, Kristian Buus, Ulrik Kohl, Viktor Jurić and Omer Kamberović. (Photo: Thomas Proctor)

87 ARAB, AK, 18: Minutes of international IWA conference, Aalbeke (B), 4–5 March 1995. See also ARAB, AK, 18: Annexes to minutes of meeting in Brescia 1994, enclosure c): "Preoccupation that IWA is not and cannot become a 'pure' humanitarian campaign".

88 PA Woods, 3: IWA Flanders to International Coordination Office Stockholm, 6.7.1994. Larger extracts with reflections on the discrepancy between political and humanitarian work are reproduced in the documentation part, doc. 30.

This brings us to a crucial point for IWA: its relationship with the trade unions. For IWA, it was clear that the trade unions in Tuzla were its main cooperation partners, and it developed very close ties with the Kreka Miners' Union and the Trade Union Council of Tuzla. There were good reasons for this: the trade unions were clearly an anti-nationalist force, and strong advocates of the "Tuzla model"; the presidium of the Trade Union Council in Tuzla, for example, was composed of Muslims, Serbs and Croats, and this was also true of the Miners' Brigade, which was part of the Army of BiH and took part in the defence of Tuzla.

But this did not mean that the cooperation encountered no difficulties nor did it prevent IWA from having a critical view of its partners: in socialist Yugoslavia, trade unions had been very close to company management, and this continued to be the case after the country broke apart. Many workers were critical of the trade unions, did not think that they were really fighting for their rights and did not feel represented by them. This was reflected in the fact that only a very small number of miners were actually active in the trade union. Also, while the trade unions in Tuzla did indeed represent Muslims, Serbs and Croats, there had been an episode in Banovići at the beginning of the war where Serbs had been evicted from the workplaces, and the local trade union had failed to respond. Finally, as already mentioned, rumours soon began to circulate that the distribution of the goods delivered by IWA to the trade unions was not being done in a fair way, with some ending up on the black market.⁸⁹

58 /

The entire IWA experience was also one of confrontation between ideals and expectations on the one hand, and the realities on the ground on the other, and how to deal with discrepancies between the two. Finding the right way to cooperate with the trade unions and the other local partners was not an easy task. "This never-ending story of trust and cooperation," was how a 1995 IWA report summarised the issues related to the distribution of aid.⁹⁰ How much could and should IWA trust its local partners, how much should it interfere and control?

89 For a nuanced/critical picture of the trade unions in Tuzla, see for example PA Woods, 1: Theo Mewis, Report "The Kreka coalmines and their future. The miners, the Kreka-trade union and IWA", 30.10.1995.; Franziska Bachmann, "Auf verlorenem Posten ? International Workers Aid kämpft gegen Nationalismus", *Stadtrat* no. 27, June 1995.

90 ARAB, AK, 16: Tuzla report 15.9.1995 (no. 5, part 1).

Working as international actors in a war-torn country brought a lot of potential pitfalls regarding hierarchical relationships. “The project with the miners’ union is a unique experiment between workers’ organisations in working in partnership. I would question the validity of any plans to reorganise distribution with the assumption that we know better than them,” wrote Mick Woods in 1994, for example.⁹¹ On the other hand, IWA wanted to be sure that the goods were really being distributed fairly, not least for the sake of those who had donated the goods in their home countries. Some miners also insisted that IWA itself should take over the distribution.⁹² At the IWA meeting in Stockholm in September 1994, a proposal to write a very strongly-worded letter to the Coal Miners’ Trade Union threatening to change the system of distribution was rejected. IWA decided to leave the distribution in the union’s hands, but also to talk with them openly about the problems and to monitor the distribution much more than before.⁹³

The monitoring remained difficult, and some in the trade unions were very cooperative, others less so. The interaction in general was also not easy because other conflicts of interests sometimes arose. For example, IWA soon realised that the male-dominated Coal Miners’ Trade Union was not too happy about IWA’s support for the women within the Kreka mines: “The TU leaders have great difficulties accepting the cooperation with the women and them organising themselves. They are afraid of losing power and of information getting through to us when it is not supposed to be.”⁹⁴ This did not stop IWA supporting the women, as it believed this was an important thing to do, and in any case it continued to work with the trade union itself on the food distribution and other projects.

After the massacre on 25 May 1995, when a shell fired by the Army of *Republika Srpska* killed more than 70 people on Tuzla’s main square, the mayor Selim Bešliagić called publicly for NATO air strikes against that army’s positions. One IWA member reacted by proposing that IWA should write a letter to Bešliagić to protest

91 See documentation part, doc. 14.

92 See for example ARAB, AK 16: IWA Tuzla to Stockholm Coordination Office, 23.11.1994.

93 See the discussions at the IWA meeting in Stockholm: ARAB, AK, 18: “IWA’s 6th international meeting in Stockholm, 10–11 September 1994”, and also PA Gysin 1994: Letter by Johan Hultberg, President of *Arbetarkonvojen*, on behalf of IWA, to Mr Fikret Suljic, Miners’ Trade Union – Sindikat Rudnici Uglja, Tuzla.

94 PA Woods, 4: IWA Tuzla, Report 2, to IWA Stockholm, for distribution, 3.8.1995.

against this statement. The IWA coordination office in Stockholm forwarded the proposal to the national campaigns with the following comment:

“We have so far agreed that we don’t have a common view on the UNPROFOR, the question of lifting the arms embargo and our opinion on ‘the imperialist forces in our own society’. We have always said it should be possible to join IWA even if you are a pacifist or if you advocate NATO airstrikes around the safe areas. In Sweden we have been able to maintain a common position on the support for Tuzla, but it doesn’t mean that we have to endorse everything that’s sent our way from the Trade Unions or from the Town Hall [in Tuzla]. IWA is forwarding all appeals from our friends in Tuzla, but we don’t have to agree with the content. We have also been very careful not to patronise the struggling Bosnians. We believe that a joint letter with an attempt to formulate a political consensus is impossible. And we also see the danger of sitting in Stockholm and London telling Mayor Bešliagić that he is wrong when he urges the UN to fulfil its promises to protect a safe area with NATO airstrikes.”⁹⁵

60 /

This comment is instructive because it explains again why IWA kept a low profile on the politically most sensitive questions: essentially because it would have jeopardised its inclusive approach. It also perfectly encapsulates the general attitude of IWA to its partners in Tuzla: we do not necessarily agree with all they say, but we support them, and we want to avoid patronising attitudes. That this was the general position within IWA is also apparent from the fact that the proposed letter of protest was not sent to the mayor of Tuzla.

Cooperation was in IWA’s DNA – cooperation between the different national groups, and cooperation with local partners in Tuzla. Besides the trade unions, IWA also developed good relations with the municipality of Tuzla, and other anti-nationalist groups that supported a democratic and multi-ethnic society, such as the Forum of Tuzla Citizens. There were also collaborations with other international solidarity groups. For example, IWA sent delegations to two conferences organised in Tuzla in November 1994, one by the Verona Forum, and the other by the Helsinki Citizens’ Assembly. Because it had offices in Makarska and Tuzla, IWA often helped out other individuals and groups that wanted to come to Tuzla, provided that this did not interfere too much with its own work. .

95 PA Woods, 5: IWA Sweden, Transmits and comments on a proposal from IWA Britain for a joint IWA message in sympathy with Tuzla, 1.6.1995.

The most complicated issue that IWA faced in its international cooperation was its relationship with Workers Aid for Bosnia. After the split in Manchester in October 1993, leading to the formation of IWA, WAB had continued with its activities and, like IWA, focused on Tuzla and worked alongside the miners' trade unions. This parallel presence and work led to a lot of confusion, as people in Tuzla and elsewhere often could not see the difference between the two: they had similar names, they both organised food convoys to Tuzla, they both mainly worked with trade unions. And yet they did not work together – they had individual contacts, and while IWA sometimes helped out logistically, as it had offices in Makarska and Tuzla whereas WAB did not, that was as far as it went. This situation soon led some to ask whether it would make more sense to seek closer ties and cooperation.

There were some attempts in that direction, but they did not lead to any real partnership – the mistrust between the two groups remained too great for this, given the experiences of autumn 1993 as well as their different political and organisational cultures.⁹⁶

96 As early as November 1993, an IWA member had observed: "It is confusing and in the long run dangerous to have two different organisations with the same or a very similar name." (PA Woods: Ulrik Kohl, Report from IWA Zagreb office, 16.11.1993). An anecdote told by Mick Woods (Woods 1998b) shows how easily the two organisations got mixed up: in February 1994 he went to Swansea to talk to the local trade union about IWA: "We were very well received and a large donation was agreed. Unfortunately it got sent to Workers Aid for Bosnia by mistake!" For individual contacts between IWA and WAB, see for example PA Woods, 2: Minutes of the meeting in Aarhus June 1995.

3

**HOW TO
CONTINUE IN
POST-WAR
BOSNIA AND
HERZEGOVINA?
(1996–1998)**

Support the Womens Center - Iva Soliana



Extract from IWA Bulletin no. 6, November – December 1997. The photo shows (from right to left): Mira Bajer, Ramiza Ramić (both from the IVA women's centre), Katharina Politzer, Franziska Bachmann (IWA Germany), Lola Zorica Koncul (IVA women's centre).

When the war in BiH ended, IWA did not for a moment consider ending its work in Tuzla: it seemed natural to continue in order to support the trade unions and other democratic forces in a post-war situation which remained highly fragile and dominated by nationalists. But the focus of its activities changed: the regular food convoys came to an end, and it was now all about developing structural activities on the ground in Tuzla, with two major projects: support for a trade union paper, and support for a women's centre. At the same time, the end of the war brought new challenges for the national campaigns and IWA in general, in particular a gradual dwindling of interest in BiH among the public and officials in Europe, which made it more difficult to carry on certain activities or to develop new ones.

THE END OF THE BREAD PROGRAMME AND THE GROWTH OF LOCAL PROJECTS

As we have seen, the development and implementation of more structural local projects in Tuzla, alongside the food convoys, did not happen with and because of the end of the war, but was already under way well before that. However, the end of the war strengthened this trend and led IWA to end its food programme with the associated convoys, and at the same time to close the office in Makarska and give more importance to the Tuzla office.

64 /

Ending the convoys and closing the Makarska office in January 1996 had not been an easy decision to take, for several reasons: because the trucks had become IWA's core activity; because of the convoys' symbolic value as an illustration of pragmatic solidarity; because for the national campaigns this was a very tangible form of assistance with which to mobilise support at home; and also because some in Tuzla felt that it would be good to continue the food programme for at least a little longer. Discussions about this matter lasted for several months. But in the end, other arguments prevailed: the humanitarian situation in Tuzla had already improved greatly in the second half of 1995, it was a big financial and logistical effort to maintain the convoys and the logistical centre in Makarska, and extending humanitarian aid for too long would create situations of dependence and passivity for the recipients. Instead, it would make more sense to focus on more structural activities, for example by supporting local food production with money and materials. Before the end of the war, the idea had been to continue with the convoys for a certain time, but to close Makarska and move the logistical centre to Zenica in central Bosnia, from where Tuzla and other towns in BiH could be more easily reached. But this idea was eventually dropped, partly because it seemed too

complicated to implement and also because the town was felt not to be a good choice symbolically: “Zenica would be a bad place. It is very nationalistic,” noted a participant at the IWA meeting in Austria in October 1995, referring to the fact that the town was a stronghold of the SDA and the seat of the (in)famous 7th Muslim Brigade, which included foreign mujahideen fighters.⁹⁷

In the post-war years, some national campaigns continued to organise individual convoys, partly with food, partly with other material, but it was no longer the core activity of IWA as a whole. It was now focusing on practical projects on the ground, many of them supported by one or more national campaigns, and the Tuzla office played a decisive role in helping to implement them.



The Aida-shoe fabric in Tuzla, which was commissioned by IWA for the shoe project. (Photo: Hanspeter Gysin, 1996)

One key idea was to support economic projects that would promote self-sufficiency within Tuzla, such as the shoe project, mushroom project and milk project, which had partially already started during the war and continued in 1996. The shoe project began with a wish expressed by the Kreka women’s association Heart to Heart to address the lack of adequate footwear. In cooperation with the association, IWA negotiated a contract with a local shoe factory in Tuzla, which then in late 1995, thanks to a financial contribution mainly from IWA Belgium, produced 450 pairs of winter shoes which were distributed by Heart to Heart to the 450 women employed at the Kreka mines. More shoes were produced in 1996, with the financial support of other IWA campaigns as well, mainly from Sweden, and

97 PA Gysin 1995: “International IWA meeting, Annental, Hainfeld, Austria”, with larger extracts reproduced in the documentation part, doc. 31. For the discussions about the ending of the food convoys and the closing of the Makarska office, see for example also ARAB, AK, 16: Tuzla report 15.9.95 (no. 5, part 1), and PA Woods, 1: IWA Denmark to IWA worldwide, regarding international meeting in Austria: “IWA – a new direction”, 21.9.1995.

this time distributed to the several hundred unemployed women in the Kreka Union, and then also through other organisations in Tuzla.⁹⁸

The mushroom project was part of the process of converting abandoned mines in Tuzla for agricultural use. Several factors convinced IWA to help fund a mushroom-growing project at a former mine: the idea was to employ miners who, because of invalidity, could no longer work in the mines otherwise; the food produced would improve nutrition in the miners' canteens, and any surplus could be sold on the local market and the money raised used for further investments. For IWA, it was also very important that the owner of the IWA investments would be the Coal Miners' Trade Union and not the mining company: IWA wanted to avoid giving a financial boost to the latter, which would probably soon be privatised, meaning that the private owner would then benefit from the project instead of the miners. IWA Switzerland in particular supported the mushroom project financially for several months, but after that the support was discontinued because the financial investments were considered too great and the economic productivity too risky.⁹⁹

66 /

The milk project too was guided by the idea of supporting local production and improving the quality of food for parts of the local population. On the one hand, milk production in Tuzla was low because people had no money to buy milk and a lot of milk powder was imported by humanitarian agencies. On the other hand, the meals provided for pupils in schools were often of poor quality. In 1996, IWA provided financial support to a local milk factory, so that it could buy milk from local farmers and deliver milk bottles to schoolchildren at least once a week: the project was implemented between March and May 1996 at a school with around 1,000 pupils.¹⁰⁰

Another of the IWA-supported projects implemented in the post-war years was the women's magazine, which was finally published in summer 1996 under the title *Pogled Žene* (Woman's View). However, cooperation between and with the different women's groups had been very difficult. Moreover, the IWA members

98 See Tuzla reports 24.1.1996 (PA Woods, 1), 2.3.1996 (ARAB, AK, 16), 13.3.1996 (ibid.); PA Gysin 1996: Minutes of IWA meeting in Amsterdam, May 1996, and PA Gysin 1997: Minutes of the IWA meeting in Paris, February 1997.

99 See PA Gysin, Divers: "Bericht von unserer Reise nach Tuzla", by Hanspeter Gysin and Marlène Soder, September 1996; ARAB, AK, 16: Tuzla reports 15.9.1995 (no. 5, part 1), 12.2.1996, 7.5.1996.

100 PA Gysin, "Divers: Bericht von unserer Reise nach Tuzla", by Hanspeter Gysin and Marlène Soder, September 1996, and ARAB, AK 16: Tuzla reports 13.3.1996, 1.4.1996, 7.5.1996.

involved were disappointed with the end result. They had expected something more political, while the female editorial team from Tuzla had opted for a much broader approach: "The content of this first issue is a mix of interesting articles on the women's conference in Zenica, and the latest news on Richard Gere's and Cindy Crawford's divorce. I don't know what to say," was the comment in one Tuzla report.¹⁰¹ Another IWA member also underlined that her expectations had not been fulfilled, while acknowledging that the magazine had gone down well in the city and also beyond: "Surprisingly, the newspaper was very well received in Tuzla and the visual appearance was also considered appealing. We were pleased about the quite impressive distribution of the newspaper. *Pogled Žene* was distributed not only in Tuzla and within the Federation, but also in cities in Croatia, Serbia and the Bosnian-Serb territory."¹⁰²

Aside from projects supported by IWA as a whole or by individual campaigns, the post-war years also saw the further development of several spin-off projects, activities that had developed under the umbrella of, or in very close cooperation with, IWA, but then became autonomous. Ship to Bosnia changed its status and name to Ship to Bosnia – Solidarity House, and now focused its work on the multi-ethnic mining village of Lipnica, situated 15 km from Tuzla city centre: there it helped to organise youth projects and other activities after the war, most notably the construction of a Solidarity House as a cultural gathering place for the population of Lipnica and the surrounding area. Some within IWA remained critical of Ship to Bosnia, but contacts between the two organisations remained close, including on the ground and in a very pragmatic way, as when IWA hired out its car to Ship to Bosnia in 1997, at a time when the IWA office was unoccupied.¹⁰³

Support Tuzla's Schools (STS) was another fast-growing spin-off project. Originally established in 1994 by the Danish IWA branch *Konvoj til Bosnien*, it subsequently developed into an independent project and registered NGO, receiving substantial support from the Danish government. There was an obvious overlap with IWA, including in terms of the individuals involved: the main protagonist in STS was Vagn Rasmussen, who was and remained a member of *Konvoj til Bosnien* as well, and Mick Woods and other IWA activists also worked for the initiative after the war. STS developed very close ties with the Tuzla teachers' union and put

101 PA Woods, 4: Tuzla report 7.7.1996.

102 PA Bachmann: Bericht über das Projekt "Frauenzeitschrift für Tuzla" [1997].

103 ARAB, AK 16, Tuzla report 29 (?), 2.10.1997.

them in touch with a teachers' union in Denmark. The organisation attracted 500 members in Denmark in 1997, and, among other things, opened three computer schools in Tuzla, organised a visit by Tuzla's Mayor Bešliagić to Denmark, and developed training programmes for teachers in Tuzla and Sarajevo. In 1997, it also established an office in Tuzla, which cooperated closely with the IWA office. This physical presence had logistical advantages for IWA too, since, for example, STS could take care of the running of the IWA office when it was unoccupied for several weeks.¹⁰⁴

THE TWO CORE PROJECTS: THE TRADE UNION PAPER AND WOMEN'S CENTRE

While several projects were short-lived or remained at the ideas stage, and others continued independently under another name, two projects became IWA's core activities in the post-war years and developed very successfully.

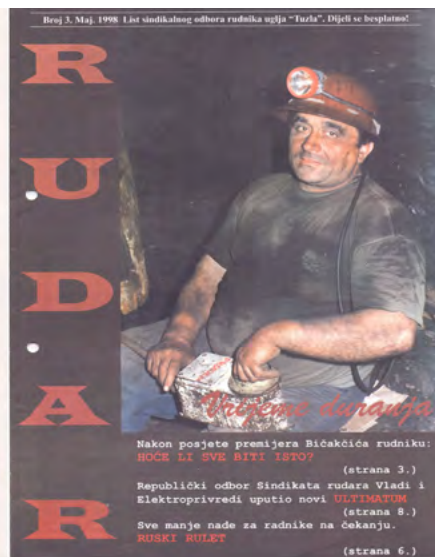
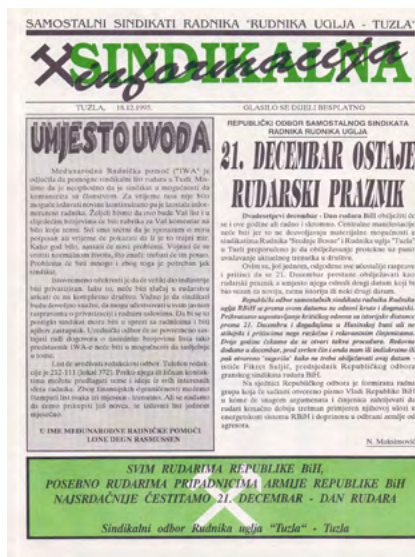
The first one was a trade union paper. The project had been in the making for a long time (since autumn 1994), and at one stage it looked like it would remain just a good idea that never got implemented. But then in December 1995, the first issue of *Sindikalna Informacija* (Trade Union Information) was finally published, and 30 issues followed in the next three years, with the title changing, in March 1998, to *Rudar* (Miner). The project had been co-developed by the Coal Miners' Trade Union and IWA and was all the more important because, until the war, there had been only a newspaper edited by the mining company, which included a section on trade union news, but none directly published by the trade union. The basic aim of *Sindikalna Informacija* was to inform readers about trade union activities and about relevant issues for workers such as privatisation. But there was a more general objective which made it very important for IWA: the magazine was intended to address the lack of communication between the trade unions and the workers and to strengthen the links between them, and also to be a tool to strengthen participatory and democratic approaches within the union.¹⁰⁵

In each pit, one workers' representative was chosen to be the contact person with the paper's editorial team. The leading player in the magazine was Nedeljko Maksimović, an independent journalist who became its driving force and was very

104 See PA Gysin, 1997: Vagn Rasmussen, "Report on the work of Støt Tuzlas Skoler", 23.6.1997, Appendix 6 to the minutes of the IWA meeting Berlin in June 1997, and also Altumbabić 2003, esp. 37–90.

105 See also the documentation part, docs. 21 and 22.

active in writing articles and promoting the paper. IWA supported the publication financially, paying Nedeljko Maksimović's fee, the printing costs, and other current costs linked to its production such as IT equipment. The number of copies increased considerably, from 1,000 for the first issue to 7,000 between 1996 and 1998, and IWA could conclude with satisfaction that it was reaching its target audience: "The miners really read the paper and not just get it. [...] For many of them *Rudar* is really the only paper they get. Most cannot afford to buy a daily paper."¹⁰⁶



The trade unions magazine supported by IWA:
 The first issue of *Sindikalna Informacija* (December 1995) which later changed its name into *Rudar* (here the issue from May 1998).
 (PA Hanspeter Gysin)

The content was not only Tuzla-focused, but often also addressed more general issues concerning trade unions in BiH. It acquired an importance beyond Tuzla, where it was the first and for several years the only professional trade union paper after the war. While it was officially edited by the Coal Miners' Trade Union, it did not hesitate to criticise the union, which led the latter's leadership after several months to tell IWA "that they are not satisfied with the paper as it is. [...] The

106 PA Gysin 1998: Minutes of the IWA meeting in Basel, March 1998.

union thinks that sometimes the paper is too critical of the union." In response, the IWA office in Tuzla explained to the union leadership that "it's never anything that IWA representatives or Nedjelko are making up. It's simply interviews with the workers, who often are complaining about the union being too dependent on the company, too old-fashioned, not doing enough to fight for the workers' rights and not knowing what is really going on among the workers because they never go there to talk to them, but stay in their offices."¹⁰⁷ For IWA, it mattered greatly to have "an independent paper which is open to both the workers and the union", and the TU leadership subsequently endorsed this point of view. IWA was generally very satisfied with the development of the project: at their meeting in Copenhagen in November 1996, the IWA members emphasized "that it is a success" and that it "succeeded in walking the fine line between being a union paper and being accessible to the rank and file".¹⁰⁸

The only really negative experience with *Rudar* occurred in April 1998 when a Swedish IWA member ran away with the paper's budget of DM 40,000, a grant from the Swedish government for that year. This caused a big stir in Sweden, both within *Arbetarkonvojen* and also in the public sphere, with several newspapers picking up the story. At a financial level, however, the negative effects were limited as the Swedish government agreed to reimburse part of the stolen money. The individual in question was arrested a few months later in Mexico and extradited to Sweden for trial.¹⁰⁹

70 /

The second important IWA project after the war was the creation and support of a women's centre in Tuzla. Unlike most other IWA projects, the centre was not a shared idea originating in joint discussions between IWA members and their local partners, but an initiative by IWA itself. The idea was to provide a space for women to meet, exchange views, learn and engage in activities and thereby strengthen their position in a society largely dominated by men, and to make them an active part of the transition processes after the war. This project went beyond

107 PA Woods 4: Tuzla report 12.8.1996 (also the following quote).

108 PA Gysin 1996: Minutes from the IWA meeting in Copenhagen. On the union paper, see also the documentation part, docs. 21–24. The magazine was also critical of BiH TU Confederation President Sulejman Hrle, who was not happy about this and made his displeasure known. This is further proof that the paper was read and taken seriously even outside of Tuzla. PA Gysin 1998: Minutes of the IWA meeting in Basel, March 1998.

109 PA Gysin 1998: Minutes of the IWA meeting in Malmö, June 1998 ("The theft of the money created a serious trauma-crisis in the Swedish campaign"), and Stockholm report no. 8, 23.12.1998.

the trade union scope, as it was not implemented with the women's group from Kreka or the Tuzla Women's Association, but outside of existing associative structures. This was in part a response to the difficult and disappointing cooperation over the women's magazine. The project was initiated by IWA Belgium, but the IWA meeting in Amsterdam in 1996 decided to make it a common IWA project. The centre opened in spring 1997 in a three-room apartment in central Tuzla, with space for meetings and activities and a little library, under the official name *Udruženje građana Centar za žene "Iva Saliniana"*. "A bad translation of this would be: Citizens' Association Women's Centre 'Iva Saliniana'. Iva is a flower (you can also make brandy out of it) and Saliniana is an old name for Tuzla."¹¹⁰

The centre immediately embarked on a range of activities, focusing on three priority areas: information, education and empowerment. The activities included the presentation and dissemination of the book *Trauma and Recovery* by Judith Herman, translated into the local language, workshops and lectures about peacebuilding, conflict resolution, legal questions and health issues, English and computer courses, and an SOS hotline for women suffering from domestic violence. From 1998 onwards, IVA also functioned as a day-care centre for young children whose mothers were at work.

The funding for the centre was provided by an EU grant which covered the renting of the space, the purchase of equipment, and the hiring of a local coordinator, Mira Bajer, a secondary school teacher, and other staff members from Tuzla. *IVA Saliniana* had its own legal status as a registered NGO in BiH, and received a positive reception: one year after opening, it had nearly 200 members, and it also undertook joint activities with other organisations in Tuzla and beyond. Specific IVA sub-groups were formed within several of the IWA campaigns, in Belgium, Denmark, Germany and Sweden, in order to provide both material and moral support for the development and implementation of the centre. This included donating books to the library and inviting Mira Bajer and other IVA staff members to their respective countries to attend seminars and meetings.¹¹¹

110 PA Woods, 4: Tuzla report 5.12.1996. Saliniana comes from the Latin words for salt / salt mine (sal / salinae), in reference to the extensive salt deposits on which Tuzla is built.

111 See the regular reports written in 1997 and 1998 by Mira Bajer, for example PA Gysin 1998: Report no. 6/97, 17.3.1998; and International Iva report no. 1/98, by IVA Stockholm [March 1998]. See also the documentation part, doc. 29.



Mira Bajer (left) and Lola Zorica Koncul (right) from the *IVA Saliniana* women's centre, during a visit in Gothenburg in 1997, with Annette Bretan and Agneta Falck from IWA Sweden. (PA Agneta Falck)

72 /

If we compare the two projects, we can see some common features in IWA's approach. In both cases, it was committed to the idea of promoting self-organisation, as illustrated by the fact that the involvement of IWA members was much greater at the beginning, during the launch phase, than in subsequent years, once the project was up and running. For the first issue of the union paper, for example, two members of IWA had been part of the editorial board and had been very active in organising the editorial meetings. But after that, Nedeljko Maksimović became the main organiser, with responsibility for the content, while IWA's support was largely technical. In the case of the women's centre, after the first grant which had been secured through IWA Belgium, it was Mira Bajer who, as local coordinator, dealt with financial matters and prepared additional grant applications, with the help of one IWA member from Belgium. And it was Mira Bajer and her colleagues from Tuzla who were in charge of the centre's programme.

That said, during the project development and implementation phases, the cooperation remained a permanent challenge, with one key question facing IWA (as during the war with the food distribution and other activities): how open can we be when we disagree with something, how much should and can we interfere? IWA had to juggle multiple expectations: for the donors it was crucial to have clear and clean financial reports, for the partners from Tuzla the attitude fluctuated between "Support us" and "We have our own way to do things", and the IWA members concerned were also unsure to what extent they could and should interfere. This was less of a challenge with the union magazine, as content-wise Nedeljko Maksimović was generally on the same page as IWA. One of the rare points on which *Sindikalna Informacija* did not fulfil IWA's expectations was the

“open page”. IWA had wished that “from the beginning there should be an open page where everybody could write their opinion”: this page did not materialise, but the paper did at least publish regular opinion surveys including short statements from different miners about relevant topics.¹¹²

The cooperation was more challenging for the women’s centre, as appears for example in the minutes of the meeting in Malmö in 1998: “We also had an open and frank discussion about our expectations and the work carried out in the centre. How to balance our attitude with the ladies, without being colonialistic?”¹¹³ This concerned the administrative work of the centre, but also extended to content issues, as illustrated by a small but significant incident. At one point, the IVA centre allowed two men to attend the computer courses. For the IVA team in Tuzla, it was actually a positive sign that men were taking an interest in their activities, but this male presence did not go down well with several members of IWA: “We would understand that point more or only if it would be for example men participating in workshops about non-violent discussion or similar events.” How to react? The group agreed that the IWA representative in Tuzla “will carefully discuss this matter with the centre since it is probably as strange for them that we think it is completely out of mind to have men in computer courses offered at a women’s centre as it is for us to do so.”¹¹⁴

In 1998, the minutes of the IWA meeting in Tuzla stated: “In general we can see that no project actually turned out like we wanted it to.”¹¹⁵ A certain disappointment can be detected in these words. But it can also be seen as one of the great

112 Quote from PA Woods, 4: Tuzla report 23.6.1996. For the surveys, see for example *Sindikalna Informacija*, no. 6, 11.7.1996, p. 5: “What do the workers say about the trade union and its activities?” and *Rudar*, no. 2, April 1998, pp. 12–13: “1. How much do you know about the privatisations? 2. What do you think about the privatisations and how much information do you get from the trade union and the trade union paper? 3. What is in your opinion the best path for Bosnia and for the miners?” [Translated from BCS by N.M.]

113 PA Gysin 1998: Minutes of the IWA meeting in Malmö.

114 PA Gysin 1998: Minutes of the IWA meeting in Basel.

115 PA Gysin 1998: Minutes of the IWA meeting in Tuzla, November 1998. Similar reactions can also be found in earlier phases for individual projects, for example the youth centre: “The activities going on in *Dom Mladih* are very good and useful for the young people taking part in them [...]. It is not however the youth project we planned for. Maybe this was not possible. [...] [One problem was] the relationship between *Dom Mladih*, with its own regulations and way of working, and our ‘independent’ project [which aimed to give more autonomy to the young people]. Our ideas just didn’t fit in too well within the frames of *Dom Mladih* – a solid, traditional institution which has fought bravely during the war to maintain some kind of activity for the young.” PA Woods, 4: “The youth project in Tuzla – a short report”, 11.1.1996.

strengths of IWA that it let projects develop in their own way, without trying to impose its own ideas. Rather, it sought to convince the partners through dialogue when it thought that something was not a good idea, but also accepted, sometimes reluctantly, that reality could not meet its own expectations.

HOW TO SUPPORT TRADE UNIONS AND OTHER DEMOCRATIC FORCES IN POST-WAR BIH?

At the Berlin meeting in January 1996, the first after the signing of the peace agreement in BiH, IWA adopted a new platform, which can be seen mainly as a confirmation of the previous one: the original aims remained the same – solidarity with workers in the Balkans and support for multi-ethnic forces in BiH – and three more demands were added: the defence of human and democratic rights, the prosecution of all war criminals, and the right for all refugees to return to their homes.¹¹⁶ In practice, the modification, or rather enlargement, of the platform did not change much in terms of IWA's actual activities: the focus remained on supporting trade unions and other democratic forces, through very concrete, pragmatic activities, concentrated mainly in Tuzla. But whereas during the war, the most pressing concern had been how to survive the war, now with the peace agreement, the main task for the trade unions was to rebuild themselves, to find their place in the new BiH and also to address the question of privatisation, which had become an imminent threat for all companies, including in the mining industry.

74 /

What could and should be the role of IWA in this context? The new situation reignited the internal discussion about the possibilities of IWA supporting trade unions elsewhere in BiH, not just in Tuzla. Before the IWA meeting in Berlin in January 1996, the first after the signing of the peace agreement, a discussion paper signed by two IWA members stated: “Whether we like it or not capitalism will probably invade Bosnia, and we do not have much influence on that, but we can try to help the trade unions organise, and prepare them for some of the things that follow capitalism – privatisations, effectivisations and so on. If the trade unions are not well organised and prepared for the new situation they will not be able to fight for the workers’ interest in the transformation process. In a longer perspective it is

116 PA Gysin 1996: “The platform” (no date). In the original platform, adopted in December 1993, these principles were followed by the sentence “The aim is political, material and humanitarian aid to those forces in ex-Yugoslavia who are against the war and the national-chauvinism”. This was now changed to: “In order to attain these aims we give political, material and humanitarian aid to the forces working for a multi-ethnic society.”

better to help the trade unions and the workers to organise so that they are able to participate in the rebuilding of the Bosnian economy and society. We are aware that this cannot be done by the support of IWA only, but takes involvement from all parts. Nor can this be done in a short period of time, but will take years.”¹¹⁷ Accordingly, it was also emphasised during the Berlin meeting that the “key task was now to mobilise international solidarity to assist rebuilding of the workers’ movement in BiH”.¹¹⁸

But while there was agreement on this general idea, it was more difficult to define how to do this, other than through the ongoing activities in Tuzla, especially the support for the union paper, which was seen as a tool for strengthening and democratising the trade unions. One of the key problems with trade unions in BiH, which IWA had already identified during the war, remained “that they are under strong influence from the companies [...]. They will never be able to fight for the workers’ rights as long as they are ‘owned’ by the company.”¹¹⁹ This was illustrated, for example, by the fact that the unions’ offices were situated in company-owned buildings. What practical steps could be taken towards securing real independence for the trade unions and reconnecting them with workers?

Among other ideas, the authors of the quoted discussion paper set out the following ambitious proposal: “Is it possible for IWA to apply for money from the big TUs for a union building in Tuzla? If all branches in Tuzla had a house together, – where they could have an office each plus one or two rooms for seminars, courses and other activities, and maybe even a small print shop (for union papers, leaflets etc.) – it could create a lot of activity. It would make it possible for the unions to involve workers and communicate freely with them. It would also be an advantage for them to be together with other branches, so they can support each other, and work together. [...] This project would cost a lot of money, and it will not be possible for IWA to run such a project. We must ‘sell’ the idea to some of the big unions in our countries. [...] This project will give IWA a new profile in Tuzla, and it will make it possible for us to put some new life into our solidarity work.”¹²⁰

117 PA Gysin 1996: Minutes of the IWA meeting in Berlin, January 1996, Annex 2: “For IWA’s international meeting in Berlin. Thoughts about IWA’s future in BiH”, by Helene Bach and Lone Degn Rasmussen.

118 PA Gysin 1996: Minutes of the IWA meeting in Berlin, January 1996.

119 Ibid., Annex 2 (see above, footnote 117).

120 Ibid.

The proposal was not adopted at the Berlin meeting – the minutes do not provide any details on this – but the participants agreed on a proposal which had already been floated several times since IWA’s establishment, namely a large conference bringing together trade unions from BiH and the rest of Europe, to be held in Tuzla. A proposal paper prepared for the Berlin meeting explained that such a conference, with the possible title “A new Bosnia and Herzegovina: which future for the trade union movement?”, could discuss for example the following questions: “how to dismantle the hatred and barriers between the nations”, the social consequences of the expected privatisations, and “how can the TU movement in Europe contribute to the TUs in BiH?”¹²¹ More generally, such a conference “will give the unions in Bosnia the possibility to make contacts with some of the big unions in Europe, and it will be possible to discuss the huge changes in Bosnia, and the consequences they have for the union. Also, it will make the European unions more aware of the situation in Bosnia.”¹²² Specifically, the Berlin meeting agreed to plan such a conference in Tuzla for September of that year, to seek “funding of 150,000 DM from European trade unions and other funding bodies, acceptance of funding is conditional on our full control of the agenda”, and to form a working group of several IWA members for the preparations.¹²³

76 /

In the end, however, the project was abandoned, and in fact IWA did not undertake any specific activities in this field in the post-war years. It remained in regular contact with the trade unions, not only in Tuzla, but also with the Confederation based in Sarajevo. IWA members attended several of their conferences as observers, for example the first general BiH trade union conference after the war, which took place in Sarajevo in 1997. But IWA had played no role in preparing it.¹²⁴ Also, in March 1998, an international conference on privatisations took place in Tuzla, attended by representatives from trade unions from BiH and 14 other countries, but it was actually Workers Aid for Bosnia which organised this, together

121 PA Gysin 1996: Minutes of the IWA meeting in Berlin, January 1996, Annex 1: “Proposal – IWA organises a trade union conference in Tuzla together with the trade unions there”.

122 PA Gysin, 1996: Minutes of the IWA meeting in Berlin, January 1996, Annex 2 (see above, footnote 117).

123 PA Gysin 1996: Minutes of the IWA meeting in Berlin, January 1996.

124 On this TU conference, see PA Gysin, 1997: Minutes of the IWA meeting in Amsterdam, October 1997.

with the BiH Coal Miners' Trade Union, without direct involvement by IWA.¹²⁵ One of the few IWA initiatives for connecting trade unions from BiH with their European counterparts was the participation of trade union representatives from Tuzla in the European march against unemployment in 1997.

8
IWA-Bulletin

Bosnians on European unemployment march

When trade union militants and grassroots activists from all over Europe in May and June march towards Amsterdam to fight unemployment and demand a different Europe, eight Bosnian workers and unemployed youth will join. This is a result of a short campaign organised jointly by French and Bosnian trade unionists in Tuzla and Sarajevo.

In Tuzla the post, hospital and miners trade union decided to make a day of action and organise three trade union meetings in each of their workplaces on April 14th in support of the European unemployment march. The preparation of this initiative was taken by the postworkers union.

Local media by and large

hospital staff took part in a rally in front of the childrens wing. A march representative explained the importance of solidarity of employed and unemployed in Eastern as well as Western Europe. The president of the postworkers union also made a speech. Two hospital workers were chosen by their union to participate in the march.

Sarajevo channel covered the meeting at the postoffice and the wreath laying.

In addition to the campaign in Tuzla, a press conference was held in Sarajevo on Monday morning April 14th. It was organised by two local youths who were disappointed by the small number of journalists. The press was more interested

in the Popes visit and Bosnian Army Day, which was being celebrated on the next day.

All the same the march was promised an hour on radio the next Sunday and a short piece on a local TV Station. The two organisers were going to take part in the march in France and after the press conference they left for Tuzla.

All in all the day of action was largely positive. If the Sarajevo end was less successful than we hoped, the meetings in Tuzla showed the involvement of the most militant and multi-ethnic sections of the trade unions in the march.

Xavier Rousselin, First printed in Rouge 24/4/97. Translated by Mick Woods

Extract from the IWA Bulletin no. 5 (May – July 1997).

But this initiative had been led by IWA France alone: the other IWA national campaigns had agreed to it, but had not got involved in any way.¹²⁶ Another idea floated several times during the war was also never realised: a European tour for trade union representatives from BiH and especially from Tuzla.¹²⁷ Such visits happened only on a bilateral basis: at different times in 1995, *Arbetarkonvojen* and IWA Germany invited union representatives from Tuzla to their respective coun-

125 See *Rudar*, no. 1, March 1998, and *Rudar* no. 2, April 1998; PA Gysin, 1998: Tuzla report March 1998, 17.3.1998, and "Springtime in Bosnia. But still some chilly moments. Report by Ulf B. Andersson (political tourist), March 1998, to IWA worldwide".

126 See PA Gysin 1997: Minutes of the IWA meeting in Berlin, June 1997, Annexes 2 and 7.

127 See for example ARAB, AK, 16: Tuzla report no. 2, 21.9.1994, and PA Gysin 1995: Minutes of the IWA meeting in Aalbeke, March 1995: "Again the question of a tour of the trade unionists came up. In Munich somebody had proposed to work on this but nothing happened."

tries, but these were not common IWA projects and this was not the same as a tour through different European countries.¹²⁸

Through *Sindikalna Informacija/Rudar*, IWA tried to help forge links within BiH and abroad. On the one hand, a selection of articles was regularly translated into English in order to distribute the magazine in Europe through the national campaigns, and there was also an idea that trade unions from Western Europe could contribute articles of their own, although this happened only very rarely.¹²⁹ On the other hand, there was the notion that *Rudar* could help to connect trade unions from different parts of BiH, i.e both the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and *Republika Srpska* (RS). IWA explored, for example, the possibility of disseminating *Rudar* in RS as well, but without real success.¹³⁰ And in any case, these activities involving *Rudar* would have been rather modest contributions compared with some of the original ideas for getting more involved in supporting trade unions in BiH in the transition phase from war to peace and from socialism to capitalism.

It is striking that these more ambitious ideas from IWA never materialised, either during or after the war, especially the large European-BiH trade union conference, and the European tour for Tuzla trade unions – two activities which would have established much more direct connections between trade unions from BiH and Western Europe. For a small organisation like IWA, there were obviously logistical and financial challenges involved in arranging larger-scale activities of this kind. It can also be explained by the “small but beautiful” philosophy which was very strong among IWA members and which was reflected in the focus on Tuzla. Perhaps, too, there was an element of not being sure how best to help

128 In summer 1995, IWA Sweden organised a visit by a delegation from the Tuzla Coal Miners' Trade Union, comprising Muhamed Gutić and Omer Kamberović, cf. PA Gysin 1995: Minutes of the IWA meeting in Austria, October 1995. IWA Germany arranged a visit in November/December 1995 by Fikreta Sijerčić, the head of the Trade Union Council of Tuzla, together with two trade unionists from Serbia and a journalist from Croatia, who had been invited by another organisation to a seminar in Berlin. See PA Bachmann: “Berichte zu (...) Jugoslawien-Rundreise (...), Berlin, Mai 1996”.

129 For the idea of publishing articles from European trade unions in *Sindikalna Informacija*, see PA Gysin 1997: Minutes of the meeting in Antwerp, October 1997.

130 See for example ARAB, AK, 16: Tuzla report 25, 31.3.1997, and in the documentation part doc. 24. In a similar spirit, at the IWA meeting in Paris in February 1997, IWA Sweden proposed that IWA should try to link mineworkers from Tuzla with mineworkers in others areas of BiH and that the IWA representative from Tuzla should start with a factfinding mission in Sanski Most, and then in other mining areas. “By rebuilding links between trade unions groups we can contribute to the defence of multi-ethnicity in Bosnia.” (PA Gysin 1997: Minutes of the IWA meeting in Paris). The resolution was passed without dissent, but the contacts taken afterwards in Sanski Most were inconclusive (PA Woods, 3: Tuzla report 24, part B, 7.3.1997).

in a more general sense, beyond the very concrete and pragmatic support and cooperation with the trade unions and other partners in Tuzla. And the fact that Workers Aid for Bosnia was also active in the field of international conferences and of organising visits for trade unionists from BiH obviously limited IWA's options as well.¹³¹ However, it is also possible to identify other reasons, rooted in the complex and very ambivalent relationship between IWA and official trade unions, both in Europe and in BiH.

On the one hand, many official trade unions in Europe felt mistrust towards IWA. As mentioned above, it was often difficult for IWA campaigns to garner support from official trade unions, especially at senior level. As Ulf B Andersson noted in 1996: "Within the established trade union movement there is a built-in suspicion of projects and initiatives that come off their own paths. IWA was no exception. Admittedly, there were a number of examples of trade unions both in Sweden and abroad that supported the aid shipments to Bosnia. But usually it was at the local level or as a one-off act."¹³² Many national trade unions, but also the European Trade Union Confederation, showed little interest in IWA's work in Bosnia and Herzegovina. And when bigger unions were interested in establishing links with their counterparts in BiH, they did not see why they would need to go through IWA rather than making direct contact with their Bosnian colleagues.

On the other hand, mirroring this, there was also indubitably a certain mistrust on the part of IWA towards many official trade unions in Europe, and also in BiH. BiH unions in general were often seen as bureaucratic structures cut off from the base. Were they really able to move in a direction that IWA hoped? At a more local level, as in Tuzla, IWA could try to influence, to a modest degree, the democratisation of the trade unions. But this seemed much more complicated at a more general level. "I would support activists, workers, unemployed people to construct [trade union] structures on the basics, to build a democratic system with democratic structures and to learn from all the mistakes

131 WAB not only co-organised the aforementioned international conference in Tuzla in 1998, but also organised, during the war, in March 1995, the visit to the UK of a delegation of the Tuzla Trade Union Council, headed by Fikreta Sijerčić, coupled with a visit to France, organised by *Secours Ouvrier pour la Bosnie*. See PA Gysin 1995: *Secours Ouvrier pour la Bosnie*, "Juillet /août 1995 – Convoi syndical européen et délégation à Tuzla", September 1995, p. 2.

132 Andersson 1996, 179. Ulf B Andersson also mentions that several unions within the Swedish Trade Union Confederation (LO) actively supported *Arbetarkonvojen*, but that the central level of LO was opposed to such cooperation with *Arbetarkonvojen*, which they considered as "shady political forces" (180–181).

made in the trade unions in Western Europe,” said one participant at an IWA meeting in autumn 1995. But then he added: “I would be very careful about building the basis of the trade union with people who come out of a traditional bureaucrat structure.”¹³³

Further to this, it is unsurprising to find regular statements by IWA members seeing it as problematic how uncritically trade unions from BiH seemed to be attracted by unions in Western Europe. In Berlin in 1996, the meeting agreed that it “was important [...] that there was full and free discussion to allow Bosnian workers to establish appropriate structures, not slavishly follow models from other countries”.¹³⁴ Many IWA members were also critical of how strong the influence of large foreign trade unions already was: “It is important that we try to tell them [the trade unions in BiH] our views and have a forum where we can have some critical discussions about the European TUs and the future of Bosnian TUs so they don’t just copy the big European TUs, or at least are aware of what it is before they do so. They must have the possibility to discuss what they want, without the big European unions breathing down their neck. DGB (Germany) already has a big influence on some branches, and I feel they have enforced their structure on these branches, without much knowledge of the present situation of the Bosnian unions. These branches are quite successful in organising union leaders all over Bosnia, but they do not have any base. The workers are not involved. The person in charge of international relations for BiH TUs is a former member of DGB. I am afraid that a structure with a huge bureaucracy is being made, without any existing base.”¹³⁵

80 /

This general scepticism towards existing trade union structures can certainly also be seen as a reason why larger activities like the European trade union conference were not more actively pursued. IWA was not a traditional manifestation of trade union work: while it included trade unionists among its members, and even had the support of some unions, it was actually also a challenge to them, through its existence, its methods and activities, which involved fostering and implementing workers’ solidarity in unconventional ways. IWA members also liked to perceive themselves in contrast to the official TUs. “We as IWA have achieved some (maybe big) things. We have very concrete initiatives of

133 PA Gysin 1995: Minutes of the IWA meeting in Vienna, October 1995.

134 PA Gysin 1996: Minutes of the IWA meeting in Berlin, January 1996.

135 PA Gysin 1996: Minutes of the IWA meeting in Berlin, January 1996, Appendix 2. – DGB (*Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund*), the largest confederation of trade unions in Germany.

great value, and this contrasts with the official European trade union movement,” states, for example, a position paper from 1995.¹³⁶ IWA was interested in obtaining financial support from Western trade unions, and also in cooperating with them, but only to a certain extent. “It was generally agreed that we should work with official TU structures in the west, while trying to encourage rank and file initiatives.” This resolution from the Berlin meeting in 1996 does not specify if rank and file initiatives meant those in the West or in BiH, or both, but it is nonetheless a highly significant sentence because it summarises well the position of IWA: cooperation with western trade unions yes, but as a means to developing something else. The minutes of the Berlin meeting also note: “There is also the ‘problem’ that West European trade unions with much greater resources than us are getting interested in organising in Bosnia.”¹³⁷ The fear that the big European trade unions could challenge IWA’s position and the good relations it had built up with several unions in BiH may be an additional explanation for the lack of commitment to substantial activities involving Western trade unions. In smaller projects, such as those in Tuzla, IWA could stay in control and do things as it wanted. In a larger project with many other (bigger) partners from Western Europe, this would certainly have been much more difficult.

DEVELOPMENTS IN IWA’S ORGANISATIONAL FRAMEWORK

During these post-war years, IWA kept the general organisational framework it had established in the early years, which had proved well adapted to IWA’s specificities. Between 1996 and 1998, nine more international IWA meetings took place, on average every three to four months, always in different cities. The international coordination office continued operating – at one point moving from Stockholm to Copenhagen and then back again. The office in Tuzla was also retained, although it remained difficult sometimes to find volunteers to come there for a sufficient period. At the same time the national campaigns continued in different ways with their activities.

But the end of the war also brought different problems. The priorities of donors shifted: in Sweden, for example, the Left Party MEP who had been one of the financial backers of *Arbetarkonvojen* for its IWA activities, switched their donation

136 ARAB, AK, 18: Minutes of the IWA meeting in Aalbeke, March 1995, annex about IWA and the BiH Army.

137 PA Gysin 1996: Minutes of the IWA meeting in Berlin, January 1996.

from Bosnia and Herzegovina to El Salvador in 1997.¹³⁸ The general interest in BiH in different countries declined, and that meant that it was also more difficult for the national campaigns to find money to keep up activities, be it through street actions or donors. In the two years after the war, some groups and countries disappeared from IWA, most notably Italy and the Netherlands. But other countries got more involved, especially Spain (*Paz Ahora* and *Ayuda Obrera*) and France (*Secours Ouvrier pour la Bosnie*).¹³⁹ Interestingly, the last two organisations had been very active with Workers Aid for Bosnia during the war.

This also illustrated a certain easing of relations between IWA and WAB. New proposals were put forward to strengthen the cooperation between the two, even to merge into a single organisation again. But this was too radical a proposition for most IWA members. At the IWA meeting in Copenhagen in November 1996, a resolution was passed stating that there was a “significant degree of agreement between IWA and WAB” and that a “unity of campaigns would be desirable in order to strengthen solidarity movement and eliminate confusion and duplicated effort [...]. It would however be stupid to ignore the less than cordial relations of our two campaigns in the past.” IWA therefore proposed “joint work on agreed campaigns and areas of work which can be negotiated between the two groups” and the “exchange of reports and representatives at meetings”.¹⁴⁰ In fact, the cooperation remained very limited in the ensuing period, with occasional encounters and exchange of information, but no substantial collaboration on a common project.

82 /

Between 1996 and 1998, IWA also published an international bulletin, in English. There had been talk of such an official publication since 1994, but it was only after the war that it was implemented. Several of the national campaigns had their own newsletters in their respective languages, which they published more or less regularly during and after the war, for example in Italy, Denmark, Sweden, the Netherlands and Belgium.¹⁴¹ But IWA as such published very little: besides

138 PA Gysin 1997: Minutes of the IWA meeting in Paris, March 1997.

139 PA Gysin 1996: Minutes of the IWA meeting in Copenhagen, November 1996 (“Agreed: Xavier’s group becomes part of IWA, and also *Paz Ahora*”) and PA Gysin 1997: Minutes of the IWA meeting in Paris, March 1997 (“Brescia has folded [...] Amount from Holland [to the six-month IWA budget] will be the last as they are closing down activities apart from promoting the bulletin.”)

140 PA Gysin 1996: Minutes of the IWA meeting in Copenhagen, November 1996.


141 See the covers of some of the newsletters in the documentation part, p. 197.

this international bulletin, no other publication was brought out by the IWA international network in the seven years of its existence. There had been thoughts of doing more in this field, for example producing documentation about IWA's work, but this did not materialise.¹⁴²

No. 1
July-
August
1996

International Workers Aid

Bulletin in defence of democratic rights, solidarity and multiethnicity on Balkan



New bulletin from IWA

This is the first issue of a bimonthly bulletin published by International Workers Aid. IWA was established in 1993 in solidarity with the forces in the Balkans fighting against nationalism, chauvinism and ethnic cleansing. The aim of the Bulletin is to inform about and discuss the development in the Balkans and the activities of IWA and other organisations and campaigns defending democracy, solidarity and multiethnicity on the Balkans. International Workers Aid bases its work on the following programme:

- 1) Solidarity with the workers of the Balkans!
- 2) For the defence of all human and democratic rights!

- 3) No to ethnic cleansing and ethnic partition!
- 4) Solidarity with a multi-ethnic Bosnia-Herzegovina!
- 5) All war criminals without exception must be brought to trial!
- 6) For the right of every refugee to return to their homes in former Yugoslavia!
- 7) For the right of every refugee to remain in their country of asylum!

We ask all our readers to join us in the struggle for these demands!

The first issue of IWA's international bulletin published in Summer 1996.

¹⁴² PA Woods, 3: Minutes of the IWA meeting in Munich, December 1994; see also the documentation part, docs. 16 and 17.

In a certain way this is significant: IWA as such was never very good at promoting itself. In some countries, the IWA sections had excellent contacts with mainstream newspapers, and articles about their work were published. This was especially the case in Sweden, where the biggest daily newspaper *Aftonbladet* officially supported IWA's women's parcels project and Ship to Bosnia. But in most other countries, articles about IWA and its work were very rare, and appeared only sporadically in some local newspapers. At one of the first international meetings, IWA organised a session with journalists, but the experience was not repeated. Even in Tuzla, IWA was not very adept at self-promotion. There were some symbolic initiatives, such as having a limited set of T-shirts with the IWA logo printed in 1995, but not much more than this. At one point, also during the war, IWA decided it would enclose leaflets with the parcels to be distributed, in order to explain who IWA was and why it was distributing the aid. But this decision was only implemented occasionally, so that often miners receiving a parcel did not even know where it had come from. The fact that leaflets were not distributed was partly for practical reasons, partly because some in IWA felt that this would oblige the recipients to feel grateful for what they got.¹⁴³ A trade unionist from Tuzla once said of IWA Tuzla: "They talk little, but they do a lot." "We took it as a compliment," was the bittersweet response of the IWA members who wrote about it.¹⁴⁴ And indeed it should be seen as something positive: IWA's priority was really its practical work on the ground, not talking about it. Although here too, several IWA members were very self-critical.

However, IWA did at least publish the international bulletin between 1996 and 1998. As well as dealing with IWA's work and Tuzla, it also tried to give a more general insight into political and social issues in BiH and other Balkan countries. Edited and printed by the Danish IWA branch, with articles about and from different countries, and distributed in the various IWA member countries, it was included in the common six-month IWA budget, and it again illustrated the IWA ethos of connecting international and national work through a common initiative. The professionally produced newsletter was well received by the groups in the different countries. At the Basel meeting in 1998, it was noted that "all campaigns agree we should keep it", with the following reasons advanced: "good for donors, only way to express our political opinions, informative for outsiders and for people

143 Interview by N.M. with Ulrik Kohl, 13.12.2020.

144 PA Woods, 4: IWA Tuzla to IWA Stockholm, for distribution, Report 2, 3.8.1995.

from campaigns, good to hand out during activities (i.e. meetings with unions).¹⁴⁵ But one year later, the situation had already changed: "Several campaigns said that they were not really using it."¹⁴⁶ The seventh and final issue was published in late 1998, an anniversary edition marking IWA's fifth birthday. The first six issues had been prepared and coordinated by *Konvoj til Bosnien* in Denmark, but then the IWA member in charge said that he could no longer do it: "Lack of articles, time and workmate were some of the reasons."¹⁴⁷ The anniversary issue was prepared by two IWA members from Germany, but it was to be the last. In a way, the end of the IWA bulletin was also a reflection of the fact that it was becoming more and more difficult for IWA in general to continue and that its most productive years were behind it.

All in all, the first three post-war years paint a contradictory picture. On the one hand, IWA continued to function well as an international network, with regular and well-attended international meetings, and various activities which succeeded in keeping up a common identity. On the other hand, with the end of the war and of the convoys, it had become much more difficult to find something that would mobilise the individual campaigns in the same collective way as before. As early as the Amsterdam meeting in May 1996, this problem had been raised during a general discussion: "The rolling convoys and the bread project had been unifying projects," remarked one participant, "but this was no longer the case." He added that "things were going off in all directions", in reference to the many smaller projects that had been launched by different IWA campaigns.¹⁴⁸ In the following years, IWA focused on the trade union magazine and the IVA women's centre as its two core projects. But despite their quality and importance, it was much more difficult to get people in the different IWA countries interested in these activities, and consequently the various IWA campaigns were less actively involved in them than in the food convoys during the war.

145 PA Gysin 1998: Minutes of the IWA meeting in Basel, March 1998.

146 PA Gysin 1999: Minutes of the IWA meeting in Paris, May 1999.

147 PA Gysin 1998: Minutes of the IWA meeting in Malmö, June 1998.

148 PA Gysin 1996: Minutes of the IWA meeting in Amsterdam, May 1996.

The legacies built up during the war were still strong enough to preserve IWA as an international structure, and the new projects also helped to maintain this foundation, but as the years passed questions were increasingly raised about which direction IWA should develop in. However, no clear answers were found and the issue was not addressed in a more substantial way. When a sort of brainstorming on the future of IWA was organised among the participants at the Antwerp meeting in October 1997, the answers revealed that the desire to continue was still there, but the thoughts, ideas and visions expressed varied greatly: some were cautiously optimistic (“although the people aren’t too interested [...] it is still possible”), some had big ideas (“worldwide network/GROW”), others emphasised that IWA should deepen its existing work (“we should stress the multicultural side of Tuzla more and let people know about the dangers like Seselj. IWA should spread this kind of news”), some focused more on the problems (“There is a crisis, it is a period of change”) and expressed self-criticism (“In Berlin we decided to make direct links with unions. What have we done so far?”), while others expressed the wish to discuss all this much more deeply (“We need more time to explore what we will do in the future. There is a need for an ideological congress!!!”).¹⁴⁹



During IWA's international meeting in Tuzla in November 1998, from right to left: Ulf B Andersson, Hanspeter Gysin, Xavier Rousselin, Peter Öholm. (Photo: Agneta Falck)

149 PA Gysin 1997: Minutes of the IWA meeting in Antwerp, October 1997. The complete extract is reproduced in the documentation part, doc. 9. Vojislav Šešelj was one of the best known and most radical figures of Serb nationalism in the 1990s.

At the same meeting, it was suggested that they should “celebrate the 5 years of IWA in Tuzla” in 1998, and that this could also be a good opportunity to discuss “What is the future of IWA” and to hold “an ideological meeting”.¹⁵⁰ But while IWA did indeed organise a meeting in Tuzla in November 1998, it turned out to be an international meeting like the others, at which mainly ongoing activities and current political issues were discussed, but not the future of IWA as such.

The only difference from the previous meetings was that it included a special anniversary component, a meeting open to the public to discuss the five years of IWA’s work (“Has our work been successful? Did our aid get to the right people? Did our work at all make any difference?”) and also the current situation and plans regarding “the mining industry & *Rudar*” and “women’s situation & *IWA Saliniana*”.¹⁵¹ This was a telling choice: it seemed easier to look at the past and discuss existing projects than think about the future of IWA itself.

150 Ibid.

151 PA Gysin 1998: Leaflet “IWA – A five year anniversary. Invitation to open house Saturday the 14th November at 10 o’clock”.

4

FINAL INITIATIVES AND FADING OUT (1999–2000)



Street action in Stockholm to collect food and other goods for the "Solidarity with Kosovo/a" campaign, 1999. (Photo: Agneta Falck)

The crisis in Kosovo in 1998 in a way reinvigorated IWA. A new action field was found, in which some of the campaigns got particularly engaged – and it was seen as a natural extension of IWA's work in Tuzla. The plan was to organise a solidarity convoy, together with partners from Tuzla, to the mining town of Mitrovica in order to support workers in Kosovo and the idea of multi-ethnicity. The initiative came from Support Tuzla's Schools (STS), and IWA agreed to get involved. "What is the purpose? Aid of course, but it is also a political issue. To drive from multi-ethnic Tuzla to Mitrovica is of course a statement or a way to try to affect their way of thinking."¹⁵² In other words: "It is very important to show the people in Kosovo – in practice – that there is another way to solve ethnic problems and that this way at the moment is represented by Tuzla."¹⁵³ It was also hoped that Tuzla's involvement could have positive effects within BiH in this difficult post-war period: "Maybe it would raise the morale in Bosnia to see that people here can help others."¹⁵⁴

For STS and IWA, it was therefore crucial to get actors from Tuzla actively involved in such an initiative. When approached by STS in autumn 1998, the municipality of Tuzla, with Selim Bešliagić, and also the teachers' union agreed to be part of it, by helping with the logistical preparations and with raising money. Only the Coal Miners' Trade Union was reluctant: Workers Aid for Kosovo, an offshoot of the British WAB, had already come up with a similar idea in the summer, and while the Coal Miners' Trade Union had collected several tonnes of goods for a convoy to Mitrovica, Workers Aid for Kosovo had actually only taken a small proportion of these goods in its convoy. However, the Miners' Trade Union agreed to at least lend moral support to this new initiative. *Paz Ahora* in Spain was also a keen backer of the idea, and said that it would organise a convoy from Spain to join the one starting from Tuzla, while IWA Sweden and STS were mainly in charge of the contacts in Tuzla and in Kosovo and the general logistical preparations for the convoy. STS managed to secure a substantial grant from the Danish government, and a name for the joint campaign was also chosen: Solidarity with Mitrovica.¹⁵⁵

However, the initiative soon encountered a series of difficulties. When the idea took form, in late September 1998, IWA had hoped to launch the convoy in November: for practical reasons, in order to travel before the arrival of winter, and for symbolic

152 PA Gysin 1998: Minutes of the IWA meeting in Tuzla, November 1998.

153 PA Søndergaard: Note from Vagn Rasmussen, 2.10.1998.

154 PA Gysin 1998: Minutes of the IWA meeting in Tuzla, November 1998

155 Ibid.

reasons, in order to connect it with IWA's five-year anniversary meeting in Tuzla.¹⁵⁶ But the situation within Kosovo was already very tense, and neither IWA nor STS had contacts or experience of working in Mitrovica and in Kosovo more generally. They therefore decided that it was first necessary to explore the situation on the ground before launching the convoy. Meanwhile, *Paz Ahora* had already finished preparations for its convoy, which set out from Madrid after Christmas. But due to lack of communication between IWA, STS and *Paz Ahora*, it remained unclear whether the convoy would go through to Tuzla or drive directly to Mitrovica. In the end, one truck tried to get to Tuzla, but was unable to enter BiH because of missing papers.¹⁵⁷

Then the crisis in Kosovo escalated, and with the NATO intervention and the open war from March 1999 on, the idea of a convoy to Mitrovica became completely unrealistic. Mick Woods, now working for STS, had already been on his way to Mitrovica in order to explore the situation, develop contacts and help organise the operations on the ground. But when the war started, he went instead to the city of Tetovo in Macedonia, near the border with Kosovo, where hundreds of thousands of Kosovo Albanian refugees were arriving in very dramatic and chaotic circumstances. What to do now? Should a convoy be redirected to Macedonia to help Albanian refugees there? Was it possible to support Kosovan trade unions in exile? There were a lot of unanswered questions, and when the IWA delegates met in Paris in May 1999 for their regular international meeting, they talked a lot about the reactions in their countries to the war, about their own views on the NATO bombing and the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) – but not at all about a joint project on the ground. The only common guideline they agreed on in this area was, as noted in the minutes, a minimal “Coordination of trucks, if possible”.¹⁵⁸ In fact, a number of individual initiatives had been launched in different countries: within IWA, a very successful campaign had been organised by *Arbetarkonvojen*, with the collection of more than 5,000 “solidarity parcels” in Sweden, which two trucks brought via Greece to Macedonian families hosting refugees from Kosovo.¹⁵⁹ But this was not a joint IWA campaign, and convoys to Macedonia from other countries were also organised with the involvement of only one national IWA group,

156 PA Søndergaard: Stockholm report no. 6, 28.9.1998.

157 PA Gysin 1999: Correspondence between *Paz Ahora* and STS, spring 1999.

158 PA Gysin 1999: Minutes of the IWA meeting in Paris, May 1999.

159 PA Gysin 1999: Minutes of the IWA meeting in Paris, May 1999; Stockholm Report 14, 11.5.1999; and Minutes of the IWA meeting in Antwerp, September 1999.

like the *Convoi syndical pour les Balkans* in France, or without any IWA participation at all, such as that of Workers Aid for Kosovo in the UK.¹⁶⁰ On the ground, Mick Woods provided plenty of assistance to the different convoys when they arrived, but no overall coordination of these convoys was organised. Furthermore, the convoys completely excluded one main aspect of the original idea – to have Tuzla as an integral part of them.

When the war in Kosovo ended, STS revived the idea of a convoy from Tuzla, but in the meantime the original support in Tuzla had dwindled: while the teachers' union remained on board, the miners' unions told STS that such a convoy would not make sense as there were no longer any functioning trade unions in Kosovo, while the municipality of Tuzla deemed the situation in Kosovo to be too complicated.¹⁶¹ Mick Woods' report on the situation in Mitrovica after the end of the war was not encouraging anyway: "Let's also be honest, the town has been partitioned by the French, 99% of the Serbs have left the south side and I'm told all Albanians have been expelled from the north – it's no picture of interethnic harmony. I think we can carry out our original project here but frankly it's going to be a drop in the ocean [...]. It's also going to be dangerous, expensive and difficult."¹⁶²

At the IWA meeting in Roskilde in February 2000, the idea of a Mitrovica convoy was once again discussed. *Paz Ahora* reported that it had two trucks ready in Spain and that it just needed DM 6,000 to get them started. IWA and STS decided to transfer this money to *Paz Ahora* to support the convoy.¹⁶³ The Spanish organisation had planned to drive its trucks to Sarajevo and to a refugee camp near Tuzla in order to deliver material and aid from Spain there, and then to pick up a load collected in Tuzla and take it to Mitrovica. But again, communication between *Paz Ahora*, STS and IWA proved to be very difficult; basic logistical questions about the organisation of the convoy in Tuzla, the reception in Mitrovica and the journey between the two towns could not be clarified, so that in April 2000 *Paz Ahora*

160 See for example PA Gysin 2000: *Convoi syndical pour les Balkans*: "Compte rendu du convoi vers la Macédoine de juin/juillet 1999/Compte rendu du voyage au Kosovo d'octobre 1999".

161 ARAB, AK, 16: Tuzla report no. 2, 29.1.2000.

162 PA Gysin 1999: Email from Mick Woods to *Stet Tuzlas Skoler*, 23.6.1999.

163 PA Gysin 2000: Minutes of the IWA meeting in Roskilde, February 2000.

described this project as “a total failure”.¹⁶⁴ STS developed some other plans to support trade unions in Mitrovica, but IWA itself did not get involved in those, and in any case they were no longer directly linked to Tuzla. After a hopeful beginning, the entire Kosovo engagement never felt like a success story for IWA, and the Kosovo campaign therefore failed to inject new life into IWA.¹⁶⁵

At the same time, 1999 also became a major blowback year for the two main projects supported by IWA in Tuzla, namely the union paper and the women’s centre. In 1999, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) decided to cut its entire budget, which meant that funding was no longer available for *Rudar*.¹⁶⁶ IWA had already asked the trade unions in 1998 if they could finance the paper themselves, but the answer had been that they had no money available for another two or three years.¹⁶⁷ Hanspeter Gysin then found some funding in Switzerland, which could have financed two or three more issues, but he and Nedeljko Maksimović were unable to reach an agreement on the transfer of the money to Tuzla, so that no further issue was published after 1998.¹⁶⁸

Also, in late 1999, the application for a new three-year EC grant for the *IVA Saliniana* women’s centre was rejected. The centre had repeatedly experienced financial difficulties, including in 1999, because the EU did not deliver the final payment for 1998. But in general it had developed well, and IWA had already decided to scale back its presence. “We still support *IVA Saliniana* and wish to have communication with them but the general feeling is that they are now able to carry on by themselves + Monika’s necessary help,” summarised the minutes of the IWA meeting in Paris.¹⁶⁹ The last part referred to the support of a repre-

164 PA Gysin 2000, Email from *Paz Ahora* to IWA worldwide, 11.4.2000, Subject “Problems with the international convoy to Mitrovica”. Due to the coordination problems and the logistical challenges and the subsequent delays to the convoy, the last supportive local partner in Tuzla had also dropped out: “The Teachers’ Union in Tuzla seems to be tired of waiting and are saying they will deliver their collected items to Kosovar refugees in Bosnia.” PA Gysin 2000: Stockholm report 20, 26.2.2000.

165 The following statement by Mick Woods at the IWA meeting in Roskilde emphasises the differences between Kosovo and BiH: “Kosovo has never been a multi-ethnic society and there is nothing to build upon if the goal is to build a multi-ethnic society.” (PA Gysin 2000: Minutes of the IWA meeting in Roskilde).

166 PA Gysin 1999: Minutes of the IWA meeting in Paris, May 1999.

167 See the documentation part, doc. 24.

168 ARAB, AK, 16: Tuzla report 29.1.2000.

169 PA Gysin 1999: Minutes of the IWA meeting in Paris, May 1999.

sentative from IWA Belgium in dealing with financial matters. When the EC grant application failed, the Bosnian coordinator, with the assistance of IWA Belgium, attempted to find new funding, but in vain. Obligated to progressively reduce its activities, this promising and very active initiative came to an end after three years of existence.¹⁷⁰

As for the IWA office in Tuzla, it was never officially closed, but after Li Skarin from IWA Sweden had stayed there for eight months until December 1998, no other IWA member came to the office on a regular basis. With the general scaling-back of projects and the union paper and the women's centre mainly run by people from Tuzla, the question of whether it really made sense to maintain a direct IWA presence in Tuzla had already been raised at the international IWA meeting in Malmö in June 1998. "The discussion went around the subject if it is still necessary to have office and permanent presence in Tuzla. [...] No one thought it was necessary for our projects any more but for the contact with the rest of Europe and for further (Kosovo?) projects. We decided though to keep it like it is until the end of the year."¹⁷¹ As STS had opened its own office in Tuzla and worked with several former IWA activists, from 1999 this became a means of dealing with IWA-related issues while no longer having a permanent IWA presence.

1999 also proved to be a difficult year for IWA on a human level. Eva X Moberg died in May, followed in December by Tihomir Babić, both from cancer. Eva X Moberg had been among the founders of *Arbetarkonvojen* and of IWA in 1993, and one of the most committed IWA activists in the early years. She also worked as a journalist, including for the renowned daily newspaper *Aftonbladet*, helping to make Bosnia a high-profile issue in Sweden and also raising the profile of IWA. Several hundred people attended a memorial meeting for her in Stockholm.¹⁷² Tihomir Babić had worked for IWA in Tuzla for several years, first and foremost as an interpreter, which was a vital job as most of the IWA activists did not speak Bosnian. In 1999, he had been employed by STS at its new Tuzla office, and in the absence of a permanent IWA representative had also served as an IWA contact

170 A final mention of *IWA Saliniana* can be found in ARAB, AK, 16: Tuzla report 29.1.2000, which states that the centre had had to move into a school basement but was not giving in despite all the problems, running a kindergarten and some other activities.

171 PA Gysin 1999: Minutes of the IWA meeting in Malmö, June 1998.

172 PA Gysin 1999: Stockholm report no. 14, 11.5.1999.

person that year. IWA members in various countries raised money to help his widow and family.¹⁷³

Despite the disappointing Kosovo campaign and the setbacks regarding *Rudar* and *IWA Saliniana*, IWA continued to operate for a little longer: a new international meeting took place in February 2000 in Roskilde in Denmark, in cooperation with STS, which was well attended, with participants from France, Switzerland, Denmark, Sweden, Belgium, Spain and Germany. Symbolically, the fact that it was the first international meeting organised in cooperation with STS, rather than by IWA alone, in a way highlighted the change of situation. STS had become extremely active in recent years in Tuzla and other towns in BiH: with strong financial support from the Danish government, it had managed to launch a school rebuilding project in four municipalities, Tuzla and Lukavac in the Federation of BiH, and Laktaši and Petrovo in *Republika Srpska*, as well as organising joint seminars for teachers and teacher trade unionists from RS and the Federation – the first initiative of this kind after the war in BiH.¹⁷⁴ STS had opened an office in Tuzla, and had also been the driving force in the Mitrovica joint initiative. At the same time, IWA as an international network had become weaker. In a way, the child had outgrown the parents. One could say that STS represented a continuation of the IWA spirit and the expansion of its work under another label – at least in terms of content, with its efforts to promote multi-ethnicity and its collaboration with unions (albeit its focus was on teachers, not miners). However, it was not a continuation at the structural level, as STS was not an international network but very much a Danish initiative and organisation, even though it had cooperation partners in other countries.

In 1999 and 2000, individual groups continued to be active, but without Tuzla being a priority. *Paz Ahora*, for example, supported projects in different parts in BiH, including the University Library in Sarajevo, as well as in Kosovo and in Chechnya, and something similar can be said of IWA France. In Sweden, IWA activists continued to meet regularly once a week in Stockholm. *Arbetarkonvojen* also remained the international coordination point for IWA in general, by sending regular “Stockholm reports” to the individuals and groups in the different countries. There was still a common budget, to which the different IWA sections contributed, but its reduction since the war-time years shows how much the

173 PA Gysin 2000: Minutes of the IWA meeting in Roskilde, February 2000.

174 See for example PA Gysin 1999: “Report about the project of STS”, 25.11.1999, by Helene Bach, project coordinator. On the work of STS in Tuzla, see also Altumbabić 2003, esp. 37–90.

situation – and IWA itself – had changed: for the period July–December 1999, the agreed common budget was just DM 1,800, less than a 20th of what it had been in the same period in 1995 (DM 42,000). Over half of the DM 1,800 was earmarked for the next IWA bulletin, yet that was never actually published.¹⁷⁵

In summer 1999, a common IWA website was launched, on the initiative of a Swedish-French IWA activist. After the discontinuation of the international bulletin, this was another attempt to preserve a common IWA identity and to make IWA's work more widely known – but it was launched at a time when IWA had become more a loose conglomerate of individual campaigns rather than a common umbrella organisation. Indeed, this was actually reflected in the website itself, which featured information about several national campaigns in parallel sections, but nothing really about IWA as such, as IWA's webmaster noted: "Altogether a very great effort has been made in all groups and the results are impressive, but it doesn't show on the IWA page. I think it would be of great importance for IWA to coordinate the sum of results in a synthetic presentation on the IWA site as well as a version in your different languages on the respective pages." Moreover, *Paz Ahora*, *Arbetarkonvojen* and Support Tuzla's Schools had already created their own websites, but the connection with IWA was barely visible: "I take the opportunity again to criticise the lack of links to the IWA site on the Spanish, Danish, and Swedish websites. If someone goes to these pages it is easy to lose the way back to the IWA site, and it also gives the impression that there is no real connection between IWA and these separate websites."¹⁷⁶

96 /

How loose IWA had become as a common network is also illustrated by the fact that no new joint projects were implemented in 1999 and 2000. There were some further attempts to engage IWA in new campaigns; Xavier Rousselin from France regularly tried to get other IWA groups involved in a campaign on Chechnya, but without real success.¹⁷⁷ After years of incredible physical, psychological and emotional commitment, an exhausting effort made on a voluntary basis, it is also understandable that many had lost their energy. Some were disillusioned about

175 PA Gysin 1999: Minutes of the IWA meeting in Antwerp, September 1999. Of the total amount, DM 1,000 was earmarked for the IWA bulletin, DM 300 for the Tuzla office (which de facto no longer existed), DM 100 for the international headquarters (in Stockholm), and DM 400 for the "Macedonia office" (actually a contribution to Mick Woods' presence in Macedonia, which was mainly financed by STS).

176 PA Gysin 1999: Minutes of the IWA meeting in Antwerp, September 1999, Annex: Hallon's report on the IWA website for the September meeting in Antwerp.

177 PA Gysin 2000: Minutes of the IWA meeting in Roskilde, February 2000.

the lack of support and interest at home, and the increasing difficulties in finding money for their projects. Political and social developments in BiH, which continued to be dominated by nationalist forces, were also far from encouraging, and there had been disappointments with their own IWA projects. Several IWA activists had moved on, professionally, with new jobs, or personally. At the same time, some members also felt that IWA had done what it could do, especially in Tuzla, and that in any case its aim was not to stay there forever but to support forces in Tuzla in their self-organisation. The initiative had been born in response to an emergency situation, the war; it had not originally been thought of as a post-war project, but had continued after the war because people had got engaged in the work and were convinced that there were still so many things to do and support. One might say that seven years of commitment and work, from 1993 to 2000, is not a long time, but in fact it is rather remarkable that such an initiative, based on volunteerism and organised in an informal way in such difficult circumstances, remained active and productive for so many years.

IWA's story did not end with a bang, but slowly faded out. At the IWA meeting in Roskilde, a new international meeting was scheduled for September 2000 in Berlin or Barcelona, but this never took place.¹⁷⁸ Various individual actors from or linked to IWA continued with their campaigns after 2000, most notably IWA France in Chechnya, and STS in BiH and Kosovo. In 2003, STS made an attempt to revive IWA, proposing a new international meeting, with Somalia the focus of a new mobilising campaign.¹⁷⁹ But this came to nothing. One additional reason why the calls for new initiatives targeting other countries and causes did not really resonate with most IWA members was undoubtedly the fact that IWA identified so strongly with Tuzla. Everything had started with Tuzla; the arrival of the three trucks in November 1993 had become IWA's founding myth, and nearly all of IWA's activities were organised in or in relation to Tuzla. IWA had grown in and with Tuzla, and Tuzla had become the heart of IWA, the rallying point and connecting link for the entire IWA structure. Everybody involved in IWA was eager to come to Tuzla at least once. More than 100 IWA activists did so, spending anything from a few days to several months in the city, and all came back with stories and experiences to share. Tuzla had given IWA its identity. Nothing outside of Tuzla could match this.

178 PA Gysin 2000: Stockholm report, 26.2.2000.

179 PA Gysin 2000: Email from Vagn Rasmussen/STS, "IWA and Somalia", 22.6.2001, and email from STS "to former members of IWA and many other friends/comrades", February 2003.

5

**PRACTISING
INTERNATIONAL
SOLIDARITY: THE
IWA EXPERIENCE**



IWA convoy in Central Bosnia, 1994. (Photo: Thomas Proctor)

How can we define what International Workers Aid was and what it achieved? At the end of this historical journey, I will try to answer this question by summarising and exploring some of the key factors making up the IWA experience, especially its approach to solidarity, with a view, among other things, to better understanding IWA's political significance.

First of all, IWA was a very concrete example of pragmatic solidarity. In other words, for IWA solidarity was not just an idea, but a practice. While many remained passive as the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina unfolded, those who got involved in IWA refused to sit back and do nothing. As Ulf B Andersson wrote in 1996: "It has been easy to feel powerless before the horrors of war. I also clenched my fists in despair and cried in front of the TV. But I have also seen that it is possible to do something."¹⁸⁰ And while some talked about solidarity in an abstract way or were very vocal in calling for action without actually taking any themselves, IWA was acting in a very hands-on way, even if the reality on the ground was far from glamorous: "Much of the left did basically agree with the analysis and efforts of IWA but basically sat on their hands and did little beyond make occasional literary interventions. It actually demanded a high level of co-operation, flexibility, trust and discipline to make IWA work. The nature of our activities meant that there was a lot of resources and comrades' lives at stake, not just squabbling over what goes in the next leaflet or what slogan we have on the banner. For many of the left, I believe, there was simply a fear of working with a popular cause in a principled way and having to take real responsibility for things. It's a damned sight easier to play with slogans such as 'arm the Bosnian resistance' than ensure the 'rolling-convoy' had spare-parts and diesel to drive flour up to Tuzla every ten days."¹⁸¹

100 /

Secondly, IWA practised solidarity in a very considered way. Not in the sense that it had a master plan that it implemented step by step. Rather, it had a guiding idea – solidarity with democratic and multi-ethnic forces in BiH – and then put the idea into practice in accordance with the analysed needs and developments in the context: for example, this led IWA to start with food convoys, but then soon to work on more structural projects as well. It was also a considered solidarity in the sense that IWA was aware of its own limits and resources, as illustrated by the fact that it mainly focused on Tuzla instead of trying to expand its activities to other places. And it was a considered solidarity, above all, because IWA was aware that

180 Andersson 1996, 8.

181 Woods 1998b.

support for people in need can be provided in many ways, with many potential pitfalls. When delivering humanitarian aid in particular, how do you respect the dignity of the recipients? IWA as an organisation was always asking itself whether it was practising solidarity in the right way. The desire to take into account the situation of those supported by IWA and an awareness of the challenges linked to international commitment in a war context also appear in individual reflections by those involved in IWA activities. In a report she wrote after taking part in IWA's women's convoy to Tuzla in November 1994, Lieve Snellings for example noted:

"Many times the women [in Tuzla] tell us how difficult it feels they depend on help. 'Normally we take care of ourselves,' they say, 'in fact we don't like depending on help at all.' It's like their dignity disappears in that way. Two things come in my mind by all this: During our convoy trip to Tuzla, I saw a man throwing chocolate through the van window. It shocked me. In the beginning I didn't know what was going on. I remembered, my mother told me they were glad during the Second World War, the Americans gave them chocolate. And it seemed, people here did like that chocolate too (the men got beer). But, when the women of Tuzla told me how difficult it is to depend on help, I understood, you have to be very careful in the way you give support. When you take away dignity from people, what use, what profit does this assistance have, than feeling yourself super powerful as a help giver? There was an opposite experience when we told the Tuzla women what we brought with the women's convoy. When we said there was make-up in the truck, everybody was very glad. You couldn't do them a greater favour. 'As long we can take care of ourselves, make ourselves beautiful... we can keep our dignity,' they said. If I ever doubted (and I did) and I asked myself if make-up is part of war aid, now I am 1000% convinced it is on top of the list."¹⁸²

Thirdly, IWA practised solidarity in a democratic and inclusive way, in two regards: On the one hand, there was IWA's democratic internal discussion and decision-making culture – the small campaigns had the same rights as the bigger campaigns, and an effort was always made to find solutions to problems which would be acceptable for as many of the individuals and groups concerned as possible. On the other hand, IWA also had a democratic and inclusive approach to its local partners in Tuzla. It was not looking for passive recipients of its humanitarian aid, but for cooperation partners, as shown by the fact that it decided to delegate to the trade unions the task of distributing the food to the miners in Tuzla, rather

182 PA Bachmann: Lieve Snellings, "Report about the women's convoy to Tuzla (26.10.–8.11.1994)", 22.11.1994.

than doing so itself. Not becoming too dominant but giving responsibility to local actors was also a common feature of the structural projects that IWA supported in Tuzla. It is “important that IWA as an organisation works with partners, not servants”, noted a participant at the meeting in Antwerp in 1997, and IWA Switzerland summarised IWA’s approach as follows: “The aim of IWA is lived interpersonal solidarity, respectful, free of paternalism, but with the aspiration that those who are helped contribute themselves to solving the problem.”¹⁸³

As we have seen, establishing such democratic and inclusive cooperation involved many difficulties, first and foremost dealing with the discrepancy between IWA’s own expectations and ideals and those of the local partners. This was a constant struggle, and in general IWA was keen not to impose its ideas, but instead tried to discuss matters with the local partners if it saw something as problematic. This also meant that IWA was consistent in its choice of goals and of the means used to reach those goals: for example, when it wanted to strengthen democratic tendencies within the trade unions in Tuzla, which IWA itself – and many miners – considered too far removed from the base, it sought to do so through democratic and inclusive means, as shown by its approach to the trade union magazine.



IWA meeting in Berlin, January 1996, with Mick Woods (left) and Ulf B Andersson. (Photo: Lone D. Rasmussen)

This leads us to the fourth point: IWA’s approach to solidarity was deeply political, in the sense that the guiding principle of its commitment was the support and defence of a cause it believed in: a multi-ethnic and democratic society opposed to all kinds of nationalism, as represented by the “Tuzla model”.

183 PA Gysin 1997: Minutes of the IWA meeting in Antwerp, October 1997; PA Gysin 1998: “IWA/ Solidarität mit Bosnien und Herzegowina, 5 Jahre Solidarität”, 7.12.1998 [Translated from German by N.M.].

It was difficult to stand for a multi-ethnic society during the war, which aimed to destroy that very notion, and in which nationalist ideas became ever stronger, including among those who defended Bosnia and Herzegovina. Also in the international community, not many believed in and supported the idea of a multi-ethnic BiH, talking instead of old ethnic hatreds and the impossibility of the different communities living together. Tuzla itself was no multi-ethnic paradise, but it was the place with the most active and most successful resistance against the increasingly omnipresent nationalism(s), both during and after the war. Within IWA too, there were doubts about the multi-ethnic reality of Tuzla, and how much its own activities were actually strengthening multi-ethnic ideas. But IWA remained faithful to its support for the forces who defended this idea for Tuzla and for the entire country: not because multi-ethnicity was a perfect reality, but precisely because it was fragile and in danger of being destroyed more and more.

It is also in this sense that IWA's political approach can be seen as non-ideological: this is not the perfect world we would like it to be, but we will support those who want to make it better, through our humanitarian aid and through our structural projects, and in so doing try to shape reality in a positive way. It was also far from self-evident, during the war in BiH, to connect humanitarian aid explicitly with the support of forces representing and defending multi-ethnicity: not only were there many international organisations distributing their aid regardless of political considerations, but there were also humanitarian organisations that mainly targeted their own ethnic/religious groups: Catholic organisations for Catholic recipients, Muslim organisations for Muslim recipients, Orthodox organisations for Orthodox recipients.

Fifthly, IWA was a truly international experience of solidarity, in two regards: On the one hand, individuals and groups were directing their efforts towards a country, Bosnia and Herzegovina, which was not their own, and with which most had not had any contact before the war. On the other hand, the individuals and groups making up IWA came from more than 10 different European countries and succeeded in building up a genuine international network and international campaign which developed common spaces and tools for working together, as well as defining and implementing together their policy, priorities and main activities. They did so through regular international meetings, an international coordination office, two offices on the ground, in Makarska and Tuzla, which implemented the common activities, and a common budget to finance these two offices. At the same time, IWA allowed its constituent country groups a great

degree of autonomy if they wished to undertake alternative or additional activities. This balanced construction is remarkable in itself, and what is even more remarkable is that IWA managed to keep it going and make it productive for so many years, despite all the difficulties encountered.

The international character of IWA did not mean that it was perfectly symmetrical. As we have seen, there were some asymmetries, with Sweden and Denmark being the biggest members and campaigns, but it would nevertheless miss the point to call IWA a mainly Scandinavian organisation. Because despite and in contrast to these asymmetries, IWA developed as a network in which all members could find their place, have their say and contribute to joint activities. However, although IWA was a genuinely international organisation, it did not exploit all the means of action available at an international level. In fact, IWA had its limits as an international campaign: for example, it did not organise simultaneous public actions in its member countries, although it did consider the idea. At the very beginning, in December 1993, it tried to organise a single day of action in all its countries to demand the opening of Tuzla airport by the UN, which would have made it much easier to bring humanitarian aid to Tuzla. But not many IWA members participated in this initiative. The Swedish campaign proposed another attempt a year later: "Last year we had a not very successful action day with the demand to open the Tuzla airport. But the idea was good and we propose now a joint European action day. [...] We suggest 10th December, which is the UN day for human rights. We arrange as many rallies as possible from Lulea in Northern Sweden to Athens in Greece. Hopefully with a poster with all towns involved and some form of statement from IWA as such."¹⁸⁴ It never happened. One of the reasons was again the lack of manpower, and it can certainly be seen as a weakness of IWA as an international organisation that it failed to mount this kind of international campaign.

104 /

Its strength, however, lay in mounting an international campaign of another type, in adhering to a single focal point, namely Tuzla, and in rallying all its energies for one pragmatic aim. The idea was that each member did what it could in its own way in its own country, and they then all converged in Tuzla through the activities that IWA collectively organised and supported there. In other words: what was *Arbetarkonvojen* in Sweden, *Konvoj til Bosnien* in Denmark, *Una penne per la pace* in Italy or IWA Belgium became simply IWA in, through and because

184 ARAB, AK, 18: "Proposal for a European Action Day", by IWA Sweden, August 1994.

of Tuzla. Symbolically and practically, this transformation was best illustrated in IWA's organisation of convoys during the war: the various national groups brought the goods they had collected to Makarska, using their own trucks and other means, and from there the three common IWA trucks took over and transported them on to Tuzla.



IWA's car in Tuzla, 1996, with Helene Bach and Tihomir Babić.
(Photo: Hanspeter Gysin)

The originality of IWA also appears when it is compared with other initiatives active in BiH during and after the war. On the one hand, there were the established and professional aid organisations: while not many of them were present in Tuzla in winter 1993/4, many more opened offices in 1994 and 1995, including some major players such as Norwegian Church Aid, Danish Refugee Council and Handicap International. These "internationals" had their salaries, usually good cars, nice apartments and offices, and often tended to keep to themselves in their spare time. IWA was a bunch of volunteers, and their office and accommodation in Tuzla during the war was a sublet room within an apartment they shared with a Tuzla resident. This was due to the constant lack of money, but was also a choice. IWA preferred to be among and in contact with ordinary people of Tuzla, and also liked the idea of being different from the big organisations. "Our friends and comrades from *SOS Balkanes* have lent the Tuzla office a bicycle. This vehicle is absolutely fantastic for getting around in town and it confirms the proletarian profile of IWA, compared to the big expensive white-painted cars of the bourgeoisie humanitarian agencies. However, the bike is not really the right vehicle for going on 20–30–40–km expeditions to visit the pits of northeastern Bosnia," noted, half-ironically half-seriously, the author of a Tuzla report in 1994.¹⁸⁵

185 ARAB, AK, 16: Tuzla report no. 4, 14.10.1994.

The Tuzla office then acquired a car, first an old Zastava which became legendary but broke down after one year, followed by another car which was not in a much better shape: "At the Tuzla office is also a Swedish registered Volvo station car. Or, actually, the still driving wreck of it."¹⁸⁶

There were also other substantial differences between IWA and professional aid organisations working in Tuzla, as the latter for example usually focused their efforts on the refugees who had come to the city, while IWA's humanitarian aid was mainly destined for the miners and other residents of Tuzla, and conceived as political support for the trade unions and the "Tuzla model".

On the other hand, IWA was also distinctive from other civic initiatives that defined themselves as solidarity organisations. The Helsinki Citizens' Assembly and the Verona Forum were two other initiatives organised in an international framework whose aim was to support anti-nationalist forces in the Balkans. But neither focused exclusively on Tuzla or on trade unions, nor was material aid on the ground one of their main activities.¹⁸⁷ The focus on Tuzla and on trade unions was also, as we have seen, a priority for Workers Aid for Bosnia. But WAB was very much a British organisation, which cooperated with groups in some other countries but without the kind of international and democratic decision-making structure that IWA had built up. The contrast between the two organisations is also apparent from a report by *Secours Ouvrier pour la Bosnie* (SOB) from 1995. In that year, SOB participated with some trucks in a European convoy to Tuzla organised by WAB. But it was a disappointing experience which certainly contributed to SOB's decision to work much more with IWA: "Prior to departure, SOB had informed the British at WAB of the need for the convoy to operate in a collective and democratic manner, and for the responsible persons appointed in each country to form a joint leadership team. Unfortunately, this need does not really seem to have been understood by the leaders of the British convoy [...]. Apart from a meeting in Tuzla, there was no general assembly of the participants either. In fact, throughout the convoy, and especially in Tuzla, the different national delegations [...] tended to operate on their own."¹⁸⁸ In 1998, Mick Woods self-critically described the

186 PA Woods, 4: Tuzla report 29.4.1996.

187 For more information about HCA and the Verona Forum, see Schweitzer 2009, 131–3.

188 Moch-David Archives: *Secours Ouvrier pour la Bosnie*, "Juillet/août 1995 – Convoi syndical européen et délégation à Tuzla", September 1995, p. 4 [Translated from French by N.M.].

split between IWA and WAB as a failure of the political left.¹⁸⁹ Indeed, the parallel existence of both initiatives led to a duplication of similar efforts and constituted a loss of energy and efficiency. But at the same time, given the very different organisational cultures, it is understandable that a reunification of the two initiatives never took place.

To continue with the comparison, other organisations went further than IWA with their political demands, and were also more vocal and more visible in their commitment in the public sphere. In Germany, for example, the *Gesellschaft für bedrohte Völker* (Society for Threatened Peoples) very explicitly and repeatedly asked the international community either to lift the arms embargo or to make a military intervention in BiH. It also published near-daily press releases, organised regular press conferences, demonstrations and other activities designed to alert the public to the crimes being committed in BiH. As we have seen, IWA was more discreet: it did not explicitly take a stance on the question of military intervention, did not openly criticise the UN, did not speak out in any major English-, French- or German-speaking media, and did not organise any international conference or other big joint public event during its existence. This was partly due to IWA's international structure and its informal character. As noted above, bringing together groups from so many different countries, with many different sensitivities, made it difficult to formulate strong positions on controversial topics. Furthermore, at a time when a European public space was still in a very rudimentary state, it was difficult to be heard internationally, beyond the different individual countries. Another reason was that, as an informal network relying mainly on volunteers, IWA's resources and means were limited. And obviously conferences and press releases were not a priority for IWA, which preferred to engage in very concrete and pragmatic activities on the ground in order to put its ideas into practice.

One conclusion that can be drawn from all the of the above is the following: Through its activities in and for Bosnia and Herzegovina, IWA not only defended and supported the principles of democracy, multi-ethnicity and international solidarity, it also embodied these principles – by being itself an international and multi-ethnic group, and by practising democracy and solidarity on a daily basis among its own members and with its cooperation partners in Tuzla. Such a high accordance between ideals and practice played a big part in making IWA a cred-

189 Woods 1998b.

ible organisation. As we have seen, trying to match ideals and practices involved a lot of discussion and struggles, such as how to deal with the trade unions and other local partners, with the UN, with the EU, with *Herceg-Bosna* or with the military question. But it was precisely these struggles and discussions which allowed it to then find a way to deal with these questions and to try to reconcile ideals and practices as much as possible.

IWA was a heterogeneous group, not everybody was there for the same reasons and with the same aims, and not everybody liked each other. But its activists succeeded in developing a common ground which also allowed them to deal with challenges and disagreements in a constructive way. Nonetheless, we should not romanticise or idealise IWA. For those who were involved, it was a very demanding experience. In June 1994, Ulrik Kohl wrote in the following terms about his work in Makarska: "Personally, my feelings about the teamwork until now have been mixed; on one hand a lot of joy and pride over working in a truly international (multi-ethnic) atmosphere, where everybody is volunteers dedicated to concrete solidarity work. Most unfortunately, on the other hand, the atmosphere has also contained a certain amount of unnecessary stress, frustrations and drinking."¹⁹⁰ And Agneta Falck from *Arbetarkonvojen*, who worked in Tuzla for several months during the war, stated in 1995: "The longer the war goes on, the harder it will be to recreate a multi-ethnic society in Bosnia. It makes me pessimistic. On the other hand, I am encouraged by all the Bosnians who do not feel hatred, despite what they have been exposed to. And it reinforces my belief that our work for the multi-ethnic community is both important and right."¹⁹¹ Both quotes illustrate that working with IWA was an experience entailing many contradictory feelings, impressions and reflections. But also that being part of IWA was perceived and lived as a meaningful experience, which is certainly also one main explanation why many people remained active in IWA over several years.

It is challenging to define IWA in simple terms, not least because simple definitions risk overlooking its multi-layered nature. Certainly, it would be a misunderstanding to call IWA a trade union organisation. IWA was an organisation that included trade unionists (among others), and also enjoyed the partial support of trade unions. But it was never a trade union organisation and actually never wanted to become one. IWA aimed to do something different, something

190 PA Bachmann: "Report from Ulrik S.K. at IWA logistics in Split / Makarska", 23.6.1994, for IWA delegate meeting in Brescia, 25-6.6.94.

191 Andersson 1996, 190 [Translated from Swedish by N.M].

that went beyond traditional trade union work. This was both its weakness and its strength. IWA did not necessarily have a clear picture of where the road it was travelling on would end up. But this is also what Mick Woods and others said very early on: IWA is an experiment.¹⁹² Not a theoretical experiment, but a very practical one. IWA invented something on the spot, in a dramatic period of the history of Bosnia and Herzegovina and of Europe. Not everything went well – IWA members are the first to admit that – and there were shortcomings and failures, but isn't that inherent to experiments? It was an experiment in how to build solidarity with workers and other groups, and also how to build an international organisation and an international campaign. And as an experiment it developed into a remarkable experience of international grassroots solidarity and activism, in a rare combination of idealism and pragmatism, of structure and informality, of planning and flexibility. IWA may have been more efficient and have lasted longer if it had become a professional organisation with employees and salaries, but this would have meant a radical change in its approach and would also have entailed the risk of becoming a bureaucracy, which was a nightmarish thought for many IWA members. As they did not want to be or to become like other organisations, it is also rather fitting that, after a certain number of years, IWA should have ceased to exist.

¹⁹² See for example the documentation part, doc. 14.

6

IWA'S LEGACY



BHSTRING.NET

Članovi organizacije "International Workers Aid-IWA" Humanitarci koji su pomagali u ratu posjetili Tuzlu

Article in the online portal "Tuzlarije" about the meeting for the 25 years anniversary of IWA in Tuzla in May 2018, group photo with former IWA members and their friends from Tuzla. The title reads: Members of "International Workers Aid-IWA", humanitarians who helped in the war, visited Tuzla.

In 2017, several former IWA activists decided to organise a reunion the following year to mark the 25th anniversary of IWA's creation, not in order to revive the organisation but simply to meet up again, as many had lost contact with each other. Naturally, it seemed that there was only one place where such a meeting could take place – Tuzla. Invitations were sent out to the former comrades, now called "IWA veterans". Some did not respond, others welcomed the initiative but said that they could not attend for professional or other reasons, but around 20 of them did make it to Tuzla. Of course, as in the old days for the international meetings, they were expected to organise and pay for their own travel. Over two days in May 2018, the former IWA activists and several of their friends and former colleagues in Tuzla met up, exchanged memories, and laid a wreath to honour the 71 victims killed in the city centre by a shell on 25 May 1995. During the official programme, they discussed various topics, talking a little about their former experiences and then a lot about current sociopolitical challenges in BiH.¹⁹³

The question of IWA's legacy was not the main topic of the reunion, but the programme did include a speech by Viktorija Jurić Mousa, the daughter of one of the trade union members from Tuzla who had worked with IWA in the 1990s. As a teenager, she had taken part in some of IWA's youth activities. In her short speech, she explained how much the presence of IWA had meant to her and had also contributed to her personal development: living in Germany for the past 20 years and working with refugees, she explained how much the young foreigners who had come to Tuzla, of their own volition, had inspired her, and said she was convinced that this experience had influenced her professional choices in working with and supporting refugees.¹⁹⁴

Also, when speaking with former IWA activists, one can see clearly how important and formative the IWA years were for them, especially as for many it was their first experience of BiH and the Balkans, and also their first international sociopolitical engagement in a war zone. As such, they consider it a crucial step in their personal and sometimes also professional development, not always an easy one and not necessarily associated with only positive memories. But despite or even because of the difficulties, it made a big impact on many. Back in 1998, to mark IWA's five-year

193 For the 25-year anniversary event, see the Facebook page www.facebook.com/InternationalWorkersAid25years and a short article in BCS: <http://bhstring.net/tuzlauslikama/tuzlarije/viewnewnews.php?id=81403&fbclid=IwAR33z7oK6b3Xe0QBA6mTvKzInFxCEYz0F81mTNDJYf73VUYOqSgMEsNY3c>.

194 Interview by N.M. with Viktorija Jurić Mousa, 25.11.2020. For her experiences with IWA during the war, see also documentation part, doc. 38.

anniversary, Micks Woods wrote: “On a personal note I would say that my activities in IWA were the most satisfying and meaningful in over 20 years of intense political activity,” adding: “I am glad I was there: I believe that those who were involved in the war have been changed for ever.”¹⁹⁵

That the impact was often immediate, in terms of shaking up people’s political beliefs for example, is also apparent from this exchange with Jenny Mees, which Ulf B Andersson includes in the book he published in 1996: “In the spring of 1994, Jenny left the Fourth International and I ask how Bosnia affected her politically. ‘It changed me a lot. I have become much more tolerant. It’s hard to see things like good and evil, black or white. Everything is so much more complicated.’ [...] ‘Do you still consider yourself a socialist?’ ‘I think so,’ Jenny says after a long hesitation. ‘Although it depends on what you put into the concept [...]. It was hard to come back and meet those who always know best. I had been to Tuzla, but in Belgium people seemed to have already figured out what they would think without having to discuss or try to understand [...]’.”¹⁹⁶

Additionally, many bonds and friendships were built up at this time, among IWA members and between them and their cooperation partners in Tuzla, some of which have lasted to this day. Aside from the personal development and human relations aspects, the more material impacts of some of the projects implemented or initiated by IWA are still being felt: several current school buildings in Tuzla and other parts of BiH were rebuilt with the help of Support Tuzla’s Schools (STS), and the Solidarity House in Lipnica, which was opened by Ship to Bosnia in 1999, is still operating. Ship to Bosnia later inspired the international Ship to Gaza initiative, launched in 2010, also mainly by Swedish activists.¹⁹⁷ STS, under the name STS International Solidarity, created an entire development programme in and for Somalia and continues to be active there.¹⁹⁸ One striking example of the personal and organisational impact of these years is the group formed by Yannick du Pont and other students in Amsterdam, which was involved in several IWA activities in 1994 and discovered Tuzla through IWA. This student group developed international programmes at the University of Tuzla which are still going today, and also

195 IWA Bulletin, no. 7, November 1998, 9.

196 Andersson 1996, 171–2.

197 See War Resisters’ International: <https://wri-irg.org/en/story/2011/freedom-flotilla-solidarity-words-action>.

198 See its website <https://stsint.org>.

became a major Dutch development NGO, which is currently operating in several post-conflict areas, with Yannick du Pont as its CEO.¹⁹⁹ So while IWA itself no longer exists, several of its spin-off projects are still active today.

However, it would be short-sighted to address the question of legacy by looking only at the long-term or visible effects. Does something have value only if it leaves a visible trace? It is true that most of IWA's projects did not last for a long time, and even its most important initiatives, the convoys, the trade union magazine and the women's centre, existed only for a few years. But that is not the point. The point is that they did exist for those years, and that during that time they had an immediate impact. On the one hand, IWA mobilised hundreds of people all across Europe who became IWA activists, and thousands more who supported them with goods, money and other activities. As such, IWA helped many in Europe to become more interested in BiH and often to step out of their passivity in order to become actively engaged. The immediate impact is also apparent in various ripple effects generated by IWA activities, which put even more people in touch with the realities of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The women's convoy to Tuzla in November 1994, for example, led to the creation of a play involving Bosnian refugees living in Belgium, as recalled by Lieve Snellings who participated in the convoy: "This theatre project came out of our Tuzla convoy. Christiana Lambrinidis, a Greek play writer, was also there, and she came afterwards to Belgium to conduct a workshop on creative writing. I searched for women from former Yugoslavia in exile in Belgium, and together they produced the play 'Women of Tuzla, Sarajevo, and Mostar: a mythography of courage' that was performed in the Bourla Theatre in Antwerp and in Athens."²⁰⁰

On the other hand, IWA's work also encompassed a significant number of people in Tuzla who were living in very difficult circumstances: hundreds of them as cooperation partners for common activities, and thousands as recipients of aid and/or as participants in implemented projects. As for the material aid brought by IWA to Tuzla, it was not a great deal in quantitative terms, when compared with the amounts brought by professional organisations. But this material assistance too should not be underestimated, especially because IWA was one of the few organisations working with trade unions and providing food parcels for miners and their families. In early summer 1994, the Coal Miners' Trade Union drew up a balance sheet of the aid it

199 Interview by N.M. with Yannick du Pont, 15.12.2020. See also the SPARK website: <https://spark.ngo/what-sparked-us-looking-back-over-25-years> and <https://spark.ngo/rebels-with-a-cause-from-youth-group-to-non-profit>.

200 Email from Lieve Snellings to N.M., 18.2.2021.

had received from IWA up to then, compared with the total amount provided by all organisations (mainly Workers Aid for Bosnia and *Ayuda Obrera*): “95 tonnes of flour (out of a total of 115 provided by solidarity associations); 3,900 litres of oil (total: 17,000); 15 tonnes of sugar (total: 26 tonnes); 8 tonnes of rice (total: 11 tonnes); 5 tonnes of beans (total: 10 tonnes); 1,800 cans (total: 4,500); 1.6 tonnes of pasta (total: 2.9 tonnes); 2.5 tonnes of lentils (total: 2.5 tonnes); 910 packets of yeast (total: 910); 5.7 tonnes of miscellaneous food (total: 5.7 tonnes).”²⁰¹ This shows that more than two thirds of the aid received at this time came directly from IWA, amounting to around 135 tonnes of food. There are no similar comparative statistics for the later period, but between summer 1994 and the end of the war IWA transported over 200 tonnes of additional goods to Tuzla. This was not enough to provide 12,000 miners with food throughout the war, by a long way. But it was a contribution, and for each individual and family who received a parcel containing 4 kg of flour, 1 litre of oil, 2 kg of sugar and sometimes also pasta and other food, even if it was just once a month, at that time it was something very tangible and useful which made life a bit easier for several days.



Awards from trade unions and other organisations in Tuzla for IWA.
(Photo: Hanspeter Gysin, 1995)

201 Moch-David Archives: IWA France leaflet *Avec Tuzla* [November 1995].

In addition to the food parcels, there was the other material that IWA collected and donated, in particular the more than 20,000 women's parcels distributed in Tuzla in 1995. Also, the shoes (over 1,000 pairs) which were produced and distributed to women and children in Tuzla in 1996, the hundreds of weekly milk bottles for pupils of a school in Tuzla in spring 1996, or the equipment which was brought to different schools. Behind all these abstract numbers, there were always individuals or families benefiting from very concrete donations. And beyond the material aid, there were also the other activities implemented and supported by IWA, most notably the *IWA Saliniana* women's centre, which for several years provided a space for hundreds of women to organise and educate themselves, and the trade union magazine *Sindikalna Informacija* (later *Rudar*) with its 7,000 monthly copies. Here too, we should consider not only the numbers of members, visitors or printed copies. Among other things, both initiatives were spaces that helped to provide meaning and direction for the individuals concerned and that connected people: among themselves, women with other women, miners with other miners and with the trade unions, and both also with the outside world, through the presence of IWA, which provided both material and moral support to the projects.²⁰²

116 /

As well as the material and quantitative value, it is therefore also the moral and qualitative value linked to IWA's activities that needs to be emphasised. There is the fact that IWA's convoy in November 1993 was the first to Tuzla destined for the trade unions and miners since the beginning of the war, and the first civilian convoy at all to come to Tuzla in several months, making it through despite the blockade from all sides that year. And IWA came back, again and again, and also established a direct presence in the city. "Jenny, if you come back with concrete help after this conversation, you would indeed be the first ones to have done so," representatives of the Tuzla Women's Association told Jenny Mees when they first met in November 1993.²⁰³ The fact that foreigners came, against all odds and despite all the dangers, was indeed a morale boost and a sign that Tuzla was not forgotten. Relations between IWA and the local partners were not always easy, and why should it be otherwise given the nature of human interactions, especially

202 Both *IWA Saliniana* and *Sindikalna Informacija/Rudar* merit studies of their own, to analyse more precisely their sociopolitical implications and significance. For example, the minutes of the IWA meeting in Malmö in June 1998 (PA Gysin 1998) mention that "*Rudar* is considered a reason why the membership of the union is increasing". This is difficult to verify, but it is worth noting that this was at least considered to be one of its effects.

203 Quoted in the leaflet *Avec Tuzla*, 5 mars 1994, published by IWA France (PA Comité Mir Sada). See also the documentation part, doc. 35.

in highly stressful situations such as a war in which the inhabitants of Tuzla fought for survival and faced a constant struggle with daily problems. But in the end, and all things considered, for many in Tuzla who were caught up in an oppressive and threatening reality, the presence of committed international volunteers and the contact with them provided “a sense of hope and of connection [...]. They represented relief – emotional, material, psychological relief.”²⁰⁴ As such, the presence and the activities of IWA should also be seen as a contribution to building the resilience of those who lived in Tuzla during the war.

“The last idealists” is how a Swedish newspaper described the IWA activists in 1994.²⁰⁵ An idealist can be defined as “someone who believes that very good things can be achieved, often when this does not seem likely to others”.²⁰⁶ Most of those involved with IWA were not naive; they were, indeed, rather down to earth and aware of the limits of their action. But they believed that it would make sense to do something. And while many others did nothing, they not only took action but did so in a highly original, inventive way, creating this remarkable experience in direct, human, pragmatic and political solidarity. For anyone asking themselves today how we can practise solidarity with others, IWA is worth looking at: not as a model to be copied and pasted, not in an uncritical way, not as the only solidarity story from the 1990s, but as an extraordinary story nonetheless. IWA can unquestionably provide inspiration for today, not least because of the way it dealt with all the challenges that arose in the course of its activities. It is probably this that constitutes its most important – and enduring – legacy.

204 Interview by N.M. with Damir Arsenijević, 10.12.2020. Arsenijević worked as an interpreter for *Ayuda Obrera* in Tuzla in summer 1995 and was in regular contact with several staff from the IWA office there.

205 *Aftonbladet* 20.11.1994, quoted in Andersson 1996, 158

206 Definition by Cambridge Dictionary Online: <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/idealist>.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

A. SOURCES

1. ARCHIVES

PUBLIC ARCHIVES

Arbetarrörelsens arkiv och bibliotek (ARAB) (Swedish Labour Movement's Archives and Library), Stockholm: *Arbetarkonvojen* Archives, Ref. No. 3264, 24 volumes, 1993–2000 (abbreviation in references: ARAB, AK).

Arbejdermuseet Bibliotek og Arkiv (ABA) (Workers Museum Library and Archive), Copenhagen: *Konvoj til Bosnien*/International Workers' Aid Archives, 11 volumes, 1993–1998 (ABA, KtB).

Archives La Contemporaine, Paris: Arlette Moch-David Archives, 176, box 4: Ex-Yugoslavia 1995 (Moch-David Archives).

PRIVATE ARCHIVES

Mick Woods: IWA Archives, 1993–1997 (PA Woods).

Søren Søndergaard: IWA Archives, 1997–1999 (PA Søndergaard).

118 / Hanspeter Gysin: IWA Archives, 1994–2000 (PA Gysin).

Franziska Bachmann: IWA Archives, 1994–1997 (PA Bachmann).

Ilario Salucci: *Una penna per la pace* Archives, 1993–1996 (PA Salucci).

Viktorija Jurić Mousa: *Diary*, 1994–1995 (PA Jurić Mousa).

Comité Bosnie Mir Sada (Lyon, France): *Bosnia Archives*, 1993–1999 (PA Mir Sada).

SPARK, Amsterdam: "Youth Solidarity with former Yugoslavia" Archives, 1994–1996 (SPARK Archives).

2. NEWSPAPERS AND NEWSLETTERS

NEWSLETTERS

International Workers Aid – Bulletin in defence of democratic rights, solidarity and multiethnicity in the Balkans, 1996–1998.

Samen met / avec Tuzla – Nieuwsbrief, 1994.

Bolletino dell' Associazione Una penna per la pace, 1994.

Nieuwsbrief Vakbondsleden voor Bosnie/International Workers Aid, 1994.

Arbetarkonvojens nyhetsbrev, 1993–2000.

Nyhedsbrev Konvoj til Bosnien, 1994–1996.

Sretno ! Nyhedsbrev fra Støt Tuzlas Skoler, 1997–1999.

NEWSPAPERS

Tuzla List, 1993–1993.

Front Slobode, 1993–1995.

Socialist Outlook, 1993–1995.

3. BOOKS AND ARTICLES

Altumbabić, Mevlida-Lala (2003), *U ime istine – In the Name of the Truth*, Tuzla.

Andersson, Ulf B (1996), *Tuzla – förnuftets oas. Bosnien mellan krig och fred*, Stockholm, Federativs.

Bachmann, Franziska (1995), "Auf verlorenem Posten? International Workers Aid kämpft gegen Nationalismus", *Stadtrat* no. 27, June 1995.

Dixon, Norm (1994), "European trade unionists aid Bosnia", *Green Left Weekly*, Issue 164, 26 October 1994: www.greenleft.org.au/content/european-trade-unionists-aid-bosnia (accessed 24 April 2021).

IWA – International Workers Aid: Facebook page for the 25th anniversary in Tuzla 2018: www.facebook.com/InternationalWorkersAid25years (accessed 24 April 2021).

Kanzleiter, Boris (1997), "In Tuzla haben wir uns immer gegenseitig geholfen", *INKOTA-Brief* 3/97, 17–18.

[Moberg], Eva X (1994), "Syndicalists truck flour directly to Bosnia unions", Industrial Worker newspaper, Nov.–Dec.1994: www.spunk.org/texts/groups/iww/sp000759.txt (accessed 24 April 2021).

Obradovic, Stojan (1994), "Tuzla: The Last Oasis", *Uncaptive Minds* 7 (Fall/Winter 1994).

Remembering Mick Woods – preserving the IWA archive, 16.12.2018: <https://socialistresistance.org/remembering-mick-woods-preserving-the-iwa-archive/13196>
https://internationalviewpoint.org/IMG/pdf/a-last-farewell-to-mick-woods_a5695.pdf
(accessed 24 April 2021).

Ryan, Geoff (ed.) (1994), *Bosnia 1994: Armageddon in Europe. Why socialist support multi-ethnic Bosnia against Serbia's war*, London: Socialist Outlook.

Ryan, Geoff / Woodford, Sue (2018), "Mick Woods (28/12/1954 – 19/7/2018) Comrade, Fighter, Friend", 5.9.2018: <https://socialistresistance.org/mick-woods-28-12-1954-19-7-2018-comrade-fighter-friend/13120> (accessed 24 April 2021).

Woods, Mick (1994), "International Workers Aid: Six months of solidarity", in: Ryan (ed.), *Bosnia 1994: Armageddon in Europe*.

Woods, Mick (1998a), "Daddy, what did you do during the Bosnian war?", *IWA – Bulletin* 7, Nov. 1998, 6–9.

120 /

Woods, Mick (1998b), "Bosnia – 5 years of International Workers Aid: A balance sheet of solidarity", *Socialist Outlook*, www.labournet.net/so/20bosnia.html (accessed 24 April 2021).

Workers Aid for Bosnia (1999), *Taking sides against ethnic cleansing in Bosnia. The story of the Workers Aid convoys*, Leeds.

4. PHOTOS AND VIDEOS

Personal photo archives of former IWA-members: Kristian Buus / Franziska Bachmann / Agneta Falck / Gölin Forsberg / Hanspeter Gysin / Jorge Lattof / Jenny Mees / Peter Öholm / Lone Degn Rasmussen / Thomas Proctor / Michel Wenzer / Tim Wise

Stephenson, Bill, Bosnia and Herzegovina December 1993 [Photos taken for Oxfam in Tuzla in December 1993] <https://billstephenson.co.uk/social-documentary/bosnia-and-herzegovina-december-1993>

From Timex to Tuzla – The story of International Workers Aid’s convoy to Bosnia 1993, documentary film by Tim Wise, IWA, 1994.

5. INTERVIEWS

With former IWA members: Franziska Bachmann, Berlin, 3.8.2019; Yannick du Pont, via Skype, 30.8.2019 and 9.12.2020; Ulf B Andersson and Andreas Thomsen, Berlin, 31.10.2019; Hanspeter Gysin, Basel, 29.8.2020; Ulrik Kohl, Trpanj, 23.9.2020 and via Skype 13.12.2020; Theo Mewis, via Skype, 30.11.2020; Gölin Forsberg, via Skype, 7.12.2020; Agneta Falck, via Skype, 9.2.2021; Xavier Rousselin, via Skype, 19.2.2021; Micher Wenzer, via Skype, 13.3.2021.

With people who worked with IWA: Viktorija Jurić Mousa, via Skype, 9.11.2020; Lejla Jašarević Majdančić, Tuzla, 12.11.2020; Viktor Jurić, Tuzla, 13.11.2020; Selim Bešlagić, Tuzla, 14.11.2020; Damir Arsenijević, via Skype, 1.12.2020; Robert Mesić, via Skype, 8.12.2020; Lieve Snellings, via Skype, 19.2.2021.

B. SECONDARY LITERATURE

Abram, Marco (2014), "I territori italiani nella mobilitazione civile per la ex-Jugoslavia: i caratteri dell'esperienza trentina", *Archivio Trentino. Rivista interdisciplinare di studi sull'età moderna e contemporanea*, 273–297.

Abram, Marco / Bona, Marzia (2016), ""Sarajevo. Provaci tu, cittadino del mondo". L'esperienza transnazionale dei volontari italiani nella mobilitazione di solidarietà in ex Jugoslavia", *Italia Contemporanea*, 280/2016, 66–93.

Armakolas, Ioannis (2011), "The 'Paradox' of Tuzla City: Explaining Non-nationalist Local Politics during the Bosnian War", *Europe-Asia Studies*, vol. 63, no. 2 (March 2011), 229–261.

Armakolas, Ioannis (2017), *Politika i društvo u Tuzli od 1992. do 1995. Političko natjecanje i građanska alternativa*, Sarajevo, Udruženje za modernu historiju.

Arsenijević, Damir (ed.) (2014), *Unbriable Bosnia: the fight for the commons*, Baden-Baden, Nomos.

Baker, Catherine (2015), *The Yugoslav Wars of the 1990s*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Bennett, Christopher (2016), *Bosnia's Paralysed Peace*, Hurst.

122 /

Berger, Stefan / Nehring, Holger (eds.) (2017), *The History of Social Movements in Global Perspective. A Survey*, Palgrave Macmillan.

Bešlagić, Selim (1998), *Tuzla, the City and its Man (Addresses, Speeches, Interviews, Prizes)*, ed. by Fatmir Alispahić, DJL "Non plus ultra", Tuzla.

Bude, Heinz (2019), *Solidarität: Die Zukunft einer großen Idee*, Hanser.

Burg, Steven L. / Shoup, Paul S. (1999), *The War in Bosnia-Herzegovina: Ethnic Conflict and International Intervention*, New York, M.E. Sharpe.

Calori, Anna (2015), "Salt and Socialism: A Deconstruction of Tuzla's Political Identity in the Context of the Bosnian Conflict", *Ethnopolitics Papers*, 35, May 2015: www.psa.ac.uk/sites/default/files/page-files/Calori_EP_No35.pdf (accessed 24 April 2021).

Christiaens, Kim / Goddeeris, Idesbald / Rodríguez García / Magaly (eds.) (2014), *European Solidarity with Chile, 1970s – 1980s*, Peter Lang.

Goddeeris, Idesbald (2010), *Solidarity with Solidarity: Western European trade unions and the Polish crisis, 1980–1982*, Lexington Books.

Lahusen, Christian / Zschache, Ulrike / Kousis, Maria (eds.) (2021), *Transnational Solidarity in Times of Crises. Citizen Organisations and Collective Learning in Europe*, Palgrave MacMillan.

Lahusen, Christian / Grasso, Maria T. (eds.) (2018), *Solidarity in Europe. Citizens' Responses in Times of Crisis*, Palgrave Macmillan.

MacQueen, Norrie (2011), *Humanitarian Intervention and the United Nations*, Edinburgh University Press.

Madelain, Anne (2019), *L'expérience française des Balkans (1989–1999)*, Tours, Presses universitaires François Rabelais.

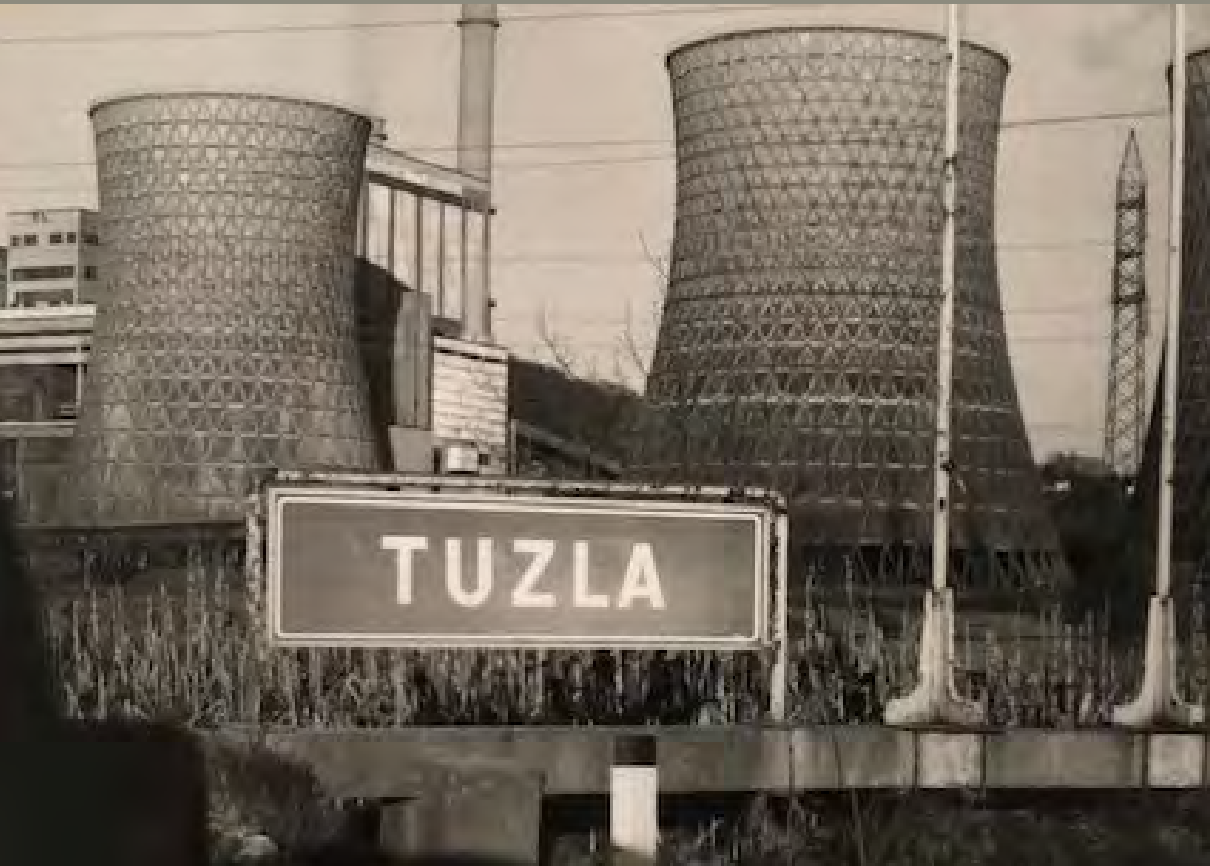
Moll, Nicolas (2019), " 'Pour une Europe solidaire': Se mobiliser contre la guerre en Bosnie-Herzégovine, 25 ans plus tard", *La Revue Nouvelle*, n°5.

Moll, Nicolas (2021), " 'Sarajevo calls every man, woman and child!' Organizing international solidarity between besieged Sarajevo and the outside world, 1992–1995", *Zbornik radova Historijskog Muzeja BiH* 14. [forthcoming]

Schweitzer, Christine (2009), *Strategies of Intervention in Protracted Violent Conflicts by Civil Society Actors. The Example of Interventions in the Violent Conflicts in the Area of Former Yugoslavia, 1990–2002*, PhD thesis, Coventry University.

Weiss, Joshua N. (2002), "Tuzla, The Third Side, and the Bosnian War", in: Weiss, J., Ed. *When Spider Webs Unite: Five Case Studies of the Third Side in Action*. Cambridge, MA: Program on Negotiation Books.

ANNEXES



The thermal power station in Tuzla, photo taken by Peter Öholm when entering the town with a IWA convoy in 1994.

ANNEX 1: CHRONOLOGY

This chronology lists the main events and activities related to the history of IWA between 1993 and 2000. In addition, the differently coloured texts refer to more general events that are important for a better understanding of the history of Tuzla and of Bosnia and Herzegovina at this time and therefore of the context in which IWA was operating.

1990

November 1990: At the first multi-party elections in the Socialist Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Tuzla is the only bigger town won by parties not organised along ethnonational lines: the Alliance of Reformists (SRSJ), in coalition with the Social Democrats (former League of Communists). Selim Bešliagić from the Alliance of Reformists becomes mayor of Tuzla.

1992

March 1992: The Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina gains independence.

April 1992: Beginning of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina and of the siege of Sarajevo. During the war, Tuzla is defended by the 2nd Corps of the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina. More than 60,000 refugees from eastern Bosnia settle in Tuzla during 1992, displaced by or fleeing from the Army of *Republika Srpska*.

June 1992: Start of the UNPROFOR (United Nations Protection Force) mandate in Bosnia and Herzegovina, mainly for humanitarian purposes. One of its main tasks becomes (from September 1992 on) to enable and escort humanitarian aid operations led by UNHCR and humanitarian aid organisations.

1993

Spring 1993: Beginning of the “war in the war” between the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Croatian Defence Council (HVO). The city and region of Tuzla are now isolated from the rest of the territory controlled by the government and the Army of BiH, with the territories in its south controlled by the HVO and those in the north, east and west by the VRS.

April–May 1993: Srebrenica, Bihać, Sarajevo, Goražde, Žepa and Tuzla are declared UN “safe areas”. The UNPROFOR deployed in Tuzla is a combined force of 1,246 Danish, Norwegian and Swedish troops (NORDBAT 2).

June 1993: Workers Aid for Bosnia (WAB) established in London.

Summer 1993: Preparations for a Tuzla convoy are made by WAB in the UK and other groups in European countries that join the initiative, some of which form into associations, including *Konvoj til Bosnien* in Denmark (August) and *Arbetarkonvojen* in Sweden (September). Around fifteen trucks from the UK and other European countries gather in Croatia in September. Following an unsuccessful attempt to drive to Tuzla through Županja, the trucks return to Zagreb. Most discharge their loads, but three decide to try to reach Tuzla via Split.

30–31 October 1993: National conference of British Workers Aid for Bosnia, followed the next day by a conference of the international representatives of IWA, both in Manchester. At the latter meeting, the majority of the delegates decide to split from WAB and continue their own campaign.

8 November 1993: Having left Split in Croatia on 4 November, the three IWA lorries arrive in Tuzla.

November–December 1993: Opening of an IWA office in Zagreb.

11–12 December 1993: 2nd international IWA meeting in Copenhagen (Denmark).

11 December 1993: “Open Tuzla Airport Now” Europe-wide day of action in several cities in Europe, organised by IWA groups.

1994

26–27 February 1994: 3rd international IWA meeting in Amsterdam (Netherlands).

18 March 1994: Signing of the Washington Agreement which officially ends the war between the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the HVO and creates the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

March 1994: An IWA office opens in Split, Croatia, and moves to Makarska one month later.

March 1994: The UN officially takes control of Tuzla airport, but it remains closed, so that humanitarian aid continues to reach Tuzla only by road.

10 April 1994: 4th international IWA meeting in Makarska (Croatia).

March–April 1994: Spring campaign organised by IWA in which goods from various European countries are driven to Makarska. From Makarska, IWA organises 30 convoys between April 1994 and February 1996, mainly to Tuzla.

24–26 June 1994: 5th international IWA meeting in Brescia (Italy).

September 1994: Opening of an IWA office in Tuzla.

10–11 September 1994: 6th international IWA meeting in Stockholm (Sweden).

128 /

Autumn 1994: IWA campaign for the “convoy of unity”. The goods are transported from Makarska to Tuzla in November. Organisation of a women’s convoy.

November 1994: IWA delegates attend two international conferences in Tuzla: “Is Europe possible without multiculturalism?”, organised by the Verona Forum, Forum of Tuzla Citizens and Circle 99, and then “Local Democracy” organised by the Helsinki Citizens’ Assembly.

November 1994: Launch of the Ship to Bosnia project.

23–24 November 1994: An IWA convoy leaves Tuzla for Sarajevo carrying coal. Accident on Mount Igman, after which the cargo is looted by soldiers of the Army of BiH. IWA loses two of its trucks.

3–4 December 94: 7th international IWA meeting in Munich (Germany).

1995

January 1995: The first convoy carrying IWA's women's parcels arrives in Tuzla.

4–5 March 1995: 8th international IWA meeting in Aalbeke (Belgium).

1 May 1995: IWA delegation attends the first of May meeting organised in Tuzla by the Bosnian Trade Union Federation, including a speech by IWA member Emina Bitic.

25 May 1995: Kapija massacre – a grenade fired by the Army of *Republika Srpska* kills 71 people on Tuzla's central square.

17–18 June 1995: 9th international IWA meeting in Aarhus (Denmark).

11 July 1995: Fall of Srebrenica – in the following days, over 8,000 Muslim men are massacred by the Army of RS and more than 30,000 refugees from Srebrenica arrive in Tuzla.

August 1995: Offensive by the Croatian army in Krajina (Croatia), and by the Army of BiH and the HVO in north-western Bosnia. One of the consequences is that the siege of the north-western town of Bihać is broken.

30 August–20 September 1995: NATO's Operation Deliberate Force, with large-scale bombing and air strikes on Army of *Republika Srpska* targets.

September 1995: One IWA convoy arrives in Sarajevo and another in Bihać.

 129

29 September – 1 October 1995: 10th international IWA meeting in Vienna (Austria).

November–December 1995: Implementation of the Ship to Bosnia project, in cooperation with IWA.

21 November 1995: Dayton Peace Agreement signed at the US airbase in Dayton, Ohio (USA).

December 1995: Publication of the first issue of the magazine *Sindikalna Informacija* (Trade Union Information), edited by the Tuzla trade union with the support of IWA. A further 23 issues are published until February 1998, and then seven more issues in 1998 under the name *Rudar* (Miner).

1996

13–14 January 1996: 11th international IWA meeting in Berlin (Germany).

January 1996: The office and warehouse in Makarska are closed, leaving the office in Tuzla as the only IWA office in the region. With the remaining goods, two last convoys are organised from Makarska, one to the Kreka Union in Tuzla, and one to Sarajevo.

18–19 May 1996: 12th international IWA meeting in Amsterdam (Netherlands).

July 1996: International IWA coordination office moves from Stockholm to Copenhagen.

July 1996: Publication of the first issue of *International Workers Aid – Bulletin* in defence of democratic rights, solidarity and multiethnicity in the Balkans. A total of seven issues are published until November 1998.

August–September 1996: Publication of the magazine *Pogled Žene* (Woman's View) with the support of IWA.

21 September 1996: General elections in BiH for parliament and presidency. Overall victory of the ethnonational parties SDA (Bosniaks), HDZ (Croats) and SDS (Serbs).

130 /

2–3 November 1996: 13th international IWA meeting in Copenhagen (Denmark).

1997

January 1997: Opening of the *IWA Saliniana* women's centre in Tuzla, with the cooperation and support of IWA.

22–23 February 1997: 14th international IWA meeting in Paris (France).

28–29 June 1997: 15th international IWA meeting in Berlin (Germany).

July 1997: The international IWA coordination office moves back from Copenhagen to Stockholm.

September 1997: First municipal elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina since the war. In Tuzla, the elections are won by the non-nationalist coalition Joint List-SDP led by mayor Selim Bešliagić.

24–25 October 1997: 16th international IWA meeting in Antwerp (Belgium).

1998

28–29 March 1998: 17th international IWA meeting in Basel (Switzerland).

27–28 June 1998: 18th international IWA meeting in Malmö (Sweden).

Autumn 1998: Launch of the initiative “International solidarity with Mitrovica” by Support Tuzla’s Schools (STS) and IWA, with the aim of organising a common convoy from Tuzla to Mitrovica.

13 November 1998: 19th international IWA meeting in Tuzla (BiH), coinciding with IWA’s five-year anniversary.

1999

March–July 1999: NATO air strike campaign against Serbia and Montenegro, mass exodus of Albanian refugees from Kosovo, mainly to Macedonia and Albania.

Spring 1999: “International solidarity with Mitrovica” becomes “International solidarity with Kosovo/a”, with individual convoys organised by *Arbetarkonvojen*, *Paz Ahora* and *Secours Ouvrier pour les Balkans* to Macedonia to support refugees from Kosovo.

15–16 May 1999: 20th international IWA meeting in Paris (France).

Summer 1999: Launch of IWA website.

3–5 September 1999: 21st international IWA meeting in Antwerp (Belgium).

2000

5–6 February 2000: 22nd international IWA meeting in Roskilde (Denmark), in cooperation with Support Tuzla’s Schools.

ANNEX 2: IWA'S ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

IWA was structured around the national campaigns in different European countries, the international coordination office in Stockholm (and temporarily Copenhagen), the offices in Makarska and Tuzla, and cooperation partners in Tuzla and elsewhere in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the wider region. This overview provides basic information about each of these groups.

1 / THE NATIONAL CAMPAIGNS

IWA Austria

Formed as a supporters' committee in September 1993 for the very first Tuzla convoy by *Gewerkschaftliche Einheit* (a small green left TU faction), *Sozialistische Alternative* (Austrian section of the Fourth International) and other leftist groups. Included several informal groups in Vienna and other cities, active until 1996. Collected goods and money for the Bread Programme. Activities included: acquisition of one mammogram machine, and organisation in May 1995 of a visit by journalists from Tuzla to Austria. Participants included: Fredi Mansfeld, Franz Sperl, Else Christensen, Walter Kanelutti.

132 /

IWA Belgium

Informal group of individuals mainly in Flanders (therefore sometimes also called IWA Flanders). Close contacts with other Bosnia-related groups based in Belgium, especially the Verona Forum for Peace and Reconciliation on the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia, based in Brussels and founded by MEP Alexander Langer, and *Balkan Aktie*, based in Antwerp: together, the three groups formed the initiative *Samen met / avec Tuzla / Zajedno sa Tuzlom* (Together with Tuzla). Very active in collecting goods and money for the Bread Programme, also organised several transports to Makarska, and provided one truck for the IWA office in Makarska. Also very involved in initiating and supporting women's projects in Tuzla, during and after the war. Participants included: Jenny Mees, Aldegonde van Alsenoy, Jos Geudens, Theo Mewis, Monica von Hoogstraten.

IWA Britain

Informal group, no regular campaign activities to collect food and money in the UK, mainly because of the strong presence of Workers Aid for Bosnia in this field. Active through the newspaper Socialist Outlook, which supported IWA and in which several British IWA members regularly wrote articles about BiH and IWA. Attended international IWA meetings on an irregular basis. Participants included: Steve Myers, Alan Thornet, Roland Rance.

IWA Denmark

Founded in summer 1993 under the name *Konvoj til Bosnien* (Convoy to Bosnia) as an NGO, with various local groups, the strongest in Copenhagen and Roskilde. Supported by 120 local trade union sections. Regularly collected goods and money for the Bread Programme and carried out other activities, including the launch in 1994 of cooperation with the teachers' union of Tuzla, which later became the spin-off project Support for Tuzla's Schools (STS). Provided one truck for IWA Makarska in 1995. Administered the common IWA budget (for the offices in Makarska and Tuzla). Took over general IWA coordination from Stockholm from July 1996 to July 1997. Coordinated and edited the international IWA bulletin from 1996 to 1998. *Konvoj til Bosnien* ceased to exist in 1999, but STS in Denmark then continued to work closely with IWA. Participants included: Bodil Rasmussen, Søren Søndergaard, Jette Gottlieb, Lone Degn Rasmussen, Helene Bach, Ulrik Kohl, Ole Brummer, Steen Larsen, Bruno Gisi, Helge Bo Jensen, Thomas Sæhl Sørensen, Vagn Rasmussen (who simultaneously also became the director of Support Tuzla's Schools), Mick Woods, Marc Gaardsdal-Andersen, Kristian Buus, Thomas Proctor (photographer).

IWA France

Mainly individual activists and trade unionists, who were close to the Trotskyist *Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire* (LCR). Collected money for the Bread Programme. There was also the group *Secours Ouvrier pour la Bosnie* (SOB; Workers' Relief for Bosnia), but during the war they worked with Workers Aid for Bosnia and not with IWA. From 1996 on, SOB was more present and active within IWA, through activists from non-conformist trade union sections, especially *PTT SUD* (post and telecommunication) and *CGT ONIC* (food sector). They attended most international IWA meetings, and also organised two in Paris, in 1997 and 1999. Among other activities, they arranged for a delegation of trade unionists from Tuzla to take part in the European march against unemployment in 1997. SOB changed its name in 1998 to *Convoi syndical*

pour les Balkans (Trade Union Convoy for the Balkans) and also became very active in Kosovo. Participants included: Jean Michel Annequin, Catherine Samary, Xavier Rousselin.

IWA Germany

During the war, a loose coalition of informal or organised groups in various German cities, including Wiesbaden, Mannheim (*Aktionsbündnis gegen Rassismus*), Kaiserlautern and Munich (*Autonome Sozialistische Jugend*). By way of a more formal structure, they established *IWA Förderverein Deutschland e.V.*, based in Mannheim, which served as a joint address for fundraising purposes. They acquired two trucks and a car for the IWA office in Makarska in 1994, collected money and goods, and organised convoys to Makarska. After internal disputes in 1995, they largely became an informal group of individuals based in Munich and then in Berlin. Very active on projects for women in Tuzla. Participants included: Bernd Kaebelmann, Hermann Nehls, Michael Willenbücher, Lutz Claassen, Andreas Thomsen, Tobias Schwarz, Franziska Bachmann, Mattias Kåks.

IWA Greece

Not a constituted group, no regular participation in international IWA meetings, but individual activists from the Anti-War Anti-Nationalist Campaigns based in Athens, which brought together Bosnia-related groups in Greece. Contributed, for example, to the women's convoy to Tuzla in November 1994 and collected money for nurses in Tuzla to assist them with setting up a new trade union branch. Participants included: Sissi Vovou, Nikolas Kapralos

IWA Italy

Una penna per la pace (A Pen for Peace), based in Brescia, northern Italy. NGO founded in June 1993 to support anti-war and anti-nationalist forces in ex-Yugoslavia, after the murder of the journalist and activist Guido Puletti during a solidarity mission in Bosnia in May 1993. Supported the campaign for the first Workers Aid/IWA convoy to Tuzla in autumn 1993 and joined IWA as its Italian branch, where it remained active during the war, before ceasing its activities in 1996. Around 120 members, with 20 of them making up the IWA section. Very active in collecting goods and driving trucks with food and medication to Makarska and Tuzla, including an equipped ambulance. Also active in other parts of the Balkans, for example by supporting the independent anti-nationalist magazine *Arkzine* in Zagreb (although a planned media project in Tuzla failed to get off the ground).

Participants included: Regina Macobatti, Rosangela Miccoli, Marco Faini, Paola Costa, Cinzia Garolla, Roberto Cavagnola, Lorenzo Capucci, Ilario Salucci.

IWA Netherlands

Operated under the name *Vakbondsleden voor Bosnie* (Trade Unionists for Bosnia), founded in December 1993 by members of the Fourth International section SAP, mainly based in Amsterdam and Rotterdam, with the support of some Dutch trade unions. Published a newsletter (*Nieuwsbrief Vakbondsleden voor Bosnie*), collected money and goods for the Bread Programme and other projects. Worked closely with the group Youth Solidarity with former Yugoslavia (YSY), set up by students in Amsterdam in 1994, which in 1994 called itself IWA Holland, Students' Office. YSY focused on cooperation with the University of Tuzla, with the support of IWA, for example organising a European tour for a university delegation from Tuzla to the Netherlands, Belgium, France, Germany and Austria in autumn 1994, and then developing close ties of cooperation with the University of Tuzla on its own. Participants included: Ernst Van Lohuizen (*Vakbondsleden voor Bosnie*), Yannick du Pont (YSY).

IWA Norway

Short-lived initiative; launched in March 1995 under the name *Konvoi Hardanger-Bosnia*, by trade union activists, Bosnian refugees and members of International Forum in the Hardanger-region in southwestern Norway. Planned to organize a truck with flour and other collected goods for Tuzla in Spring 1995 but there is no evidence in the consulted IWA-archives that this project was implemented and that IWA Norway later continued to exist.

IWA Slovenia

Lucien Perpette, retired trade unionist from Belgium, residing since the end of the 1980s in Ljubljana, who organized various activities to support Bosnian refugees in Slovenia during and after the 1992–1995 war. Joined IWA in 1996, mainly active in the youth field, organised holidays for schoolchildren from BiH in Western Europe, partially in cooperation with Support Tuzla's Schools.

IWA Spain

During the war, there was no explicit Spanish IWA group, but irregular involvement by individuals mainly from the group *Paz Ahora* (Peace Now), established in 1993 and based in Madrid. Cooperation between IWA and *Paz Ahora* was officially agreed at the IWA meeting in Aalbeke in 1995, and the cooperation continued in different ways until 2000, with regular discussions about whether *Paz Ahora* was or should

become an official member of IWA or not. *Paz Ahora* was active in different parts of BiH and organised convoys to Tuzla and other towns, and later to Kosovo, and was also very active in the Ship to Bosnia project. Between 1995 and 1998, *Ayuda Obrera*, based in Catalonia, also cooperated to some extent with IWA. During the war, the Basque organisation *SOS Balkanes* worked very closely with the IWA office in Makarska, where it had also a base, but did not attend international IWA meetings. Participants from *Paz Ahora* included: Pura Blasco, Isabel Menchón, Gregorio Davila, Julio Rodriguez Bueno.

IWA Sweden

Arbetarkonvøyen (Workers' Convoy), founded as an NGO in August 1993, with up to 30 local groups. Permanent office in Stockholm, with offices in some other towns and cities. Published the newsletter *Arbetarkonvojen Nyhetsbrev*. Organised weekly meetings, regular campaigns with street collections, concerts and other activities, for collecting food and money, and regularly sent trucks with the collected goods to Makarska. Together with *Kvinna til Kvinna* (Woman to Woman) implemented the women's parcels campaign for Tuzla, and launched the Ship to Bosnia project, which later became an organisation in its own right. Organised solidarity parcels campaign for Kosovo in 1999. Served as international IWA coordination office from 1994 to 2000 (except for July 1996 to July 1997, when it moved to Denmark). *Arbetarkonvojen* was actively supported by the libertarian socialist trade union SAC (*Sveriges Arbetares Centralorganisation*), which provided an office space, *Ung Vänster* (Young Left, the youth league of the former communist Left Party), the Socialist Party (Trotskyist), the Dock Workers' Union, and several unions within the social-democratic trade union confederation LO, with the active participation of many local branches and clubs of these trade unions and parties. *Arbetarkonvojen* also had a good relationship with the Swedish government and especially its development agency Sida, through which it secured several grants for IWA projects in Tuzla, most notably to support the trade union magazine. Participants included: Eva X Moberg, Michel Wenzer, Ulf B Andersson, Mattias Kåks, Gölin Forsberg, Peter Öholm, Emina Bitic, Agneta Falck, Agnete Bretan, Li Skarin, Jonas Lundborg, Micke Bohl, Josefin Brink, Jakob Schneider, Jomi Jutlöv, Johan Hultberg, Anna Knöfel-Magnusson, Per Magnusson, Linn Hjort, Dick Forslund, Sven Jinton, Dirk Grosjean, Ellinor Kanafer, Anna Lindqvist.

IWA Switzerland

Individual trade unionists and activists, close to the political groups *Sozialistische Alternative* and *Solidarität*, who joined IWA in autumn 1994, first as an informal group, then under the name *Solidarität mit Bosnien* (Solidarity with Bosnia), which was founded as an NGO in autumn 1995. Based in Basel, it remained active within IWA until 2000. Within Switzerland, it was part of a loose network of 20 groups actively involved in the Balkans. Did not organise its own trucks for the Bread Programme but collected money and material, and was for example involved in supporting the mushroom project and organising school cooperation projects with Tuzla. Main participants: Hanspeter Gysin, Marlène Soder.

2 / INTERNATIONAL IWA MEETINGS

The international IWA meetings were attended by representatives from the different national campaigns and were where the main decisions regarding the general policy and joint activities of IWA were taken. They lasted one to two days and usually included a presentation and discussion about the political situation in BiH, reports from the national campaigns about their situation and activities, and then a discussion of various topics: mainly internal organisation, logistics, activities and budget, often in working groups that drew up proposals which were then voted on by the entire group.

The meetings were held three to five times a year, with a total of 22 meetings taking place between October 1993 and February 2000:

1) 31 October 1993 in Manchester (UK); 2) 11–12 December 1993 in Copenhagen (DK); 3) 26–27 February 1994 in Amsterdam (NL); 4) 10 April 1994 in Makarska (HR); 5) 24–26 June 1994 in Brescia (I); 6) 10–11 September 1994 in Stockholm (S); 7) 3–4 December 1994 in Munich (D); 8) 4–5 March 1995 in Aalbeke (B); 9) 17–18 June 1995 in Aarhus (DK); 10) 29 September – 1 October 1995 in Vienna (A); 11) 13–14 January 1996 in Berlin (D); 12) 18–19 May 1996 in Amsterdam (NL); 13) 2–3 November 1996 in Copenhagen (DK); 14) 22–23 February 1997 in Paris (F); 15) 28–29 June 1997 in Berlin (D); 16) 24–25 October 1997 in Antwerp (B); 17) 28–29 March 1998 in Basel (CH); 18) 27–28 June 1998 in Malmö (S); 19) 13 November 1998 in Tuzla (BiH); 20) 15–16 May 1999 in Paris (F); 21) 3–5 September 1999 in Antwerp (B); 22) 5–6 February 2000 in Roskilde (DK), in cooperation with Support Tuzla's Schools.

3 / MAKARSKA LOGISTICAL CENTRE

IWA established a direct presence in the region from November 1993, first with an office in Zagreb, which then moved to Split in February/March 1994, and finally to Makarska in April 1994, where it remained until it closed in January 1996. As IWA's logistical centre, it included an office and a warehouse, as well as accommodation for the people working there (office staff and truck drivers). Its main tasks were: receiving the loads from the trucks dispatched by IWA groups across Europe, storing and inventorying the goods, completing administrative paperwork for the trucks to get to Tuzla, organising and driving the truck transports to Tuzla, supporting IWA members and other people coming to Makarska on their way to Bosnia and Herzegovina, writing regular reports to inform the Stockholm coordination office and national campaigns about the activities and general situation, and preparing a budget proposal for Makarska for the international IWA meetings.

Among those who stayed for at least one month were: Office staff: Ulrik Kohl, Lone Degn Rasmussen, Gölin Forsberg, Agneta Falck, Peter Öholm, Nathaniel York, Bo Wermus, Mimma Tadic, Nikolas Kapralos, Boris Geier, Andreas Thomsen, Annette (Joelsson) Fogelmark. Convoy leaders, drivers: Mick Woods, Michel Wenzer, Marc Gaardsdal-Andersen (Husfelt) – Drivers: Lennart Robertson, Monique Wouters, Harry H. (or d'H.), Jadran Svetška, Magnus Lindquist, Jorge Lattof.

138 /

4 / TUZLA OFFICE

First created as a sub-office of the Makarska office in autumn 1994, the Tuzla office became more important in 1995, and then the only IWA office on the ground between 1996 and 1998, after the Makarska office closed. Its main tasks were: coordinating and organising the distribution of goods that arrived from Makarska in cooperation with the Coal Miners' Trade Union, contacting and meeting with trade union representatives, other stakeholders and civil society groups from Tuzla, developing and supporting IWA projects on the ground, supporting IWA members and other people coming to Tuzla, writing regular reports to inform the Stockholm coordination office and national campaigns about its own activities and general situation, and preparing a budget proposal for the Tuzla office for international IWA meetings. It was run by IWA volunteers who came out for several weeks or months. Usually there was one person in the office, sometimes two, but it could also be unoccupied for several weeks

at a time. It was located in a private apartment during the war, and within the *IVA Saliniana* women's centre in 1997–1998.

Among those who stayed for at least one month were: Else Christensen (spring 1994, before the opening of the office), Ulrik Kohl (1994), Franziska Bachmann (1994 and 1995), Emina Bitic (1995), Gölin Forsberg (1995), Theo Mewis (1995), Lone Degn Rasmussen (1995), Peter Öholm (1996), Mattias Kåks (1996), Helene Bach (1996), Thomas Egholm (1996), Agneta Falck (1997), Li Skarin (1998).

5 / INTERNATIONAL COORDINATION OFFICE IN STOCKHOLM/COPENHAGEN

Established based on a decision by the IWA meeting in Brescia in 1994, the coordination office was located in Stockholm, except for the period July 1996 to July 1997, when it moved to Copenhagen. In Stockholm, it was the same as the main office of *Arbetarkonvojen*/IWA Sweden, where two full-time staff worked during the war and one in the later years, and who were employed thanks to a Swedish government unemployment programme for NGOs. Its main tasks were coordinating activities between the international IWA meetings and circulating information between Makarska/Tuzla and the national campaigns, and between the latter.

/ 139

6 / COOPERATION AND PROJECT PARTNERS IN TUZLA, BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA AND CROATIA

IWA worked with many cooperation partners on the ground. This is a non-exhaustive list of groups and individuals:

TUZLA

Coal Miners' Trade Union of Tuzla (*Rudnici Uglja Tuzla*), with three branches/locations in Kreka, Banovići and Đurđevik: Muhamed Gutić, president (from 1995 on, previously: Fikret Suljić) and Omer Kamberović, vice-president and president of the Kreka branch

Coal Miners' Trade Union of BiH: Fikret Suljić, president (from 1995 on)

Warehouse of the Kreka trade union: Viktor Jurić

Trade Union Council of Tuzla (= federation of trade unions of Tuzla): Fikreta Sijerčić, president

Tuzla Mining Institute: Marinko Jakovac

Heart to Heart (women's association at the Kreka mines): Mujesira Džambić

Tuzla teachers' trade unions: Murveta Stević (primary schools), Mevlida Altumbabić (secondary schools)

Trade union paper *Sindikalna Informacija* (later *Rudar*): Nedeljko Maksimović, main editor

IVA Saliniana women's centre: Mirjana (Mira) Bajer, coordinator; Zorica Lola Koncul, deputy coordinator; Ramiza Ramić, Sanela Imamović, staff members

Municipality of Tuzla: Selim Bešlagić, mayor; Sead Avdić, president of the Executive Board of the municipal assembly (until 1993) and deputy mayor (after 1994); Kleilija Balta, coordinator at the office for international relations at Tuzla City Hall

Forum of Tuzla Citizens: Vehid Šehić, president

Dom Mladih youth centre: Tamara Ljubinković, director

Students Union of the University of Tuzla: Lejla Jašarević, Head of international affairs

Tihomir Babić, interpreter for IWA

140 /

Robert Mesić, owner of the apartment in Tuzla where the IWA staff were accommodated and had their office during the war

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Federation of Trade Unions of Bosnia and Herzegovina, based in Sarajevo: Sulejman Hrle, president, and Fatima Fazlić

CROATIA

UATUC trade union confederation (based in Zagreb): Mario Uccellini

International organisations that had a base in Split during the war and cooperated with the IWA office in Makarska, especially for the organisation of convoys: *SOS Balkanes* (Basque solidarity organisation); Convoy of Mercy (British humanitarian NGO); *Burgos Solidaria* (solidarity organisation from Castile, Spain), Atlas (French humanitarian NGO); *Médecins du Monde* (French humanitarian NGO)

ANNEX 3: OVERVIEW OF IWA ACTIVITIES

IWA carried out many activities of various kinds in the 1990s, mainly in Tuzla. In the interests of clarity, they are divided here into the following categories:

I / Convoys

II / Structural projects in Tuzla

III / Spin-off projects

IV / Other activities

There was often a degree of fluidity between what were considered common IWA projects, projects by individual IWA groups, and spin-off projects that developed their own organisational structure. This list is not intended to be exhaustive, especially regarding projects run by individual IWA campaigns.

For more information about the IWA groups involved in the different projects, see Annex 2 above.

I / CONVOYS

1. The Bread Programme (or Food Programme) convoys to Tuzla

IWA's core activity during the war. More than two thirds of the 30 convoys between November 1993 and January 1996 took place as part of this programme. All IWA campaigns participated in it by collecting or buying basic foodstuffs (flour, oil, sugar, etc.), which were then transported from Makarska to Tuzla, where they were distributed in parcels, mainly to miners and their families through the Coal Miners' Trade Union.

2. The women's convoy and the women's parcels convoys to Tuzla

Women's convoy: Organised in November 1994, mainly by IWA Belgium, in cooperation with *Vrouwen Aktie Kollektief* (Women's Action Collective), with material, financial and logistical support from other IWA branches, including the Netherlands and Austria. The convoy brought hygiene products for the Tuzla Women's Association.

Women's parcels: More than 20,000 parcels, collected by IWA Sweden in cooperation with Swedish organisation *Kvinna til Kvinna* (Woman to Woman), were brought to Tuzla between January and April 1995 and distributed via the Kreka mines women's association and other organisations.

3. Other transported material

Other equipment was also brought to Tuzla, often in combination with other goods transported by IWA, or through IWA partner organisations. This included equipment for schools (see "Schools project" below) and three mammogram machines, acquired by IWA branches in Austria and Belgium, with financial contributions from other campaigns, including IWA Greece: one was delivered to the hospital in Zenica in 1994, and two, plus an ultrasound machine, to a health centre in Tuzla in 1995.

4. Convoys to other cities in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1994–1995

Sarajevo: One convoy mainly of food, in September 1995, in cooperation with the BiH Trade Union Federation, and another one in February 1996. An initial convoy to Sarajevo in November 1994, consisting of two trucks transporting coal donated by the Tuzla Coal Miners' Union, was looted before it arrived in Sarajevo.

Bihać: One convoy mainly of food in September 1995.

Mostar: Mainly convoys with and for cooperation partners – one in summer 1994 with Convoy of Mercy, two convoys of food and other material in April and July 1995 (the latter with *SOS Balkanes*); in October 1995, on the way to Usora, the IWA-convoy stopped in Mostar to deliver goods from the Swedish *Kvinna til Kvinna* to the family-planning organisation Marie Stopes International (MSI) working in Mostar.

142 /

Usora/"HVO project": One convoy of two trucks transporting mainly food in October 1995, distribution organised in cooperation with the local Red Cross.

5. Convoys after 1995 run by individual campaigns

Several more convoys to Tuzla were organised after the war by individual IWA campaigns. Some contained food, for example those organised by IWA Denmark in autumn 1996 for the Coal Miners' Trade Union, and by *Paz Ahora* in 1999 to a camp of Kosovar refugees near Tuzla. Others carried material, such as school parcels for primary schoolchildren in Tuzla in 1996, organised by IWA Switzerland in cooperation with the Tuzla teachers' trade union.

6. Kosovo convoys in 1999

The original idea of transporting goods from Tuzla to Mitrovica could not be implemented, but individual IWA branches later organised convoys for Kosovar refugees in Macedonia in spring and summer 1999, e.g. *Arbetarkonvojen's* transport of 5,000 "solidarity parcels", several convoys by *Paz Ahora*, and IWA France as part of *Convoi syndical pour les Balkans*.

II / STRUCTURAL PROJECTS IN TUZLA

1. Newspapers and publications

Union paper: Twenty-four issues of *Sindikalna Informacija* from December 1995 to February 1998, and seven issues of *Rudar* from March to October 1998, published by the Tuzla Coal Miners' Trade Union with the cooperation and financial support of IWA, mainly using money awarded by the Swedish government's development agency Sida and secured by IWA Sweden.

Women's paper: Launched in 1994 as a joint IWA project, in cooperation with the Tuzla Women's Association and several other women's organisations from Tuzla, mainly supported by IWA Germany and Belgium and coordinated by IWA Germany, with the publication of one issue in summer 1996 under the title *Pogled Žene*.

Comic Roll, a cartoon strip magazine edited by Tuzla's youth centre *Dom Mladih*, two issues published in 1995 with the support of IWA Sweden.

2. Economic projects

Shoe project: Shoes made at a local factory in Tuzla were distributed through the Kreka mines women's association and other organisations in Tuzla. Launched in winter 1995/6 and continued until early 1997, with the financial support mainly of IWA Belgium, IWA France and IWA Sweden.

Mushroom project: As part of the Tuzla mining company's rehabilitation of abandoned mines for agricultural use, IWA (mainly Sweden and Switzerland) provided financial support in 1996 for a mushroom-growing project led by the Coal Miners' Trade Union.

Milk project: Bottles of milk produced at a local factory were distributed to a primary school in Tuzla during spring 1996. Mainly financed by IWA Switzerland.

3. Youth and education

Youth group and girls' group: Informal groups for secondary school pupils launched in autumn 1994, shortly after the opening of the IWA office in Tuzla.

Youth centre: Project to renovate and equip the *Dom Mladih* youth centre in Tuzla in 1995, launched and implemented by IWA Sweden, with a DM 70,000 grant from Sida.

Schools project/Teachers project: Cooperation projects between schools from Tuzla and schools in Western Europe during and after the war, for example in

Belgium with IWA Belgium. There was also cooperation with the Tuzla teachers' trade union from 1994 on, in which IWA Denmark was especially involved. This later developed into the Support Tuzla's Schools project (see section III below). Also noteworthy in this context is the "Holiday for children" project, launched and implemented by IWA Slovenia after the war, in cooperation with IWA Belgium, Denmark and Spain, which allowed children from Tuzla to spend several weeks in Western Europe.

Students project: Cooperation established in 1994 with the University of Tuzla by the Dutch IWA branch Youth Solidarity with former Yugoslavia, which became a project of its own, involving the collection of financial and material assistance, the organisation of a visit to Western Europe by a delegation from the University of Tuzla in autumn 1994, and after the war several summer universities in Tuzla and the establishment of international study programmes at the University of Tuzla.

4. Projects for and with women

Girls' group: see above II.3.

Women's paper: see above II.1.

Shoe project: see above II.2.

144 / *IVA Saliniana*: Women's centre opened in 1997 with the support of IWA, which was registered as an NGO in BiH and offered various activities for women in Tuzla. Financed between 1997 and 1999 mainly through an EC grant secured by IWA Belgium. Joint IWA project, with particular involvement by the campaigns in Belgium, Denmark, Germany and Sweden, where IVA sub-groups were formed.

III / SPIN-OFF PROJECTS AND PROJECTS IN WHICH (PARTS OF) IWA WERE INVOLVED

Ship to Bosnia: Launched as an IWA project by *Arbetarkonvojen*/IWA Sweden in cooperation with the Swedish dock workers' union, later developed its own organisational structure and became an autonomous project and organisation. The container ship *M/S Haväng* set out from Sweden in November 1995 with collected goods on board and then picked up more goods in Aberdeen, Antwerp and Barcelona, which it transported to Split. From there, the more than 100 containers were distributed in Tuzla and other towns in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Continued in 1996 under the name Ship to Bosnia – Solidarity House, with the construction and opening of a Solidarity House in Lipnica near Tuzla.

Support Tuzla's Schools (Danish: *Støt Tuzlas Skoler*): Launched by *Konvoj til Bosnien*/IWA Denmark in 1994–1995, became an independent project and NGO, financed by the Danish government, which carried out various activities, mainly in cooperation with the teachers' trade union in Tuzla: financial and material assistance for the teachers' union and schools in Tuzla, training courses, visits by delegations, rebuilding of schools in Tuzla and other towns in Bosnia and Herzegovina after the war. Also undertook activities in Kosovo in 1999–2000.

IV / OTHER ACTIVITIES

IWA bulletin, published under the title International Workers Aid – Bulletin in defence of democratic rights, solidarity and multiethnicity in the Balkans, seven issues published between 1996 and 1998, edited by the Danish IWA branch, financed through the common IWA budget and distributed in and through the different national IWA groups.

ANNEX 4: THE “TUZLA MODEL” DURING AND AFTER THE 1992–1995 WAR IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

“In Tuzla, we don’t ask ourselves whether we are dealing with a Bosniak, a Serb or a Croat. Instead we ask ourselves whether someone’s human rights are under threat or if laws are being broken.”
(Selim Bešliagić, 21 March 1996)²⁰⁷

In socialist Yugoslavia, Tuzla was the third largest city in the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the cultural and industrial centre of north-eastern Bosnia. According to the 1991 census, the municipality had 132,000 inhabitants, of whom 48% identified as Muslims (later called Bosniaks), 15% as Croats, 15% as Serbs, and 17% as Yugoslavs – the latter representing the highest percentage within BiH. The number of interethnic marriages was also high in Tuzla, accounting for approximately one third of all marriages in the city. As an industrial city, Tuzla’s importance relied on its vast mineral resources: on the one hand salt (the name Tuzla stems from the Turkish word for salt, tuz), and on the other hand coal. Because of the latter, a coal-fired thermal power plant was established in Tuzla in the 1960s, which was (and still is) the largest power plant in BiH. The city’s long industrial history also meant that there was a sizeable industrial and mining workforce within the overall population.

After the first multi-party elections in BiH in 1990, Tuzla became, with Vareš and Novo Sarajevo, the only municipality where none of the three (Muslim, Serb or Croat) ethnonational parties won power, but rather a coalition of leftist non-nationalist parties. The local government, led by the new mayor Selim Bešliagić, was in favour of preserving and reforming Yugoslavia, but when Yugoslavia was torn violently apart in 1991 by the wars in Slovenia and Croatia, it gradually rallied behind the idea of an independent Bosnia and Herzegovina, which was achieved after a referendum in March 1992. A few weeks later, the Bosnian Serb nationalist forces supported by Serbia launched the war against the independent Republic of BiH and within a few months controlled big parts of BiH territory. However, the city and region of Tuzla successfully defended itself against these attacks, while being encircled and cut off from the north, west and east. At the same time, more than 60,000 Muslim refugees expelled from eastern Bosnia by

the Bosnian Serb forces took refuge in the city, which made the humanitarian situation even more critical.

While the war led to a surge in nationalist forces and ethnic tensions throughout BiH, the municipality of Tuzla actively endeavoured to maintain the existing interethnic social bonds in the city and to preserve Tuzla as an undivided community. Even in Tuzla, however, nationalist voices became stronger, within the local Bosniak party SDA and through the newspaper *Zmaj od Bosne*, which openly called for the murder of Serb inhabitants and for the establishment of a Muslim Bosnia. In the face of this mounting pressure, the response of Tuzla's civic forces was at first timid, but then from 1993 gained momentum in a twofold and interconnected way. On the one hand, more and more citizens started to organise themselves in order to vocally articulate and defend the civic and multi-ethnic spirit of the city against all forms of divisions and nationalism; this happened, for example, through the newly created Forum of Tuzla Citizens, led by Vehid Sehic, which quickly acquired more than 10,000 members. On the other hand, the local government led by Mayor Bešliagić also became much more vocal, especially at an international level, in promoting Tuzla as a model of civic and interethnic cooperation in BiH and in Europe, opposing all forms of extremism. In so doing, Tuzla also positioned itself as an alternative to the dominant Bosniak party SDA under Alija Izetbegović, which was leading the BiH government. While Bešliagić agreed with the SDA in the defence of Bosnia and Herzegovina, he pitted Tuzla's "civic option" against the radical and nationalist tendencies within the SDA. From 1993 on, the promotion and defence of the "Tuzla model", or the "Tuzla way", did indeed attract a lot of attention internationally, especially among groups who supported BiH but were critical of the SDA and its increasingly authoritarian and Bosniak nationalist policies.

The fact that the Tuzla model attracted a lot of – positive – international attention was very important for Tuzla's local government, not least in strengthening its position against the SDA and the central government. The SDA tried to discredit Bešliagić by accusing him of secessionism, and increased its pressure on and against the municipality, partly through the intermediate administrative levels created during the war, the okrug (district) of Tuzla, and then the canton of Tuzla-Podrinje, which were both controlled by the SDA. While the central government could indeed increase its influence on certain sectors of public life in Tuzla, in relation to the Army of BiH for example, it did not succeed in ousting the non-nationalist forces led by Bešliagić, which remained in power with the support of the different civic groups, and also won the first post-war municipal elections in 1997.

The identity of Tuzla as a mining town also played a role in the development of the "Tuzla model". The miners are often considered to embody the heart and soul of the city, due in part to their spirited tradition of resistance against authoritarian and nationalist ideas. In December 1920, for example, a miners' strike and armed rebellion against industrial slavery took place in the village of Husino in Tuzla, which was brutally repressed by the regime. In socialist Yugoslavia, this event became a major point of reference, and not only for Tuzla: 21 December was designated as Miners' Day throughout the country, to commemorate and honour the Husino Uprising that had taken place on that day. Also, as tensions escalated throughout BiH in 1991/1992, Tuzla's miners were at the forefront of the large peace rallies in Sarajevo before the start of the war. During the war, they became an important pillar in the military defence of the city and also in political support for the Tuzla model against all kinds of nationalism.

As mentioned above, Tuzla did not remain free of interethnic tensions during the war. But there is widespread agreement among local and international observers that, through its proactive approach, the local government with the support of the civic forces did largely succeed in thwarting attempts to destroy interethnic bonds, and to maintain in essence the civic and multi-ethnic character and spirit of the city, much more so than other cities in BiH, including Sarajevo.

148 /

Tuzla's multi-ethnic life and spirit was also experienced by many of those involved in IWA activities. After she had travelled with the women's convoy to Tuzla in November 1994, Lieve Snellings wrote in a report: "The longer I think about Tuzla, the clearer it becomes to me what strong multi-cultural, multi-ethnic feelings are living in the minds and in the hearts of people in Tuzla. It is not only that they still want or hope for that, it is an existential part of themselves. Many times I could feel and hear that in reactions they gave... I will give you some examples. [...] Ajsa is a young woman about 30 years old, who joined the army. She tells me she fights at the frontlines. She shows me three pictures of three young men. Her brothers. They were killed at the very beginning of the war by the Chetniks. When she was telling me that story, Mirsada, a woman who is married to a Serb, says to me: 'After all Ajsa went through, you can't expect her to love the Serbs.' Then Ajsa was shaking her hand and said: 'No, no, you can't say that. I'm not against Serbs. I have Serb friends. I hate the Chetniks. That's a great difference.' Hearing this, I can only think: I HOPE, if I were ever in such a situation, I could react in the same way. I really don't know if I could make such a distinction. I hope... This openness touches me deeply."

At a political level, IWA activists were sometimes critical of the publicly promoted picture of the Tuzla model, but they nevertheless remained convinced that Tuzla was indeed something special and that it therefore deserved IWA's full support: "Tuzla is unique in Bosnia-Herzegovina because it prevented to a great extent an ethnic escalation on its territory, not because of its people and tradition and so on – each of them play a role – but because of the political choices of the city-political coalition. We support that. [...] Our aid and efforts have a symbolic and political value as a support for the democratic, non-ethnic and multicultural option in BiH. And in that sense Tuzla is an exception that needs to be supported. And in the new political climate in BiH [at the end of the war], Tuzla can have a real influence on the course of the events. In any case, the SDA and the central government in Sarajevo are aware of the challenge and installed out of nothing the cantonal government in the Tuzla-Drina canton to combat its non-nationalistic opponents. If the nationalists are concentrating on Tuzla, let us do the same thing." ²⁰⁸

The Tuzla model did not manage to spread in post-war BiH, where the Dayton Peace Agreement provided crucial structural advantages to ethnonationalist forces. But in the years after the war, Tuzla has continued to play a special role in BiH: following their victory in 1997, non-nationalist parties have remained in power through all the municipal elections held since; in the latest elections in October 2020, the social democrat Jasmin Imamović – who succeeded Bešliagić in 2001 – was re-elected as mayor. Tuzla's importance for a "civic" and non-nationalist Bosnia and Herzegovina was also evident in the protest movements of February 2014, sometimes referred to as the "Bosnian Spring". It was in Tuzla that the protests started, before spreading to other towns and cities in BiH. They were directed against high unemployment, fraudulent privatisations and the inertia and corruption of the ethnonational political elites, and transformed into a grassroots democratic movement which articulated itself through citizens' assemblies called plenums.

For more information about Tuzla and its specific position and role in BiH, during the war and more generally, see the following publications cited in the bibliography above: Armakolas 2011, Armakolas 2017, Arsenijević 2014, Bešliagić 1998, Calori 2015, Obradovic 1994 and Weiss 2002.

208 PA Bachmann: Lieve Snellings, "Report about the women's convoy to Tuzla (26.10.–8.11.1994)", 22.11.1994; PA Woods, 1: Theo Mewis, Report "Seminar organised by the German trade union DGB and the BiH TU federation", in Visoko, November 1995. For more details of the discussions about Tuzla within IWA, see the text part pp. 47–9, and the documentation part, docs. 31 and 32.

DOCUMENTATION

Samen met

Avec

TUZLA

Nieuwsbrief

nr. 3, maandblad 1988

Verenigingsschrift

Voor een stad met mensen



start op: 424-6086951-27

Administratiebureau X
Verenigingsschrift uitgever: Jerry West, Melkwegstraat 11, 2008 Houten

ARBEJAREN/SAC/FEDER.

F-425 T-907 F-001

13.07.94 12:45

Dana

INTERNATIONAL WORKERS AID ✕

15.

Makarska 12/7 - 94

report from the very hot and sunny Croatia. Things have been very recently, because we have had guests from Sweden, Spain and the same week. It has been a little difficult for us to be good hosts, because the same time had a lot of work to do. - Our apologies for that.

Split.

last week we had 23 T from Spain, and 17 T from Sweden coming to visit our warehouse, but only for a short while though.

and accommodation.

We decided to move again, for a number of reasons. We will move in the next pr. month, incl. everything (parking place for trucks, warehouse with our own kitchen, and our own washingmachine, this place and electricity.) All this counted together, will be cheaper than now, and it will make it a lot easier for us to have everything moved on the 1st. of August. I'll give you more detailed information

Trucks.

Unfortunately one of our trucks broke down on the last conveyor possible to repair it, so it is now stuck on a base in Visoko. We are investigating how much it will cost to fix it, and if it's worth it. We got a new 10 T truck, which we will bring on the next conveyor

bollettino dell'Associazione

Una penna per la pace

per un'informazione internazionalista



Strada, c/o Camera del Lavoro, Via Repubblica 1, tel. 030/375180-375206, fax 030/372303

Continua la campagna
International
Workers Aid
a favore di Tuzla



A sostegno dei media
indipendenti croati:
ARKZIN

UN "BON" DE PAIN

Valeur : 30 FF
= 4 kg de farine
+ 1 l d'huile
+ 2kg de sucre

Solidarité avec Tuzla

- Nous brisons le blocus de la faim de Tuzla assiégée
- Par solidarité avec sa population multi-ethnique

Prix de guerre à
Tuzla :

farine : 25 F/kg
huile : 80 F/l
sucre : 160 F/kg
Salaires mensuel :
de 6 à 32 F

SOUTENEZ LE CONVOI "FARINE, HUILE,
SUCRE" POUR TUZLA
La distribution sera assurée par le Syndicat
des mineurs de Tuzla

A. GENERAL POLITICAL AIMS AND ORGANISATION OF IWA

- Doc. 1: The creation of IWA
- Doc. 2: The reasons for the separation from Workers Aid for Bosnia
- Doc. 3: Specification of IWA's modus operandi as an international network
- Doc. 4: IWA's definition of solidarity
- Doc. 5: The creation of the international coordination office
- Doc. 6: What priorities?
- Doc. 7: IWA's common budget
- Doc. 8: How to continue?
- Doc. 9: Brainstorming about the future of IWA
- Doc. 10: "From humanitarian help to democracy projects"

B. THE CONVOYS

- Doc. 11: "IWA has arrived": The first convoy in November 1993
- Doc. 12: List of convoys 1994–1995
- Doc. 13: The logistical work in Makarska
- Doc. 14: Achievements...and problems
- Doc. 15: "...but otherwise it went fine"

C. THE NATIONAL CAMPAIGNS

- Doc. 16: Report about the situation in December 1994
- Doc. 17: Report about the situation in March 1995
- Doc. 18: Report about the situation in March 1998

D. THE LOCAL PROJECTS IN TUZLA

The Tuzla office

- Doc. 19: The opening of the IWA office in Tuzla
Doc. 20: Day-to-day work in Tuzla

The trade union magazine

- Doc. 21: The birth of an idea
Doc. 22: IWA's editorial in the first issue of *Sindikalna Informacija*, December 1995
Doc. 23: Extract from Tuzla report 28.07.1996
Doc. 24: The Coal Miners' Trade Union on *Rudar* (1998)

Activities in support of and in cooperation with women in Tuzla

- Doc. 25: Proposals for solidarity projects with women in Tuzla
Doc. 26: Distribution of women's parcels
Doc. 27: The shoe project
Doc. 28: Setting up the women's centre
Doc. 29: The *IVA Saliniana* women's centre in 1998

E. DISCUSSIONS ABOUT TUZLA, THE TRADE UNIONS AND MULTI-ETHNIC BOSNIA

- Doc. 30: Humanitarian versus political work?
Doc. 31: Going beyond Tuzla?
Doc. 32: Taking a position on the military question?
Doc. 33: The situation of the trade unions in Tuzla during the war

/ 153

F. VOICES FROM TUZLA

- Doc. 34: Interview with Selim Bešliagić, November 1993
Doc. 35: "Don't forget to tell that there are no three parties in Bosnia, but four!"
Doc. 36: "We ask the European Trade Unions to support our rights to a normal life"
Doc. 37: "Don't we look European?"
Doc. 38: "Today, the Spaniards brought Daddy aid"

Note:

- The documents are largely reproduced as written, but spelling errors have been corrected and abbreviations expanded.
- The terms marked with an * are explained in the glossary.
- Footnotes and comments in [brackets] were added by N.M.

A. GENERAL POLITICAL AIMS AND ORGANISATION OF IWA

This section brings together documents illustrating the general political aims of IWA and its internal organisation as an international network, as well as some of the developments in these areas from the war to the post-war years.

DOC. 1: THE CREATION OF IWA

IWA was formed at a meeting in Manchester on 31 October 1993, where it defined its political principles and aims and also the way it wanted to work as an informal international network. The minutes of this meeting can be considered as IWA's founding document. (See also text part, pp. 20–21)

INTERNATIONAL WORKERS AID MEETING IN MANCHESTER 31 OCTOBER

The following resolution were put to an indicative vote before the international delegates and participants. It got an absolute majority.

1. The unity platform of the international campaign is:

- > Solidarity with the workers of Balkans!
- > No to ethnic cleansing and ethnic partition!
- > Solidarity with the multi-ethnic Bosnia!
- > Asylum rights for all those fleeing the war in ex-Yugoslavia!

2. The aim is political, material and humanitarian aid to those forces in ex-Yugoslavia who are against the war and the national-chauvinism

3. The international cooperation has the following framework:

A European campaign should have a loose structure and decisions taken on the basis of consensus. The possibilities of building an united front campaign will vary from country to country. The political platform is also likely to vary from country to country – according to who is involved in the campaign.

4. When needed one representative from each country meet with the mandate to decide in consensus.

5. The campaign shall immediately

- > take responsibility for the 3 trucks presently in the town of Split and try to get them to Tuzla.
- > on the spot develop contacts, knowledge, channels for aid to unions, peace groups, women groups who resist the war and national-chauvinism.

- > demand the airport of Tuzla, closed by UN-decision, is opened.
- > prepare for a new larger convoy in February.

Other decisions:

- > The meeting appointed Steve Myers (Britain), Ulrik Sebastian Kohl (Denmark) and Eva X Moberg (Sweden) to constitute a provisional working committee. (Unanimity)
- > A new meeting of European delegates shall take place within a month. The campaigns in Denmark and Sweden take responsibility for calling to the conference, possibly held in Copenhagen. Contact before this conference is Eva X Moberg. (Unanimity)
- > The meeting recommended the campaigns to hold a day of Action all over Europe on 11th December. (Majority vote)
- > The international campaign shall investigate the possibility of holding a broad european conference of unions and peoples movements against the war in beginning of next year. Preferably in cooperation with the *UATUC and in Zagreb. (Majority vote)
- > The meeting gave approval to a request from the participants in the convoy presently in Split to unfold the banner of International Workers Aid if and when they can reach Tuzla. (Unanimity)

Notes were taken by Dick Forslund

Source: ARBA, AK, 18

DOC. 2: THE REASONS FOR THE SEPARATION FROM WORKERS AID FOR BOSNIA

Ulf B Andersson was one of the founders of the Swedish IWA branch, *Arbetarkonvojen*, in summer 1993. In 1996, he published a book in Swedish about the war in Bosnia, which includes a chapter on IWA. Andersson attended the meetings in Manchester in late October 1993 at which IWA was established. In his book, he writes about the tensions that developed among the organisers of the international convoy while it was stuck for several weeks in Croatia. While the drivers of three trucks decided to try to reach Tuzla via the south, tensions reached their peak at the Manchester meetings and led to a formal split between the organisers (see also text part, pp. 20–21). In the following extracts from his book, Andersson explains how the separation between Workers Aid for Bosnia and IWA came about:

The tensions [within the convoy stuck in Croatia] grew the longer it went without anything happening. Then followed a confused period. The small British Trotskyist Party WRP (Workers Revolutionary Party) had made great efforts in the fund-raising effort. But its leadership, with veteran Dot Gibson at the forefront, also had a political program behind the campaign. Providing support for Tuzla's vulnerable workers was not controversial, but WRP also saw the convoy as an opportunity to reveal the UN's "dirty role" in Bosnia and, by extension, build a new truly Trotskyist *Fourth International when the working class had awakened in Europe. The practical consequence of this policy was that the requirement "Open the Northern Corridor!" was driven into absurdity. It was certainly a reasonable requirement and in the map's theoretical world somewhat simple. From Croatia it was only a few miles to Tuzla from the north. On UN maps, this road was excellent as a convoy road. But the map and reality did not match, here went the Serbian corridor. For the Bosnian Serb Army, one of the most important goals of the war had been to establish a land strip that could support the Serbian conquests in Bosnia and Croatia. Here passed weapons, fuel and food from Serbia. It was hardly likely that the Bosnian Serbs would let through a political-humanitarian convoy whose intention was to support the enemy side of Tuzla. It was less likely that *UNPROFOR would carry out a military operation to pave the way for a dozen trucks with beginners in the humanitarian convoy arena in Bosnia. Nevertheless, several weeks were devoted to unsuccessful attempts to get to Tuzla this way. The UNPROFOR headquarters in Zagreb was blocked by trucks and convoys demonstrated with demands that the northern road be opened. [...]

A meeting had been announced in Manchester where the continued support work for Tuzla would be discussed. It was a strange meeting, especially for those who had never experienced all the characteristics of the British left. Anyone who remembers Swedish abyss left in the 1970s can have an idea, but with the addition that dogmatism has had another twenty years to be cemented. Each small sect has its own newspaper in which the working class is informed about the right path to the revolution. Capitalism is constantly moving towards its downfall and the events of our time are preferably analyzed with a map and compass taken from the 1917 storming of the winter palace. Outside the beautiful town hall's large assembly hall, there was an expectant grumble as people flocked in on Saturday morning. The various newspaper vendors competed to offer the correct analysis of the war in the Balkans and political friends and enemies discussed over a cup of coffee. Here, as always, there were the political idealists and of course

the refugees from the war. Over the meeting podium hung a large banner with the demand that the northern road to Tuzla be opened.

Dot Gibson was the centerpiece of the meeting. When she told the 300 congressionists about her experiences from Slovenia and Croatia, everyone listened eagerly. "We have succeeded. For the working class, we have revealed the UN's imperialist intervention. They refused to let the Worker convoy through the *Posavina corridor and thus showed that they wanted to strangle Tuzla. But we have also managed to train young convoy participants who can now become leaders in the working class."

Dot Gibson has devoted her entire life to the minimal sect of WRP. She had been loyal to WRP leader Gerry Healy who, at his death, left a project in disrepair where the heirs fought for the money from Libya and sex scandals and corruption rolled up. Dot Gibson and her followers were mesmerized by the idea that now was the time to recreate the real *Fourth International and the convoys to Bosnia were the tool to win new followers. The rhetoric reached unprecedented heights and Dot Gibson was met with storming applause as she indicated the future direction. "Let's send 1.000 trucks in February / March! We blow up the Posavina-corridor! We can change the whole course of the war and save Bosnia from annihilation only if we arrive!" [...]

Meanwhile, Jenny Mees, Mick Woods and Terry Moore from England, Tim Wise from Australia and Mohammad Abdulzade from the Swedish SAC sat down in Split waiting for *UNHCR's message when they would be allowed to enter Bosnia. They sent a greeting to Manchester which was "neglected". Swedish and Danish workers' aid was not high in the course. "You have chosen to betray labor internationalism. By turning to the UN with the request for escort, you have transitioned to devoting yourself to humanitarian solidarity", Dot Gibson thundered.

The meeting ended with a parodic vote in which WRP's correct analysis won by 165 votes to 78. On Sunday morning it was time for a new meeting. It started in a chaotic spirit. The present WRP sympathizers tried to enforce that the meeting would address the issue of how Saturday's resolution would be implemented in each country. Finally, they pulled out and the remaining ones decided to form an international network, International Workers Aid.

A minimum platform was adopted in great agreement: Solidarity with Balkan workers, For a multi-ethnic Bosnia, No to ethnic cleansing and division, and Asylum rights for the refugees. Each country was given great freedom to build its

own campaigns. The focus was clear. This would be a broad organization with no hidden agendas from obscure left groups. The goal was to fight against the war by providing support for the multiethnic forces in Bosnia and to persuade Europe's unions to finally, after 18 months of war, engage with their abandoned sisters and brothers in the Balkans. [...]

Source: Ulf B Andersson, Tuzla – förnuftets oas.
Bosnien mellan krig och fred, Stockholm, Federativs, 1996, 165–167.
Translated from Swedish.

DOC. 3: SPECIFICATION OF IWA'S MODUS OPERANDI AS AN INTERNATIONAL NETWORK

While several IWA branches were registered as NGOs in their home countries, IWA as an international network never became a formal organisation. At their second meeting, in Copenhagen in December 1993, the IWA delegates adopted the following IWA Statutes, which confirmed and specified the platform they had agreed on in Manchester.

INTERNATIONAL WORKERS AID – STATUTES

1. Name

The name of the organisation is International Workers Aid

2. Aim

The unity platform of the international campaign is:

- > Solidarity with the workers of Balkans!
- > No to ethnic cleansing and ethnic partition!
- > Solidarity with the multi-ethnic Bosnia!
- > Asylumrights for all those fleeing the war in ex-Yugoslavia!

The aim is political, material and humanitarian aid to those forces in ex-Yugoslavia who are against the war and the national-chauvinism

3. Membership

All national organisations who wish to join IWA and work for its purpose can do so.

4. Delegate meeting

3–4 times a year delegates from each country meet to decide matters concerning the IWA. The delegate meeting are seeking consensus on all important matters. If a vote is necessary each national organisation has two votes.

5. Coordinating committee

The delegate meeting elect a coordinating committee to work until the next delegate meeting.

6. Finances

The delegate meeting elect a person responsible for the finances of the IWA. No funds must be spent without prior decisions by the delegate meeting or the coordinating committee.

As agreed upon in Manchester the 31/10/1993 and in Copenhagen the 12/12/1993.

Source: ARAB, AK, 18

DOC. 4: IWA'S DEFINITION OF SOLIDARITY

This document was produced by the Swedish campaign for the third international IWA meeting in Amsterdam in February 1994, at which IWA decided to launch the Bread Programme. As well as providing a self-definition of one of the most important IWA branches, it explains the philosophy of direct aid and solidarity underlying the Bread Programme, which reflects the general spirit of IWA.

BREAD FOR TUZLA – A SOLIDARITY PROGRAMME

Swedish Workers Aid / *Arbetarkonvojen* is an independently operating branch of the umbrella-organization International Workers Aid.

159

We have our roots in trade unions, peace movements, women's groups and refugee organizations, and we believe strongly in the ability of a functioning and active network to act as a counterweight against war, neo-fascism and national chauvinism in former Yugoslavia and throughout the European continent.

We want to combine direct aid to needy people with support to those forces in former Yugoslavia who are bravely fighting against the war and the lethal nationalism.

The people of Tuzla have become famous for their struggle against ethnic cleansing and nationalistic demoralization.

That's why we want to support them.

We want to show them that we think they are right.

Direct aid means, to us, that we participate and take responsibility along every step of the way – from the fund-raising and collecting of aid in our home countries

to the actual distribution in Tuzla. We travel with our own vehicles, collectively bought and maintained, and with drivers connected to the organizations involved.

We have learnt a lot from our experiences in this huge project, and as a result from this learning period we are now presenting this programme.

Running humanitarian aid is a complicated and unwieldy business. Sometimes (due to amateurism, bureaucracy or whatever) the aid can turn out to be both insensitive and misdirected. Too much aid ends up on the Black market, where it serves the purpose of the warlords in building up and reinforcing the military societies that are now blossoming all over ex-Yugoslavia. To us, it's essential to show that we support the civil societies still functioning in Bosnia.

The civil society is, by its very existence, an antipole in this perverted and destructive development. War does not only mean death, refugees, destruction of cities, villages and land, diseases and starvation – it also means a total and maybe irreparable destruction of all social, economic, political and moral structures and values.

Just distributing aid is not enough. We want to contribute to a society where it is still possible to exist as a human being. [...]

[Signed by] Eva X [Moberg] / Swedish Workers Aid

DOC. 5: THE CREATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL COORDINATION OFFICE

After the logistical centre opened in Makarska and IWA's activities had started to expand, the members decided, at their meeting in Brescia in June 1994, to set up an international coordination office (instead of a simple coordination committee as before) and to establish internal operational procedures, in order to deal with the growing number of communication and cooperation issues. The following proposals were drawn up by a working group during the meeting and then adopted by the entire group, with 15 in favour and none opposed.

[...] ORGANIZATION DECISIONS

1. The international meetings are the head of decisions. On these meetings we set the political aims for the organization. We also decide in what way we

should work, on which subjects we should focus on, until next meeting. During these meetings, the host write the minutes, later adjusted by delegates from two other countries. Where the next meeting is going to be located, is decided on the international meeting. The meetings are prepared by the host country together with the international coordination office.

2. Between the international meetings, important tasks which must be solved, are to be sent on referendum, organized by international coordinating office. Each member country have two votes.
3. Often there are questions and problems of less importance and they are to be solved by the international coordination office. Their work is to coordinate international campaign, keep informed on national campaigns, have contacts with bureaucracy of different countries. All their work is done according to decisions made at the international meetings. The office report in the internal news-bulletin (materially made by Italian group). They also collect information from member countries on international campaigns and of course report the situation in Makarska and Tuzla. The office have to located in Sweden. This can of course change from time to time. The office can make decisions and work as free as the Makarska office work today.
4. The Makarska office. They have, in their work, to deal with every day problems like: bureaucracy of former Yugoslavia, repairing of trucks, loading and unloading trucks, make the convoy depart as scheduled. They work according to decisions made at the international meetings. All their work is reported to the internal news bulletin. The Makarska office continue to work as before but in closer contact with the international coordinating office.
5. We can choose campaign coordinators. They coordinate national initiatives, which like to cooperate on international level (example: student campaign is coordinated by Rob and Yannick – Holland).
6. Between two internationals meetings, the coordination office (Sweden) and the Makarska group, decide together in all financial matters. The Copenhagen office continue to coordinate international finances. [...]

Source: ARAB, AK, 18: "International Workers Aid – Minute of the meeting held in Brescia 24–26 June 1994" (extract).

DOC. 6: WHAT PRIORITIES?

Besides the food convoys, various other projects were launched in Tuzla by different IWA members, which often led to discussions about priorities in IWA's work. At the meeting in Aalbeke in March 1995, one working group addressed this question and came up with a proposal for a priority list, which was then agreed by the meeting. (See also text part, pp. 46–47)

[...] GROUP 4: IWA NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGNS, PRIORITY OF PROJECTS, WHAT PROJECTS AND RESPONSIBLES

Walter (Austria), Franziska (Germany), Yannick (Holland), Monica, Yves, Sigrid (Belgium), Regina (Italy), Agnes (France).

Proposal:

Our priorities stay:

1. the union of Kreka Miners and the bread programme.
2. the womens newspaper – Franziska
3. the miners newspaper – Mathias
4. the Kreka-mines womens union – Jenny

Agreed

162 /

Some other projects are interesting but for us not to be done, like the proposal in Elses text about the work-clothes and helmets for miners. This can be something for *Ship to Bosnia.

National campaigns can have other projects running. Like the teachers project (Flanders, Denmark), the Tuzla University (Holland students), theater-project (France), media (Italy)... but they are responsible themselves for work and contacts. They can ask help from Makarska and get it if possible for the people there. Here we had a discussion about priorities and drowning in the different existing projects so that there is no time and energy left for the priority, the bread project. We thought there was a real danger indeed, but also engaging more people around different projects attracts also people and sections of trade unions (like the teachers trade unions). [...]

Source: ARAB, AK, 18: "Minutes of international IWA-conference, Aalbeke (Belgium) 4–5 March 1995" (extract).

DOC. 7: IWA'S BUDGET

IWA adopted a common budget every six months. While the IWA branches were responsible for the costs within their own campaigns, the common budget was meant to cover mainly the running costs of the Makarska office and then also of the Tuzla office. The contributions of each country group were tailored to their financial means. The common budget was administered by the Danish IWA branch *Konvoj til Bosnien*. Below is one example of a budget, as adopted at the meeting in Aarhus in 1995. The document was produced by the Danish office, and also served as a reminder to the national campaigns to pay the agreed amounts.

ECONOMY

To national campaigns within IWA (This is part of the minutes from our international meeting)

At our last international meeting in Denmark, we decided on the budget below. We agreed that it is not possible to lower any costs more than we already have. (Maybe we can cut down on rent, but at present time we do not have a better offer.)

Subject:	One month:	½ year
Communication	3.000,00 DM	18.000 DM
Rent	1.700,00 DM	10.200 DM
Transport	450,00 DM	2.700 DM
Newspaper	140,00 DM	840 DM
Office equipment	100,00 DM	600 DM
Tuzla office	1.300, 00 DM	7.800 DM
Travel cost int. meetings	200,00 DM	1.200 DM
Others	100,00 DM	600 DM
Total	6.990,00 DM	41.940 DM

Communication: Phone and fax bill, stamps and copies.

Rent: office, flat and warehouse

Transport: Bus tickets, fuel for the car (trips to Mostar, Split, Zagreb etc.)

Newspaper: Subscription of The Independent.

Office equipment: Pens, paper, colour and battery for the computer.

Tuzla office: rent, translation, fuel for the car, communication.

Travel cost int. meetings: Travel costs for one person from the Makarska office to attend the international meeting.

Others: translation in Croatia and unexpected costs.

This of course means that we will all have to pay our share. We have divided it into two main categories. 900 DM/half year for very small campaigns. This is the minimum for being part of IWA. Medium sized campaigns pay 3,000 DM/half year. Sweden and Denmark pay more.

If you are not part of IWA but would like to get all information you can pay 400 DM/half year to the Stockholm office, and they will fax/phone you and keep you posted. You can not vote at international meetings.

We have divided the costs as following:

E [Spain] 900 DM
UK 900 DM (maybe)
CH [Switzerland] 900 DM
F [France] 900 DM
G [Greece] 900 DM (Ok)
D [Germany] 3,000 DM
I [Italy] 3,000 DM
B [Belgium] 3,000 DM (ok)
NL [Netherlands] 3,000 DM (Ok)
A [Austria] 3,000 DM
N [Norway] 3,000 DM
DK [Denmark] 8,000 DM (OK)
S [Sweden] 11,500 DM (ok)
Total 42,000 DM

Half of the amount must be payed now to cover the next three months expenses, and the other half after the next international meeting if we decide to keep the program running as now. *Split tax is still 200 DM per MT for IWA groups (groups that pay at least 900 DM/half year.) Groups outside IWA still pay 300 DM per MT.

It is very important that you get back to us ASAP. You must inform us if you can pay your share. Please call Lone at the Danish office. + 45 33 93 31 42

Source: PA Woods, 2: "Minutes 9th international meeting of the IWA in Aarhus, Denmark". – Note: The "(maybe)" and "(ok)" in brackets have been added by hand on the printed document.

DOC. 8: HOW TO CONTINUE?

The improving humanitarian situation in Tuzla in 1995 and the prospect of a peace agreement in autumn 1995 once again triggered discussion within IWA about the priorities for its activities. At the meeting in Vienna in October 1995, two proposals were discussed: one was to close the office in Makarska and organise all work in and from Tuzla, the other was to move the logistical centre from Makarska (in Croatia) to Zenica (in Bosnia and Herzegovina) and from there to continue with activities in Tuzla but also in other parts of BiH. After lengthy discussions, the authors of both proposals were asked to sit down together and draw up a shared proposal, which was then presented to the meeting. The parts of the documents in italics indicate the results of votes on these proposals, which appear later in the minutes of this meeting.

PRESENTATION OF THE NEW PROPOSALS

The proposals of Denmark and Belgium [...]

1. The conference of Vienna reinforces our common political line of work: we look for support in our countries for multiethnic forces in the town of Tuzla. We concentrate on some specified projects agreed on by international meetings.

Consensus

2. We continue our material support for the Trade Union of Kreka Mines in Tuzla. We change our bread-project into the parcel project. The detailed description and budget for this parcel project is a task for our Makarska-office people to develop.

The parcels will be transported to Zenica, packed and ready.

This is to keep the powerful force for our campaigns in our home-countries; our own trucks that bring food/necessities to the people in distress that we want to support because of their will for keeping their multiethnic society going on.

Consensus

3. We close down the Makarska-office and warehouse as soon as possible – the last by beginning of January 1996.

Consensus

4. We have our main office in Tuzla – where we will have possibilities for communications. An international phone-line, Fax and E-mail will be installed.

Pro: 12. Against: 2. Abstentions: 2

5. We have our warehouse, drivers and trucks stationed in Zenica because the facilities there are better for the moment than in Tuzla and because we want to keep the symbolic value of the convoys.

Pro: 5. Against: 4. Abstentions: 7

6. IWA still has other projects running in Tuzla. Internationally we support the trade union newspaper, the project with the Kreka womens association, the teachers project.

Consensus

7. We can drive convoys to other towns / regions of Bosnia when specifically asked by a Bosnian trade union. Then the national campaigns decide by referendum if they want to support this.

[Point 7 has been slightly modified from the original formulation] [...]

Source: PA Gysin, 1995: "International IWA meeting, 29.9.–1.10.1995, Annental, Hainfeld, Austria" (extract).

Note: In the end, IWA did not open an office in Zenica, nor did it continue to organise convoys to Tuzla after the closing of the Makarska office in early 1996, focusing instead on more structural projects in Tuzla. (See text part, p. 64)

DOC. 9: BRAINSTORMING ABOUT THE FUTURE OF IWA

At the international meeting in Antwerp in October 1997, ahead of IWA's upcoming five-year anniversary in 1998, the attendees held a quick brainstorm about possible future directions for the organisation. The different answers – including one sarcastic remark by the authors of the minutes – illustrate the difficulties faced by IWA for several years after the war in setting itself a clear goal for the future.

H. FUTURE

Proposal U. [...] There is an interest to seek more time to discuss IWA and the future.

A.: Very positive view on the future. Although the people aren't too interested in the subject it is still possible.

L.: Thinks there is a crisis. It is a period of changes. He will continue the Holidays for children. He believes in the good effects of it. Like the town twinning between Saint-Denis [in France] and Tuzla.

B.: Broaden the campaigns / A new Platform. Closer co-operation with other NGO's who also focus on Multiethnicity.

T.: Don 't lose track with the practical work. Shouldn't we search for one action in common to stimulate political and social organisations? This is now more difficult than three years ago, but still possible to do.

X.: "IWA showed the world where to go !" New Messiah !!!! Why not start an (Inter)national trade union office in Tuzla ???? Or an IWA group from Tuzla ???

S.: World-wide Network, GROW

A.: We need more time to explore what we will do in the future. There is a need for an ideological Congress !!!

J.: We should stress the multicultural side of Tuzla more and let people know about the dangers like Seselj. IWA should spread this kind of news.

U.: Some people are burned out. Conferences always give new flames, ideas, it is good that we have our projects, otherwise we were just a political club. In Berlin we decided to make direct links with unions. What have we done so far.

Source: PA Gysin, 1997: "IWA International meeting in Antwerp. Autumn 97, October 24–25, 1997. Minutes" (extract).

DOC. 10: "FROM HUMANITARIAN HELP TO DEMOCRACY PROJECTS"

167

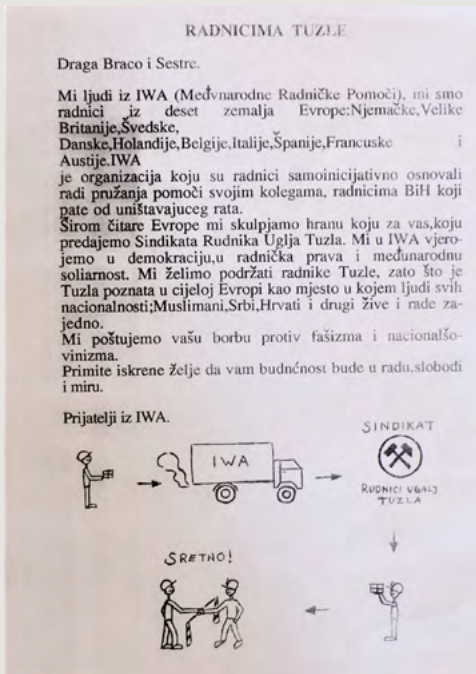
For its fifth anniversary in November 1998, IWA held its regular international meeting in Tuzla, including a press conference for the local media. The minutes of the meeting give us an informal but accurate insight into how IWA saw itself at this time.

[...] A press conference has been announced at 13. 00. Li has send out invitations to different papers, radio stations and TV stations. This morning, Li was also participating in a talkshow on Radio Soli where she talked about how the work of IWA has changed from humanitarian help to democracy projects. What shall we say to the press and who shall talk? Li and Hans-Peter will talk about our work and political aim.

Questions raised and answered in our meeting: How much have we send here? About 400 tons of food at a cost of about 1 million DM and the women parcels.

Why are we here? To strengthen the democracy and the multiethnicity through supporting workers and women. Who are we? An international network with representatives in 10 countries. Our political aim? Help to self help, to generate independent trade unions and organisations with an aspect of self-organisation.

Source: PA Gysin, 1998: "Minutes from the international IWA meeting in Tuzla, 13.11.98" (extract).



TO THE WORKERS OF TUZLA
Dear Brothers and Sisters.
We, the people from IWA, are workers from 10 European countries: Germany, Great Britain, Sweden, Denmark, the Netherlands, Belgium, Italy, Spain, France and Austria. IWA is an organisation founded by workers on their own initiative to help their fellow BiH workers suffering from a devastating war. We collect food for you from across Europe, which we hand over to the Tuzla Coal Miners' Trade Union. We at IWA believe in democracy, workers' rights and international solidarity. We want to support the workers of Tuzla, because Tuzla is known throughout Europe as a place where people of all nationalities, Muslims, Serbs, Croats and others, live and work together. We respect your fight against fascism and national chauvinism. Accept our sincere wishes for your future in work, freedom and peace. Friends from IWA

Leaflet distributed by the IWA team in Tuzla with some of the food parcels for miners in 1995. (PA Franziska Bachmann)

B. THE CONVOYS

IWA's principal activity during the war was organising convoys to Tuzla from different parts of Europe. The documents in this section will provide a more tangible idea of how these convoys were arranged and the various challenges involved.

DOC. 11: "IWA HAS ARRIVED": THE FIRST CONVOY IN NOVEMBER 1993

The three IWA trucks that made it to Tuzla in November 1993 – a feat that many had considered impossible – became the organisation's founding myth. IWA's later convoys were also organised along the southern route, via Makarska, but with much more preparation. The following report about the November 1993 convoy was written by one of its five participants, Tim Wise, shortly after his return, and provides a detailed account of the difficulties encountered, the attitude of the UN, the warm reception in Tuzla and the first impressions of the city. (See also text part, pp. 22–23) A shortened version of this report was published in *Socialist Outlook* 32, December 1994.

INTERNATIONAL WORKERS AID, SPLIT TO TUZLA REPORT BY TIM WISE

The Workers Aid Convoy consisting of 3 trucks totaling 24 tonnes of aid departed Split – destination Tuzla, on Thursday 4th November. We had no *UNPROFOR number plates and did not have papers to cross into BiH territory. Our first stop was Livno and we unloaded the trailer of aid to the Caritas Church as it was not possible to take the trailer on the route to Tuzla.

From Livno we headed to Duvno [former name of Tomislavgrad] [...] as this was a base for the British UNPROFOR. We met with the commander of the base who informed us that a convoy of trucks and tanks were heading up to Vitez the following morning and that we could follow them. We all slept in the trucks outside the base that night as we were not allowed to stay on the base overnight even though we had UN Blue Cards.

At 7am the British convoy began to leave, we were informed that somebody would come and tell us when to go. After 20 minutes of waiting we decided to depart as the convoy had gone without us. We had to drive quickly to try catch them, which we eventually did. We travelled on the back of the convoy for approximately one and a half hours when we were forced to stop because of the puncture on one of our vehicles. The British Convoy did not stop to help us. After 3 hours of repairs

we continued and met the convoy as it was stuck because of a French truck that had gone off the road.

The British decided to make one large convoy made up of British, French and Workers Aid trucks. We continued to Vitez and quite a lot of fighting could be heard on the way. On arrival at Vitez we asked the French convoy that was continuing to Zenica if we could follow them for protection under UNPROFOR: they refused us protection and drove on. We were left outside the British base and had to ask to for in as it would have been far too dangerous for us to stay outside this camp at night. We were fed and given beds for the night. We asked the British captain what the situation was like further up the route. His response was that it was dangerous and that we should think about the possibilities of turning back and delivering aid somewhere else.

We all decided against this advice and set off first thing in the morning as 2 British APC' [military vehicles] were going to the first *HVO controlled checkpoint out of Vitez. We were told that this was quite a difficult checkpoint and that they were unfriendly and can be dangerous. The British informed us that one APC will be in front of the convoy and one at the rear. Once we stopped at the checkpoint they would also stop. If any troubles occur they will intervene.

170 /

We were all nervous driving to this border as we had no proper papers to cross and we did not know what to expect. Upon arrival at the HVO checkpoint we were waved down, told to stop engines. They asked for our papers so we handed them the receipt that we got from Caritas and they seemed confused and kept on asking for exit documents. They did not speak English and we did not speak Croat so we communicated for about 20 minutes with our hand, feet, heads and any other body gesture we could think of. They then telephoned for their interpreter who arrived 10 minutes later. They started to check the first truck which was OK, then onto our Swedish truck which was also OK.

When they were searching Terry's truck they found some very old ex-German army uniforms which they did not like at all. They explained that it was extremely bad and they could be used by the BiH army. They then found sacks of army boots and so decided to do a thorough search of all the trucks. This went on for about 3.5 hours. During this time Mohammed stalled giving his passport when asked 4 times, he did not want to, as his name is a Muslim name and this could endanger his life. We distracted their attention by giving cigarettes away, saying sorry so many time regarding the old military clothing and said yes when they wanted 20

liters of our diesel. The local TV station sent a cameraman to video our trucks and the confiscated clothing. We explained that all the goods will be going to a Croatian held pocket in Bosnia but we were not quite sure what area. They seemed to accept this but demanded that we bring a receipt back for them on our return journey and also that the next convoy of ours to pass through should leave some aid in the Vitez region. They gave us permission to pass and we continued to the next HVO checkpoint. This we managed to pass with no problems – just a few cigarettes given.

The next checkpoint was the BiH frontier. They were extremely friendly and happy to see us and they passed around plum brandy and we all drank together. The British escorted us to the next BiH checkpoint and suggested that we go to the *UNHCR headquarters as it would be safe to stay there. The mines on the road were cleared and we drove to the UNHCR office and warehouses. The British APC' did not escort us as they had turned back at the last BiH checkpoint.

On arrival at the UNHCR we were met by Steve who was in charge. He was a very unfriendly character and did not give us any advice and refused us permission to sleep the night in the UNHCR compound. He seemed extremely hostile to us and could not believe that we had made it this far. (Point of information: All UNHCR convoys had been suspended one and a half weeks earlier as a Danish UNHCR driver had been shot dead). The Blue UNHCR ID Cards did not even allow us to stay in the UNHCR compound – reason unknown.

171

We decided to drive onto the French UN camp in Kakanj: they refused us entry and turned us away. We had no protection and it was night. The role of UNPROFOR was specifically set up to protect UNHCR convoys. We had our Blue Cards, yet they refused us entry and help.

From there we set off again – this time to the Canadian Base in Visoko. They checked our ID cards and granted us permission to enter and were very friendly. We slept the night at Canbat (Canadian Battalion). The following morning we arranged to get 260 liters of diesel and to be escorted by 2 PC's into Vares.

The Canadian assured us to protection through Vares and into the *Nordbat Base just out of Vares. After a 3 hour drive we passed Vares town that had witnessed fighting 2 days earlier. Vares had been a Croat pocket and was on the main supply route to the Tuzla region, a Bosnian Brigade had over run the town and is now in control of it.

We had lunch at Nordbat and arranged to get a return convoy into Tuzla at 1pm. This convoy just arrived from Tuzla and was a supply convoy for Nordbat in Vares. The convoy to Tuzla comprised of about 15 vehicles, so it was rather safe. The route took us up the famous Mike India climb to the stop of Malankavic Mountain, a very narrow dirt road with sharp hair-pin bends ascending upwards. The Hill was so steep that the handbrakes would not hold the trucks if we had to stop, Terry almost went over the edge on one occasion. I, took about 2 hours to climb to the top. On the descent we encountered 2 low and narrow tunnels that Terry got stuck in, not even 4 metres high. The UN troops help direct Terry through – but damage has occurred to the top of the truck. The journey from Vares to Tuzla took about 8.5 hours.

The convoy of UN vehicles left us to go in the Nordbat [...] base. We drove the last 8 km by ourselves which was great to do. We were all extremely happy at seeing the sign of “TUZLA” – a long dangerous journey finally comes to an end. We had to go through one more BiH checkpoint before the city. The guard were very thin and wanted food. They did not even want cigarettes. We drove into the centre of Tuzla and luckily found the UNHCR building. We were even more lucky to bump into Steve Tannick of ECTF [European Community Task Force] who booked us into the Tuzla hotel. He was amazed that we had made it as he thought that we had turned back at Zagreb. IWA has arrived!

172 /

After a well deserved sleep we met Steve again who introduced us to Mr Marinko Jakovac of the *Rudarski* [Mining] Institute of Tuzla. This was the man who had sent the first fax of help from the Tuzla miners many months before. Marinko was to be our interpreter and main organiser for our stay in Tuzla.

Our first appointment was with the Trade Union (delegation from the famous Kreka Miners Syndicate). We had a normal introduction and drank plum brandy (we all got very used to it after 11 days in Tuzla). We then discussed a joint plan for the distribution of the aid.

The Mayor of Tuzla came to meet us and gave a speech (all on video)²⁰⁹. After sorting out our plans for the next week we want to meet the Mayor for a late lunch. From walking around the town on that first day you suddenly notices the

209 Tim Wise was filming during the convoy and later made a documentary for IWA entitled “From Timex to Tuzla”. Timex refers to a factory in Dundee where workers went on strike in 1993, and where goods were collected for the convoy to Tuzla.

harsh conditions that the people of Tuzla live in. The rest of the night was spent meeting local miners, electricity plant workers, journalists, TV and local people.

Wednesday the 10th: we all unloaded the trucks at the main warehouse of the Kreka Miner in the town. While unloading it became apparent the damage that has been caused by the border guards at the HVO check-point in Vitez. Many of the personal packages had been thrown around and items stolen. Damage to parcels had also occurred from water and the names of people destroyed.²¹⁰ This would prove to be a great problem later on and also sad as some people did not receive parcels. During the unloading many young children helped out – I gave all of them a Timex strike T-shirt for their help. It was great to see these T-shirts being worn (Timex to Tuzla has officially occurred).

Terry and myself went for a press meeting with the Mayor which was filmed by Television Tuzla and shown that night. In the evening we all went to Radio Cameleon and were interviewed. This Radio Station has only been open for about one and half years. It plays a lot of western music and is a very popular station for the young, cold, bored youth of Tuzla.

Thursday: we all visited the Kreka Mine below ground. I did an interview with a miner and filmed parts of the mine entrance and belts, and also the meeting with the mine manager.

In the afternoon we visited the “TE” electricity power plant. This is a huge plant. Before the war this plant powered the whole of the Tuzla region and even exported electricity to other parts of the former Yugoslavia. The plant is capable of 800 MW! I filmed the main control room which was a very depressing sight as on the wall was a large Mega Watt output gauge. Before the war it registered 800 MW and while I was filming it, the total output of the plant registered 4 MW!

During the fighting in Tuzla the Serbs had managed a direct hit from about 20 km away into one of the smoke stacks. I filmed the men working shoveling coal onto belts to be put into the furnace. They earn 3.5 DM per month! On Friday we visited an open air mine ‘Banovici’ about 20 km’s out of Tuzla. We had another meeting with the union and gifts were given to all of us. I filmed local peasants digging for coal for the winter – did an interview as well.

²¹⁰ The cargo also included packages from Bosnian refugees in the UK destined for family members or friends in Tuzla.

In the afternoon we visited the 2nd Brigade – the Miners Brigade – of the BiH Army. This Brigade I think sums up the whole of Tuzla as it comprises of Tuzla miners of mixed ethnic backgrounds, Serbs, Croats and Muslims fighting for the same cause of wanting to live together in a free peaceful world. [...]

When we got back to the Hotel Tuzla we found out that Terry's truck had its fuel line cut. Somebody had intervened, and we lost most of the fuel. This is understandable a diesel in Tuzla on the black market costs between 25-40 DM per liter! Sugar about 35 DM and coffee 80-90 DM per kg.

Saturday, 13th: I interviewed the Mayor of Tuzla. He is of very strong character and a very modest man. The people of Tuzla love him and he even walks around the town with no armed guards.

Saturday and Sunday I filmed Tuzla town and interviewed people. Visited an orphanage where the children come mainly from the Srebrenica area and many are the ages of 3 – 9 years and parents have been killed. They are all very disturbed and hungry. [...]

It starts to snow for the first time in Tuzla. Winter is coming early. We have a large farewell dinner with the TUC's [Trade Union Councils] and the Mayor (I didn't film this as I wanted the night off). I will give you a report of our failed return trip once I'm back in London.

174 /

Everything is all on video!

From being in Tuzla for those 11 cold nights, I can honestly say that these people are fantastic. They say that we are heroes. But they are the real heroes. A small part of ex-Yugoslavia does exist. This place is called Tuzla! They are a small community living together from all over that once great country. They are fighting the aggressors with sticks and stones and will be forced into the Dark Ages very soon. The winter has arrived with force. It is upon you all to stop this HELL, only WE CAN. Time is running out – the United Nations don't care, the aggression continues. WHAT THE HELL – YOUR ARE ALL IN PARADISE!

My impressions – Tim JS Wise.

Source : ARAB, AK, 18: "IWA, Split to Tuzla report, by Tim Wise"



On the way to Tuzla, November 1993, photo taken by Jenny Mees from the truck driven by Mohammad Abdulzade.

The IWA crew visiting the Kreka Coal mine in November 1993; Mick Woods in front, on his left Marinko Jakovac, from the Miners Institute, and Terry Moore (with the red cap). (Photo: Jenny Mees)



Meeting in the city hall with representatives of the Municipality, from left to right: Sead Avdić (head of Executive Board) Jenny Mees, Selim Bešlić (mayor), Tim Wise, and Refik Ahmedinović (in charge of economic affairs). (PA Jenny Mees)



DOC. 12: LIST OF CONVOYS 1994-1995

This list of convoys was compiled by the IWA Makarska office in August 1995. It includes the 25 convoys that IWA had organised between Makarska and (mainly) Tuzla, from the establishment of the IWA office in Makarska in spring 1994 up to that point. Each entry features a) the convoy number (comprising the year followed by the number of the convoy in that year, e.g. 9403 = third convoy in 1994), b) the date of arrival at the destination, c) the names of the drivers and passengers, d) the content of the load, and e) the gross weight of the load. Six or seven more convoys were organised between September 1995 and February 1996, when the Makarska office and warehouse were closed, so this document includes over 80% of all the IWA convoys. The list illustrates the strong focus on Tuzla, the importance of the Bread Programme (with flour, oil and sugar being the main cargo), and also the very international make-up of the drivers and passengers.

INTERNATIONAL WORKERS AID

IWAs konvojer [= IWA's convoys]

Convoy No: 9401

Date of arrival in Tuzla: 18/4 [1994]

Drivers / other personnel: Vagn R. (DK), Kresten T (DK), Mick W (GB),

176 / Patrik B (S), Stig O (S), Jenny M (B), Eva X (S), Aldegonde A (B).

Load: Flour, oil, sugar, etc.

Convoj No: 9402

Date of arrival in Tuzla: 30/4 [1994]

Drivers / other personnel: Mick W (GB), Harry D (B),

Josetxu M (BASQUE), Jürgen D (B), Kenneth A (S), Yannick P (NL)

Load: Flour, oil & sugar

Weight brutto: 13.5 MT

Convoy No: 9403

Date of arrival in Tuzla: 8/5 [1994]

Drivers / other personnel: Mick W (GB), Kenneth A (S), Hermann N (D),
Berndt K (D), Harry D (B), Alice P (DK)

Load: Flour

Weight brutto: 9 MT

Convoy No: 9404

Date of arrival in Tuzla: 22/5 [1994]

Drivers / other personnel: Mick W (GB), Josetxu M (BASQUE), Harry H (B)

Load: Flour, oil, sugar & clothing

Weight brutto: 13.5 MT

Convoy No: 9405

Date of arrival in Tuzla: 3/6 [1994]

Drivers / other personnel: Mick W (GB), Josetxu M (BASQUE),

Bengt N (S), Charlotte K (S)

Load: Flour, yeast, sugar, paper, beans, pasta & rice

Weight brutto: Approx. 12 MT

Convoy No: 9406

Date of arrival in Tuzla: 15/6 [1994]

Drivers / other personnel: Mick W (GB), Kristian B (DK), Harry H (B),

Lone R (DK), Lawrence H (USA), Jadran S (NL)

Load: Flour & mixed food

Weight brutto: 18.9 MT

Convoy No: 9407

Date of arrival in Tuzla: 21/6 [1994]

Drivers / other personnel: Mick W (GB), Harry H (B), Jadran S (NL), Gölin F (S)

Load: Flour, yeast, chickpeas, mixed food

Weight brutto: 14.4 MT

 177

Convoy No: 9408

Date of arrival in Tuzla: 2/7 [1994]

Drivers / other personnel: Mick W (GB), Mark G-A (DK), Harry D'h (B),

Jadran S (NL), Ulrik K (DK), Thomas P (DK)

Load: Flour, school equipment, oil, sugar, rice, pasta

Weight brutto: 18.9 MT

Convoy No: 9409

Date of arrival in Tuzla: 12/7 [1994]

Drivers / other personnel: Mick W (GB), Mark G-A (DK),

Jadran S (NL), Harry D'h (B), Alberto G A (Burgos Solidaria) [NGO from Castile,

Spain], Jordi C C (Burgos Solidaria), Gerardo O d J (Burgos Solidaria),

Josu H O (Burgos Solidaria)

Load: Rice, sugar, beans, toys, clothes, oil.

Weight brutto: 19 MT

Convoy No:9410

Date of arrival in Tuzla: 20/7 [1994]

Drivers / other personnel: Mick W (GB), Mark G-A (DK), Harry D'h (B), Jadran S (NL), Gölin F (S), Kenneth A (S).

Load: Flour, pasta & beans

Weight brutto: 14 MT

Convoy No: 9411

Date of arrival in Tuzla: 11/8 [1994]

Drivers / other personnel: Mark G-A (DK), Berndt K (DK), Bruno G (DK), Kenneth A (S), Steen L (DK), Agnete B (S)

Load: Sugar, oil, biscuits, mixed food, beans

Weight brutto: 8.4 MT

Convoy No: 9412

Date of arrival in Tuzla: 10/9 [1994]

Drivers / other personnel: Mick W (GB), Roland J (S), Marga B (NL)

Load: Flour, mixed food, rice, sugar, lentals, oil.

Weight brutto: 9 MT

Convoy No: 9413

Papers missing

Weight brutto: Approx. 15 MT

178 /

Convoy No: 9414

Papers missing

Weight brutto: Approx. 10 MT

Convoy No: 9415

Date of arrival in Tuzla: 11/2 [probably incorrect date, could be 2/11]

Drivers / other personnel: Marc G-A (DK), Monique W (B), Bert V (B), Moreni R (Italy), Lorenzo C (Italy), Major J (B), Ismet D (BiH), Rasid M (BiH)

Load: Flour, oil, sugar, hygienic material

Weight brutto: Approx. 25

Convoy No: 9416

Date of arrival in Tuzla: 11/11 [1994]

Drivers / other personnel: Mick W (GB), Marc G-A (DK), Monique W (B), Bert V (B), Lars G (DK), Gert C (DK)

Load: Hygienic material, first 1200 women parcels

Weight brutto: 10.5 MT

Convoy No: 9417

Date of arrival in Tuzla: 21/11 [1994]

Drivers / other personnel: Mick W (GB), Marc G-A (DK), Jadran S (NL)

Load: Flour, oil, sugar, yeast, school material

Weight brutto: 8.4 MT

Convoy No: 9418

Date of arrival in Tuzla: 24/12 [1994]

Drivers / other personnel: ?

Load: Various

Weight brutto: 4.8 MT

Convoy No: 9501

Date of arrival in Tuzla: 15/1 [1995]

Drivers / other personnel: J F Borie, E. Lacroix, F. Martiniere, J R Germain, J F Philips

Load: Women parcels – 80 pallets

Weight brutto: 25 MT

Convoy No: 9502

Date of arrival in Tuzla: 3/2 [1995]

Drivers / other personnel: Marc G A (DK) + 3 Atlas drivers

Load: Women parcels (51 pallets + 360 parcels in Kaiser [name of a smaller truck brand])

Weight brutto: 14 MT

 179

Convoy No: 9503

Date of arrival in Tuzla: 24/3 [1995]

Drivers / other personnel: Marc G-A (DK), Monique W (B)

Load: Flour, oil, sugar, yeast

Weight brutto: 13 MT

Convoy No: 9504

Date of arrival in Mostar: 15/4 [1995]

Drivers / other personnel: Michel W (S), Monique W (B), Lennart R (S)

Load: Tea, bomboni, hygienic material, tin cans, rice, salt & candles

Weight brutto: 6 T

Convoy No: 9505

Arrival in Mostar: 28/7 [1995]

Drivers: Jordi Estrada, Montse Playá

Load: school materials

Weight brutto: 1.3 mt

Convoy No: 9506

Date of arrival in Tuzla: 3/8 [1995]

Driven by ATLAS [French NGO]

Load: Flour, rice, pasta, sugar, oil

Weight brutto: 26 mt

Convoy No: 9507

Date of arrival in Tuzla: 22/8 [1995]

Drivers: Michel (S), Magnus (S)

Load: Flour, rice, pasta, sugar, oil, other

Weight brutto: 10 T

International Workers Aid – Logistic

c/o Roso Dinko, Slavonska 19, 58300 Makarska, Croatia

Phone & fax: + 385 21 611 303 (for fax please phone first)

Source: PA Woods, 1

180 /



At the first IWA warehouse in Makarska: unloading a truck from Germany, 1994. (SPARK Archives)

IWA convoy at a petrol station in Split. Before entering Bosnia and Herzegovina, all IWA trucks had to go to Split for the customs papers. (SPARK Archives)



IWA convoy on its way to Tuzla, on a muddy mountain road, 1994. (Photo: Thomas Proctor)

IWA convoy on its way to Tuzla, negotiating a narrow passage, 1994.
(Photo: Thomas Proctor)



IWA convoy on its way to Tuzla, encountering a UN convoy, 1994.
(Photo: Thomas Proctor)

Unloading goods at the warehouse of the Coal Miners' Trade Union in Tuzla, 1994.
(Photo: Thomas Proctor)



/ 181



Mick Woods recording goods as they are unloaded at the warehouse in Tuzla, 1994.
(Photo: Kristian Buus)

From its warehouse in Tuzla, the Coal Miners' Trade Union brought the goods to different pits. There they were distributed as food parcels among the miners.
(Photo: Franziska Bachmann)



DOC. 13: THE LOGISTICAL WORK IN MAKARSKA

This is one example of the numerous "Split reports", which provide an insight into the day-to-day work of the Makarska office, from where the transports to Tuzla were organised.

SPLIT REPORT NO. 15

MAKARSKA 12/7 – 94

Dear friends

Here is another report from the very hot and sunny Croatia. Things have been very confusing here recently, because we have had guests from Sweden, Spain and France all in the same week. It has been a little difficult for us to be good hosts, because we at the same time had a lot of work to do. – Our apologies for that.

Shipments to Split

During the last week we had 23 T from Spain, and 17 T from Sweden coming to Split, so we filled our warehouse, but only for a short while though.

Warehousing and accommodation

We decided to move again, for a number of reasons. We will have to pay 1.700 DM per month, incl. everything (parking place for trucks, warehouse and an apartment with our own kitchen, and our own washing machine, this price also included water and electricity.) All this counted together, will be cheaper than what we are paying now, and it will make it a lot easier for us to have everything in the same place. We move on the 1st of August. I'll give you more detailed information on this later.

Trucks

Unfortunately one of our trucks broke down on the last convoy, and it was impossible to repair it, so it is now stuck on a base in Visoko. We are at the moment investigating how much it will cost to fix it, and if it's worth it. The good news is that we got a new 10 T truck, which we will bring on the next convoy. This truck only cost us a cup of coffee.

Cars

Our Opel Ascona is still in the workshop, and this is Jadrans private car so we can not count on using it too much. The Mazda has a flat battery, so we have to push it every time we start it, also it does not run on all the cylinders. I don't know anything about cars, but I'm told that this is very bad. We had an offer from a Bosnian driver who now lives in Croatia. He wants to start driving for us in about two weeks, and he also wants to sell us his jeep. It should be in a very good condition, and reasonably cheap, but we have not seen it yet, so we will get back to you on that.

Staff

Agnetta from Sweden arrived this morning, and is going to work in the office for 6 weeks, because Gölin (who has been very good to work with) is leaving in about a week. We have two drivers from Holland coming on the 10th of August, and two Danish drivers should turn up in the beginning of August, so for August we are doing fine. We are short of drivers for the next convoy, the main reason for this is the new 10 T truck. So far we have five trucks and five drivers. We will try to call other organisations down here to ask for assistance.

Convoy # 9

Left Makarska Sunday the 10th and arrived in Tuzla yesterday. Since we didn't have one of our trucks we borrowed one from *SOS Balkanes. This time we brought in 19 T of rice, sugar, beans, oil, flour, mixed food, toys, clothes and medicine. We are expecting the convoy back tomorrow night.

Convoy # 10

Is scheduled to leave July 18th. With the new truck, and if we can use SOS Balkanes truck again, we will be able to move 28,4 T in one convoy. Then it really starts looking like something. This means that we will empty our warehouse. – So please – send us more goods as soon as possible. (But of course, give us a call before you do so.)

Economy

During the last 1 1/2 month we have been doing very good, in terms of bringing in food. This obviously means that we also spend a lot of money. I will not give you a long speech about this, (I guess you know it by now) I'll just tell you that we again need money.

What else.

Well, I think this is all for now.

P.S. We were just informed that a 7 T truck from Germany is coming in tonight. They are driving directly to Tuzla with the next convoy, so we don't have to unload here. There are two drivers in the truck, so this means that we have a spare driver for the next trip.

Have a nice summer

Lone [Degn Rasmussen]

DOC. 14: ACHIEVEMENTS...AND PROBLEMS

Alongside the office reports from Makarska, Tuzla, Stockholm and the national campaigns, IWA members sometimes also shared personal reports in their own name. This one was written by Mick Woods, who had been one of the drivers of the first Tuzla convoy in November 1993 and became a key IWA figure as a driver and organiser of the Makarska office in 1994 and 1995. He wrote this report for the Stockholm IWA meeting in August 1994, which he was unable to attend. It provides a personal perspective on IWA's successes and work as well as the very practical difficulties that it faced on the ground.

PERSONAL REPORT TO THE STOCKHOLM MEETING OF IWA, 10–11 AUGUST 1994

Since it seems unlikely that I will be able to attend the Stockholm meeting for a number of reasons I will refer to below I am sending this written report in the hope that it will both inform and clarify the debates which our organisation needs to go forward.

Whatever the outcome of the Stockholm meeting I believe that to date IWA has written a proud chapter in working class history. We have established an office and a functioning convoy operation in the middle of a war situation. We have successfully overcome obstacles places in the way of our operation, built links with organisations of the working class in Croatia and Bosnia- Herzegovina and cooperated with other non-governmental humanitarian and solidarity organisations. All this has been done on a shoestring budget.

Up until the last month or so this organisation has operated in an open and comradely fashion and those of us in ex-Yugoslavia have felt we have enjoyed the confidence and support of our comrades in Northern Europe despite difference that have arisen. The last period has been a nightmare where everything has gone wrong....trucks, finances, Balkan bureaucracy, allegations of black-marketeering ...shit has really happened! This has caused a lot of friction both here and with the home countries. However since I started writing this report the situation has improved a lot and this report is far more positive than the first draft.

ACHIEVEMENTS

We have so far run 11 convoys to Tuzla and one to Mostar. We are leaving tomorrow for Tuzla (Saturday September 10th). We have delivered to date 138.484 metric tonnes of aid to the miners union as well as facilitating the delivery of other loads to the Logistic Centre, Caritas and Merhamet. We have further assisted the Convoy of Mercy with the loan of a driver for a run to Tuzla and have just run a joint convoy to Mostar with them for which we earned 650 DM.

In return we have enjoyed the loan of a driver Josetxu for 3 convoys and an 8 tonne Ebro truck for 3 convoy from SOS Balkanes. We have further borrowed a Mercedes 1217 from International Friedensdienst Stuttgart for 5 our convoys. We assisted the last Workers Aid to Bosnia convoy. We have donated pharmaceutical goods delivered to us to Medecins Sans Frontieres / Artsen Sonder Grensen (Belgium), wheelchairs to Handicap International and made a small donation to the refugee camp at Jala where a past volunteer of ours is presently working.

We have received awards from the 26 August Foundation which looks after the dependents of 180 miners killed in a mining accident in 1990 [in Tuzla] and from the Mining Institute of BiH for the project.

We have in addition to these activities operated as a campaigning organisation and have been ready to confront authorities who have attempted to stop us delivering aid and we have always got through with our load eventually.

/ 185

PROBLEMS...

TRUCKS & EQUIPMENT

At present I can inform you that all trucks are basically functional. The IFA²¹¹ 4 wheel drive army truck which we have 2 of is a good strong truck. Having said that, it is a bloody nightmare everytime it needs a spare part since they have to be sent from Berlin. Small parts can be sent by courier which is very expensive and larger parts have to be brought down in a vehicle. Recently we drove to Berlin and back to get parts! (3300km) Any truck spares are difficult to get in Croatia but this is ridiculous.

211 Name of trucks built in East Germany before 1990; IWA had acquired two used IFA trucks for their convoys from Makarska to Tuzla.

I remember begging people not to buy IFAs for this reason. Several times we have had trucks laid up with minor problems and on almost every convoy we have had to run a truck with a problem that could be easily solved with a spare part, ie a flasher unit relay or a water pump. In addition we have never had a mechanic in Makarska, we have done our best, but this has not been good enough. [...]

At a more strategic level we are wasting a lot of money and time by running such small trucks. Something with all-wheel-drive capacity and a 10 tonne load would be more cost effective. Here however we are talking about an investment that is probably beyond IWA's present resources.

In addition we lack very basic equipment which would make convoy driving easier and safer. Radios are in my view essential, visual contact convoy driving is unnecessarily tiring and time consuming, a support vehicle which can travel in advance of the trucks to sort out problems carry equipment, tools and passengers as well as provide transport in Tuzla would also be very useful. This was a decision of the Brescia meeting but it has impossible to find the resources to buy it. On reflection radios are a higher priority.

STAFFING & ACCOUNTABILITY

We have had around 25 people working on the project since June. In itself that is good but has caused a number of problems- lack of financial control being one and a lack of accountability being together.

In many cases people have been sent or arrived with little knowledge of local conditions, little knowledge of the politics of our project, and in some cases little agreement with it. We have attempted to have an open-door and this has been good in that it has allowed most people to contribute their talents as best they can. In some cases this has caused friction in the office especially with people who have had serious reservations or disagreement with the project. There is in any event very good case for having a team which knows the route, country, language (a little) and so on.

At the Brescia meeting I reported that we had built a stable convoy team, this for one reason or another has been destroyed but I am hopeful that the new team around Roland (6 months), Marta (1 month), Marc & me (? dependent on subsistence decision taken at Stockholm meeting) can get the momentum of the convoys rolling again. This of course also depends on load and money coming down, which takes me to the next point.

LOAD, SPLIT- TAX & MONEY IN GENERAL

At the Brescia meeting there was no disagreement over raising the *Split- tax from 250 DM per tonne to 450. This was a completely non-controversial item for the delegates who heard the arguments for it. (Overspend on warehousing, maintenance etc). However as soon as it was decided we faced what we felt to be an "aid strike" by some donor countries, which would have meant that even if we hadn't had a mechanical/ financial and bureaucratic nightmare for the past weeks we wouldn't have had much load to run.

We also had the problem that we spent 10,000 DM of Dutch money destined for the students in Tuzla on day-to-day running costs and the repaid it out of money the Swedish campaign sent for flour. This left IWA Sweden feeling ripped off and us feeling that they were trying to marginalise us or close us down.

This seems to have been overcome now and we love, trust and respect one another again, Stockholm are sending us a large load and all is sweetness and light for the moment. Hopefully the new financial formulae, either Stockholm's or Makarska's will get the aid flowing again and clarify mutual distrust.

THE PROJECT ITSELF & NEW PROJECTS

The project with the miners union is a unique experiment between workers organisations in working in partnership. I would question the validity of any plans to reorganise distribution with the assumption that we know better than them.

There have been rumours of black-market activities and we have seen a small amount of our goods on sale in a shop and the central market. We have no evidence of systematic black-marketeering and have received a large amount of paperwork from the union showing where the goods have gone. There has been insufficient monitoring of our aid, this being due to the lack of a full time worker in Tuzla. Ulrik will be in Tuzla for 3 months and hopefully this will clarify matters.

The lack of a full-time worker in Tuzla has also meant that the campaign has lacked a sharp political and organisational presence in Tuzla.

There may be talk of taking the October convoy to another place. In my view this would be an error....at Brescia we decided to continue with the bread project until October and I believe that we should deliver to the miners, these being as reliable a source as will be found in Tuzla.

At Brescia we also decided to take a convoy to the unions in Sarajevo. Michel has recently visited Sarajevo and returned with a list of what the unions need. (See separate report.) If we are to run this convoy we obviously need goods, preferably earmarked for Sarajevo.

There are many other projects being talked about at the moment, I suggest we ask ourselves the following questions:

1. Are these projects likely to mobilize outside our present support?
2. Are these projects in line with the working class/ trade union orientation of our campaign?
3. Will these campaigns detract from or strengthen our core project?

There is considerable anxiety in Tuzla that this winter could see a crisis as life-threatening as last winter....many humanitarian agencies have packed-up and left. A bad winter could still mean great hardship in BiH. It would be foolish if we abandoned the bread program because we believed the crisis was over.

LET US KNOW!

A few weeks ago we faxed the sections of IWA to let us know what their plans were for sending load, buying trucks, October convoy, whether they still loved us and received very little response. O.K. its the summer holidays but we need constant reassurance we've not been forgotten. Let us know your plans comrades! It'll help us both.

I'd love to write more but we're off to Tuzla tomorrow.

*SRETNO! From Mick in Makarska, 9/9/1994.

Source: ARAB, AK, 18, "Personal report to the Stockholm meeting of IWA, 10.11 August 1994", by Mick [Woods] in Makarska, 9.9.94.

DOC. 15: "...BUT OTHERWISE IT WENT FINE"

These are extracts from another Split report, written by the IWA team in Makarska, this time from November 1995. More details are provided about the financial conditions on the ground, as well as the logistical and administrative hurdles faced by the convoys between Makarska and Tuzla. What also comes across is the energy with which the IWA members dealt with all the problems while providing support to others.

Note: Dolly, Jenny and Amanda were the names given by the IWA team to the trucks that travelled back and forth between Makarska and Tuzla.

ECONOMY

For the moment it's ok. For the October-November-December-period we've received *Split-tax to the Danish and Swedish load that arrived 21st October. We've also received Makarska-Tuzla-fee from Sweden = 3,100 DM, Denmark = 2,480, B = 2,100, Austria = 1,500, Italy = 200, Switzerland = 300. Italy also paid Makarska-fee when they were here with load in the end of September, but those 1,050 DM was for the June-August period as I understood it. Switzerland has also donated some money directly to [the IWA office in] Tuzla, exactly how much I do not know. *Ship to Bosnia is contributing with 200 DM/month (as from 1st of August) for use of office and accommodation. They also cover the extra phone-expenses we have due to this project. From Gothenburg local IWA-group we have received 1,200 DM earmarked for diesel. At the moment we have approx 7,000 DM. This afternoon I will pay the last phone bill, 2,900 DM, so then we're down to 4,100 DM, which I expect just about to cover the next phone bill and dec. rent. But then there's nothing left for [the office in] Tuzla. I brought 1,000 DM to Tuzla with the last convoy so they're ok for the moment.

CONVOYS

On Friday 3rd of november the convoy 9511 for Tuzla started. We thought we would leave already on tuesday but we were delayed since Dolly broke down in the hill up to Dinko's [IWA office in Makarska] when coming back from customs in Split. So we spent a day trying to repair it and then another day to get new customs paper and H-B [*Herzeg Bosnia] permissions. So, we left with Jenny, Amanda and the Italian ambulance. Drivers were Jorge, Magnus & Michel. Agneta and Thomas, a freelance photographer, also followed. The ambulance had to make customs in Mali Prolog, Caplinja and Mostar. Well in Tuzla it turned out to be a lot of bureaucracy and new papers & permissions in order to be able to donate it

which made us spend two days in the customs. I guess Theo will tell more about this. Anyway he made a great job when having to run around all over Tuzla in order fixing all these new permissions and papers.

We unloaded the trucks in Banovici and we had a talk with Muhammed Gusic about getting some coal to take to Sarajevo. It wasn't time enough to arrange it this time but we will really make an effort to do it next convoy which is planned to leave Makarska at thursday, 24rd November.

If you have any opinion on this coals-delivery please let us know.

The road conditions when going back from Tuzla last Thursday were tough with snow and ice. We took a newly opened road between Ribnica and Zenica which was jumpy but quite flat. Between Bugojno and Kupres it went over some snowy mountains and there we made a great solidarity action. A truck&trailer from Sibenik had failed to climb the mountain and had been stuck there for 14 hours just spinning himself further down in the snow. So IWA heroes move into action and with a lot of snowchains, digging for sand, connecting and disconnecting the four different vehicles taking part in this, traffic conducting and stubbornness we manage to get all vehicles to the top of the mountain, all put together in a sort of a train. Dear Jenny had some problems with frozen brakes, shit in the fuelsystem and losing her servosteering, and Amanda had a flat tyre. Magnus and Thomas had a serious case of food-poisoning. All complications were solved in smooth way and it was quite a happy and satisfied, but tired, team that arrived in Makarska again last friday.

"You can check out any time You like but You can never leave" [...]

Quotes: [...] The Eagles

Respectfully Yours, Agneta [Falck] and Co.

Source: PA Woods, 4: Split report 49,
15.11.1995 (extracts).



Repairing one of the two IFA trucks IWA had aquired in East Germany, Tuzla 1994. (Photo: Lone Degn Rasmussen)



November 1995, return from Tuzla: Helping a commercial truck over the icy mountain road (action described in document 15). (Photo: Agneta Falck)

C. THE NATIONAL CAMPAIGNS

IWA's constituent groups in various European countries formed the core of the organisation. During each international IWA meeting, part of the time was given over to presentations by the national campaigns of their current situation and activities. This section contains extracts from the minutes summarising these activities, sometimes very briefly, sometimes in more detail. They give an insight into the diversity of situations in different countries, and the developments from the war to the post-war years.

DOC. 16: REPORT ABOUT THE SITUATION IN DECEMBER 1994

[...]

3. REPORTS FROM THE COUNTRIES

Sweden: Biggest campaign, more and more growing, always new members, received 200 000 kronen from the government. On the future: continuing of the bread-program and broadening of the campaign.

Netherlands: Continuing of the bread-program, but also women and the youth should be mentioned in a broader scale in our campaigns. In the moment there are sympathies, but no direct support for the campaign, a tour with trade unionists from Tuzla should be organized and thus help to get this support. In the moment no possibility for bigger amounts of money.

France: A campaign existed with the bread coupons, but it didn't succeed very far. No support from Unions.

Italy: Existing small groups, national conference next week will clear further steps.

Denmark: If there is too much money been spent on the infrastructure of IWA itself, this will reduce the legitimacy of the whole project in the eyes of others, especially unions. One full timer [working in the office] in Denmark.²¹² Aid and convoys for Tuzla should be continued in the way it is.

212 Similar to Sweden, Denmark had a government support programme for unemployed people in the NGO sector, which enabled *Konvoj til Bosnien* to employ one person in their office.



“Bread coupons” distributed by IWA France, 1994. Supporters could purchase a coupon for 30 French francs (approximately €6), and IWA then used the money to buy basic food-stuffs to be transported and distributed in Tuzla. Those who bought a bread coupon were also invited to write a personal message to be delivered with the goods. (PA Mir Sada)

The text says (translated from French): On the left: Value: 30 francs (= 4 kg of flour, 1 litre of oil, 2 kg of sugar). // Solidarity with Tuzla. //We are breaking the blockade of besieged Tuzla, out of solidarity with its multi-ethnic population. //War prices in Tuzla: flour 25 francs/kg, oil 80 francs/l, sugar 160 francs/kg. Monthly salary: between 6 and 32 francs // Support the Flour, Oil, Sugar convoy to Tuzla! // The food will be distributed by the Miners’ Trade Union of Tuzla. // On the right: Together with Tuzla [in Bosnian and French] // A message from France // Name and address



A truck in Malmö is charged by members of the Swedish IWA branch with collected goods for Tuzla, 1994. (Photo: Jonn Leffmann)

Leaflet with the logo of *Arbetarkonvojen*, the Swedish IWA branch. (PA Agneta Falck)

The text says (translated from Swedish):
Thank you for your support !



Austria: Campaign began recently with the distribution of postcards, trying to find a half timer. A driver is ready to go for the next convoy. Critics: the information about what, when and who is going to happen is very insufficient on the European scale. – A documentation of the history of IWA is in work and will be published in a book!! Everybody who has any pictures, documents, videos, [...] should send them to the following address: IWA Austria [...]

Switzerland: About 20 little organisations are working on Bosnia, but no IWA-campaign. 4.000 SFr received from donations given at a fiesta of immigrants. SOLIDARITE is a leftist initiative who will eventually support IWA in the future.

England: not working!!

Belgium: a mammograph was bought for the Women's Group of *Kreka. The teacher union wants to make a convoy to Tuzla in spring and will pay IWA for the transport. Students from Tuzla are coming to universities In Belgium. Unionists from Tuzla and Sarajevo are making a tour in Belgium. IWA has a good reputation in and around Tuzla. We have to discuss the political platform.

Source: PA Woods, 3: "Notes on the Munich-congress of International Workers Aid, 3.12.-4.12.1994" (extracts).

DOC. 17: REPORT ABOUT THE SITUATION IN MARCH 1995

2. REPORT FROM THE NATIONAL CAMPAIGNS

[...]

Holland: IWA-Holland "Vakbondsleden voor Bosnia" could not attend the conference. Three students of "Students Solidarity with former Yugoslavia" gave a rapport of their work. Especially the tour with the students and professors of Tuzla University through Europe in December was a success. They asked IWA for further cooperation (especially the transport of literature in April -to agree with Belgian campaign). Yannick will go to Tuzla (3 months) in summer for doing a study program, but he is willing to do some work for IWA too. There was a report from Ernst for Vakbondsleden voor Bosnia. See Annexes.

France / Spain: Catherine and Jean Michel both wrote a fax to apologise for this meeting. Jean Michel pointed to the difficulties in the French campaign. He found it difficult for countries where there is not yet an existing or bigger campaign to start because IWA had not one big campaign for the moment that could attract people and attention. Agnes gave a small rapport about her solidarity work at the

Paris university with the people of *Workers Aid, and also with *Ayuda Obrera in Spain. They ask us to work together (as already mentioned) for next convoys. Both in France and Spain there are groups/people of Workers Aid and IWA. Better is to work together there where it is possible, besides IWA is very small and weak, almost not existing in both countries. Pura (Madrid) regularly phones and we keep contact.

Great Britain: Again the same problem. Workers Aid is active and organised recently a tour with 2 Tuzla people from the Kreka Mines (they also were in France). IWA Great Britain stopped functioning... Alan wrote a letter for our conference, you find it in the annexes.

Greece: We have some contacts with women of a solidarity group. They keep in contact and also paid 300 DM to IWA as contribution. They supported with 1.000 DM the Flemish campaign for the mammograph. The political situation in Greece is very difficult for organising solidarity with Bosnia.

Denmark: The Danish campaign did a good Christmas collection, they are organising local groups and in the trade unions. As far as I could understand it was 25.000 DM. They want to buy a truck and wage a campaign for this truck inside the trade unions. Else is for the moment in Tuzla but will return to Denmark. Her plan is to organise something like the famous Swedish women's parcels. Vagn is for the moment in Tuzla, to start the teachers and schools project going. [...]

Germany: Some cities have active groups (like Munchen, Oberhausen, Mannheim). A new project is needed. There are some coordination problems between the different groups. [...]

Austria: In Austria there were some problems because the people had the impression IWA worked too much humanitarian, not political enough. There was no information, no feedback. The fact that the Austrian mammograph stayed so long in Makarska (it is now in Zenica, Agneta brought it there together with Médecins sans Frontières) without any news, demoralised people. We had a discussion and Walter will try to put things back straight after our conference. Anyway the Austrian campaign collected money and will contribute to different projects. To start with 1.000 DM to the Flemish campaign for the mammograph. They will further contribute for the transport if necessary and possible. The Austrian campaign is also organising a tour with Tuzla journalists, and a sport manifestation with a Tuzla football-team. Fredi (Wien) will write a history of IWA. But he is lacking information of the early days. [...]

Switzerland: They recently started and we think with good results after the rapport from Hans Peter. They have hopes to organise via teachers and universities. Hans Peter stressed that a big problem is: communication and information. Especially if you only recently started, you need interviews, photos, concrete figures and material... It is difficult with IWA to get this, it is all dispersed and unorganised. They collected money and are looking for a project. Together with Austria they will look for joining a convoy after spring. [...]

Italy: IWA is in one city active (already from the start), in beautiful Brescia. Recently some people from Napoli took contact but disappeared again afterwards... They think they will be ready for a convoy in May. They are also working on a project for support to media (Arkzin) in Croatia. Another group is busy with the bread campaign – they think they can be ready in end of april. They also have their campaign “Word”, in this they will support one project concerning media in Bosnia (trade union newspaper, women’s newspaper, or “Tuzla list”). [...]

Sweden: They collected loads of money (200.000 DM in total during whole campaign) and did a big campaign with women’s parcels. Also they continued all time long with the bread project. Eva managed to get national press and big newspapers with the women’s campaign. They have send already “Dolly Parton”, the Kaiser truck, and bought already another one, “Eva”, that is to depart for Makarska soon. They raised this money in bigger organisations. There are 31 local active groups for IWA. They have government recognition and support. 70.000 DM for the youth project they have planned. Also the Swedish campaign is busy investigating the necessary things to be done for the Kreka trade union paper we want to support. Swedish campaign also delivered a lot of people for the Makarska-office (together with Denmark). They also carry the burden of the International Coordinating Office. [...]

A special report from Leif and Pelle of the dockworkers union about the *Ship to Bosnia-project. They will stay for another week in Belgium to contact European parliamentarians and trade unions. This is a huge and important and wonderful project. There are nice leaflets to join the projects. Use them! Agnes thought in Spain there would be several harbours that could be organised around this project. Also Rada was enthusiast about the possibilities of Antwerp and Geert about Zeebrugge... But a lot of work has to be done for this. Ship to Bosnia has an office in Stockholm. Contact them.

WOMEN'S APPEAL FOR BOSNIA

**International
WORKERS
AID**

OVER ONE MILLION people in Central Bosnia face hunger and cold this winter.

THE PEOPLE of the city of Tuzla and the area around it want to live together - Muslims, Serbs and Croats.

WOMEN ARE AT THE forefront of resistance to the war. They are struggling to defend their multi-ethnic community from the evils of racism and ethnic cleansing.

WOMEN HAVE been particularly affected by the war.

WOMEN HAVE been raped as part of the campaign of ethnic cleansing.

WOMEN AND children get lower priority for food than men on the front line.

WOMEN MAKE up the majority of refugees.

AS THE RECENT suicide of Lejla Ibrahimovic shows, even when women do escape to Western countries their struggle does not end. Only a handful have been granted refugee status, without which their families cannot be brought in.

INTERNATIONAL AID INTERNATIONAL Workers Aid has already delivered one convoy of aid to Tuzla. Women from Britain, Sweden, Denmark, France and Belgium joined the convoy or gave financial help. We took forty tons of food and medical equipment, including aid specific to women's needs.

INTERNATIONAL WORKERS AID 12 THORNTON ST LONDON SW9 0VL • (071) 978 8622

YOU CAN HELP

IWA IS planning another convoy to Tuzla for early spring. Aid will be distributed through the Miners' Union and other organisations such as the Bosnian Women's Organisation.

WOMEN IN Tuzla have asked for donations of:

- Baby clothes and shoes (new or good as new)
- Sanitary towels, tampons and toiletries
- NEW underwear
- Condoms
- Children's toys
- Money, to pay for flour, oil and sugar for the municipal bakery.

WOMEN IN Britain can also help women in Bosnia by demanding that the British Government help open Tuzla Airport.

THE PLIGHT of the people of central Bosnia could be greatly eased if the UN opened the large international airport at Tuzla. Getting supplies through by road is very difficult.

BUT THE UN refuses to open the airport. They are starving the Bosnians of supplies to force them to accept a peace deal which would carve up Bosnia and so reinforce ethnic cleansing.

WE CAN also help Bosnian women by demanding that British does open up more generously to the sick and to refugees.

YOUR HELP CAN AID BOSNIAN WOMEN

- I enclose a donation of £..... (payable to International Workers Aid)
- I can help circulate IWA leaflets, send me more details.
- I can help collect money, send me more details.
- I want to contact other women in IWA.
- I am collecting aid - please contact me to arrange its collection.
- I can help with a street collection in..... (state town)
- I want to join International Workers Aid

Name _____
Address _____
Post Code _____ Tel: _____
RETURN TO IWA, 12 Thornton St, London SW9 0VL TEL (071) 978 8622

SPEAKING TOUR by members of the convoy to Tuzla.
Monday 24 Jan - Tuesday 2 Feb, FRIDAY 28 JAN PICKET
Foreign Office 6pm to demand opening Tuzla airport

Leaflet published by IWA Britain in January 1994 calling to support women in Tuzla. (PA Franziska Bachmann)

198 /

Appel om din hjælp!

Tuzla, en by i den nordlige del af Bosnien, er et multi-etnisk fæstet. Bystyret, borgerrepræsentationen, fagforeninger og de offentlige institutioner er bredt sammensat af repræsentanter fra alle de forskellige grupper, som fandtes i det tidligere Bosnien: serbere, muslimer, kroater, jøder og andre grupper.

Men Bosnien står overfor et valg, som kan ændre dette. I november eller december skal befolkningen til stemmerne. Nationalisterne sidder på en stor del af medieerne, og derfor risikerer oppositionen, herunder det ikke-nationalistiske bystyre i Tuzla, at miste fodfæstet. Dermed kan en af de stærkeste platforme for et fremtidigt fredeligt og multi-etnisk Bosnien-Herzegovina styrte i grus, og risikoen for en etnisk opdeling af Bosnien vil vokse.

International Workers Aid/Konvoj til Bosnien støtter de multi-etniske kræfter, der findes i Tuzla. Først og fremmest gennem nødhjælp til mine-arbejderne. Men vi har også kontakter til studenterorganisationer, kvindesamfundet og de ikke-nationalistiske partier i bystyret. Disse kræfter ønsker ikke en etnisk opdeling af Bosnien. En opdeling som kun er i nationalisternes og krigsherrenes interesse. De ønsker, som mange almindelige mennesker i Bosnien-Herzegovina, at leve fredeligt sammen.

Tuzla er i en situation, hvor der er desperat brug for fødevarer-hjælp for at overleve vinteren. Men Tuzla er også i en situation, hvor massiv solidarisk støtte er nødvendig for, at Bosniens overlever som multi-etnisk samfund i fremtiden. De har desperat brug for din støtte!

Gå aktivt ind i Konvoj til Bosnien. Tlf 31 39 79 48, 33 93 31 42 eller 86 12 50 45. Støt økonomisk på giro 115-3315, Konvoj til Bosnien, Box 547, 2200 Kbh. N

Konvoj til Bosnien Giro 115-3315



- * Nej til etnisk udrensning & opdeling *
- * Solidaritet med Balkans arbejdere *
- * Asylret til flygtninge fra krigen *

"Appeal for your help!" Leaflet published by the Danish IWA branch *Konvoj til Bosnien* in 1994, calling to support Tuzla through financial donations to IWA. (PA Hanspeter Gysin)

Belgium: [...] There is a small but creative women's group that have managed to have access to the media and official instances. We have two mammographs and an echo-machine. We are collecting money for transport. We edited a rapport on the women's convoy of November, a little brochure on 2.000 exemplaires. After this campaign we will start with the work for the women's magazine (together with Munchen-group). The other thing we have running is the teachers project together with the teachers union. But we agree that we should again concentrate on the bread project and the Kreka miners. Problem is the lack of enough people to carry the load of work. Monica is trying to force her way in in the European Union bureaucracy to get to the money. We have no big hopes because it seems to be the money is gone... Monique is leaving for Makarska for driving on 10th March. She edited a small booklet with her adventures of last convoy.

Source: ARAB, AK, 18:

"Minutes of international IWA-conference,
Aalbeke (B), 4-5 march 1995" (extract).

DOC. 18: REPORT ABOUT THE SITUATION IN MARCH 1998

Switzerland: The campaign is still consisting of Marlene and Hanspeter but they cooperate with another group called KONTAKT on some events. F.e. this group showed the BBC/ORF co-production "Bruderkrieg" where they were also present and distributing the IWA-bulletin. The bulletin as well as other letters informing about the IWA-activities and asking for donations are regularly sent out to "Hanspeters 80 addresses". At a meeting organized by the organization "War-architecture" they met Vehid Sehic from the *Forum of Tuzla citizens who after being asked about his opinion of IWA by Hanspeter made some good propaganda for our organization by talking extremely positive about IWA. The Swiss campaign could also send medical instruments worth 3,000 DM to Tuzla and a clinic in RS [*Republika Srpska]. The equipment was transported by the Swiss army, but had enough letters with to make clear where the things came from and why. [...]

Germany: The campaign hardly receives any money at the moment. Germany sent out the [IWA]-bulletin and has produced an info-letter to go with it, but so far no replies. IWA-Germany has informal meetings with other Bosnia-and Eastern Europe groups like Osteuropa Archiv/Papiertiger and FAU [a federation of local trade unions]. Hopefully IWA-Germany will be able to establish contact between the organizers of the May concert in Tuzla and some concert activists in Munich who are interested to support projects in Bosnia. IWA-Germany has got some publicity with articles

and interviews in "Neues Deutschland" and in the European trade union youth magazine "Onion". At the moment first contacts have been taken with Volksbühne, a huge theater in Berlin, about arranging a solidarity performance where the money goes to any IWA project, but nothing clear yet. [...]

France: Last November the French campaign, which still is a loose network of a few persons made a trip to Tuzla delivering a "mobile-medical-office" (as Xavier's little language computer calls it). During their stay they had meetings with the union of hospital-workers, the PTT [post and telecommunication], union representatives from the salt- and the chemical-factory (they visited the [power] plants HAK 1 and 2) as well as with bank-clerks. They discussed with these unions the possible launching of TU-magazines for their branches but after they left Tuzla nothing seems to have happened in that direction. [...] The French campaign is in regular contact with the PTT and through this one also to some other unions. About their November trip they have prepared a 25-page-brochure in French. Xavier was asked by the meeting to inform the international campaign about such things to make it possible for those who can understand French to get ahold of these reports and he also promised to futurely pass on information about their activities in a few lines in English through the HQ. [...] The French campaign also had some activism on the issue of Kosovo working together with the Kosovo-information-center. [...]

200 /

Sweden: Since Agneta has moved to Stockholm it is now 4 women working regularly in the "*IVA-sub-group" and meeting every second week. During the last months of 1997, when it was not sure whether or not the EC-grant was going to be allowed they managed to collect around 3000 DM. In December they invited Mira and Lola from the women's center in Tuzla to Stockholm for a seminar they had arranged on the situation of women in Bosnia. The meeting was good and it was 50 persons participating of which some had shown interest in starting to work in support of the center in Tuzla as well, but nothing has come out of that so far. After the EC-grant was guaranteed they felt a bit confused with how to continue their campaign and then collected some painting-materials as asked for by IVA. They are also still working on getting free subscriptions of magazines for the center. See also Annex 3 (one of the reports that didn't get sent out...) With the general IWA campaign there still are about 20 persons actively involved in Sweden. They still have their weekly meetings in Stockholm with normally 5-10 persons. There are not much activities outside Stockholm though. The campaign publishes an extra Swedish newsletter which is sent out regularly. Through this,

collections in the streets, a party and other things they were able to collect 8.000 DM between October and the end of February. Ulf is working on making the SAC (syndicalist TU) inviting someone from Tuzla (f.e. from the PTT) to the SAC congress in June. Others than that they are in good contact with the Bosnian embassy and organized a meeting for the 2nd anniversary of the signing of the Dayton peace-treaty together with the christian-democrat-women's-league on the central square of Stockholm. [...]

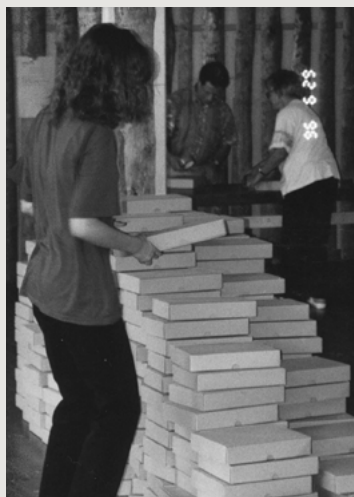
Denmark: See report ANNEX 4 [...] [Note: This annex was not attached, but from another part of the minutes it appears that one of the topics reported on was the international IWA bulletin, which the Danish campaign was coordinating and editing.]

Belgium (Aldegonde was so nice to write this report herself to make life easier for me. Thanks!): The Belgian campaign is very restricted of activists, the school-campaign consists of Lucien, Jos and Jenny, the Iva-center is Aldegonde and Monica. The school-campaign had still a debt of 5.000 DM. They had a big quiz in January and that resulted in some money. At the moment they are still in debt but not so dramatically as before. There will not be any school-holidays in 1998 since it is too expensive and it is very difficult at the moment to motivate organizations like the union to support it financially. The IVA group (Monica and Aldegonde) went to Tuzla in the end of November. The first part was to bring the latest elements of the financial report of 1997 in order and to explain Lola the details of the budget and of course to meet Mira and the other ladies and to discuss various topics. It was a nice time and M. and A. had the feeling that they were doing well but that the financial uncertainty was pressuring their work. After the stay in Tuzla A. and M. both took Christmas vacations and restarted in January with communication with IVA and the EC. We gave up the communication with the IVA groups [in other countries], because we would not receive any replies after our stay in Bosnia. It wasn't very motivating to keep on with the communication when you felt it was only one way. It also took more time than I thought to install e-mail. So the contract was signed and latest details on the numbers of the bankaccount were settled. Now they had to wait for the EC money. Luckily Li arrived and the *SIDA budget allowed to lend them the money for paying the rent in advance. We tried to get our IVA group in Belgium bigger. We sent out requests to different contacts who had been supporting IWA in the past financially and mentally. This resulted in 3 subscriptions of the bulletin and some people ordered postcards. None wanted to participate actively. Sad but

true. Nusomi from Gent, involved for a peace group the last five years in Croatia is supporting us and hope to cooperate in the future. Let's hope! The Belgian IVA group decided in cooperation (financially and mentally) with VAK (Womens' Action Collective) to invite Mira or another English-speaking person to come to the center to Belgium for the celebration of 8th of March. At the same time Jadranka from Zena Zenama (Woman to Woman) from Sarajevo was invited and Sonja Prodanovic from Belgrade's Autonomous Womens' Center and at the same time politician. Mira stayed more than a week and we had a very busy schedule including a visit to Amsterdam. [...]

Source: PA Gysin, 1998:
"Minutes from Basel", IWA meeting
28-29 march 1998 (extracts).

202 /



Putting together 400 parcels containing equipment for a school in Tuzla, organised by the Swiss IWA branch *Solidarität mit Bosnien* (Solidarity with Bosnia) in 1996. (Photos: Hanspter Gysin)



IWA activists from Denmark, 1994, including Vagn Rasmussen, Lone Degn Rasmussen, Søren Søndergaard and Kristian Buus (back row, first, second, fifth and sixth from the left, respectively). (PA Franziska Bachmann)

lich und dringend nötig. Koordiniert wird dieses Projekt seit drei Jahren von einem unabhängigen Journalisten aus Tuzla und IWA. Die Finanzierung der Zeitung steht bereits für dieses Jahr. Was wir jedoch benötigen, sind Kontakte vor allem zu Gewerkschaften und deren Zeitungen bzw. zu Aktiven aus dem gewerkschaftlichen Umfeld, die an einer Kommunikation und Austausch z.B. von Artikeln mit der Zeitung in Tuzla interessiert sind.


INTERNATIONALES INFO-BULLETIN

Hiermit wollen wir Leute außerhalb Bosniens regelmäßig über unsere Projekte unterrichten und über aktuelle Themen in und um den Balkan als eine Art Diskussionsgrundlage informieren. Außerdem soll es auch nicht-nationalistischen Kräften -im Gegensatz zu einem Großteil der ausländischen Medien - eine Stimme geben.


Also: Bitte recht fleißig unter den Stichworten IWA (generell), 'FRAUENZENTRUM' oder 'BULLETIN' (Dringen! Es wird zwar niemand für seine Arbeit für das IWA-Info-Bulletin entlohnt, aber Druck und Versand kosten doch recht viel!) auf folgendes Konto überweisen: **40 406 909 00**, BIZ 120 800 00, Dresdner Bank, M. Koks.

Wer generell mehr oder über die einzelnen Projekte detailliertere Info wünscht, bekommt sie gerne zugeschickt.

Bis dann, IWA/Berlin



International Workers Aid / Berlin
c/o F. Bachmann Mühlenstraße 49, 13187 Berlin
Fax: 030/473 36 24



WIEDERAUFBAU BOSNIEN



"Reconstruction Bosnia": information leaflet published by IWA Germany, 1998. (PA Hanspeter Gysin)

D. THE LOCAL PROJECTS IN TUZLA

The documents in this section offer a more specific insight into some of the projects implemented by IWA in Tuzla. It begins with two of the numerous Tuzla reports, illustrating IWA's day-to-day work in Tuzla, and then reproduces extracts from various reports relating to its key activities: the trade union magazine, which became its most important cooperation project with the trade unions in Tuzla after the war, and the cooperation with and support for women in Tuzla, which took the form of various activities between 1994 and 1999.

THE TUZLA OFFICE

The IWA office in Tuzla was opened in September 1994 as an extension of the Makarska office, and later became IWA's main office after the closing of the warehouse and office in Makarska in January 1996. From the outset, the office played a crucial role in implementing IWA's activities in Tuzla, initially in relation to the food convoys and then also for other projects. Reproduced in this section are the first report after the opening of the office in autumn 1994, and extracts from a subsequent report, which illustrate the various tasks associated with IWA's presence in Tuzla.

DOC. 19: THE OPENING OF THE IWA OFFICE IN TUZLA

INTERNATIONAL WORKERS AID

IWA TUZLA

IWA TUZLA REPORT no. I – 9/9 1994

Comrades !

As you know, IWA Logistics is trying to open a more than less permanent office in Tuzla. I am now in Tuzla to make this happen.

The objectives of this office are, as I see them:

- To provide general and specific information about political, social and military situation in Tuzla for all IWA sections, and to assist IWA activists when visiting.
- To check, monitor and evaluate the distribution of aid in our main program – the support for Sindikat Rudnici-Uglja Tuzla (Kreka).
- To stay in close contact with the members and leaders of this and other unions.
- To be an IWA contact point for workers and people from civic associations, media etc. in Tuzla.

– To participate in the preparations for the two upcoming international conferences/ seminars in November (not October anymore...)

I consider this office to be a natural extension of the Logistics office in Makarska, from where the above mentioned activities have been carried out so far by IWA convoy team members. This office should encourage and facilitate regular visits of political character by IWA activists.

Location: ULICA MUHAREMA MERDZICA 47, Ph: +387 (0) 75 – 225 964 Tz.

These are some points for the agenda of the Stockholm Meeting:

– The meeting decides whether (or not) IWA confirms the establishment of an IWA Tuzla office, the staffing (I think that means me.... at least for the moment), and that extra money is set aside for this on the budget.

Also the approval of the “adoption” of the *’August 26 Foundation” as suggested by IWA logistics.

CONFERENCE DATA:

“Is Europe possible without multiculturalism?” Organized by: *Forum of Tuzla Citizens (FTC) and *Verona Forum, November 4 – 5.

“Promoting local democracy and multi-ethnic communities” Organized by FTC and *Helsinki Citizens Assembly, November 9 – 13.

Between 50 and 100 participants are expected/invited for these two gatherings incl. Serbs from now Yugoslavia.

The FTC expects IWA participation and support. They ask if convoys taking place around these dates can be received by the FTC. It is still up to IWA who is receiving the goods (*Kreka / Front Slobode [newspaper edited in Tuzla] / Women’s Org. etc.) but as a moral support for the FTC, their name will be on the papers. They will publicize it to promote the four multi-ethnic parties before elections.²¹³

I think we should accept.

213 Municipal elections were scheduled to take place in November 1994 in Tuzla and other parts of BiH controlled by the BiH-government, but were finally postponed because of the war-situation.

Other info: Prices: diesel 1.30 DM/l, gasoline 1.50 DM/l, bread 0.80 DM, potatoes 1 DM/kg, bananas 2.5 DM/kg.

Exchange rate: 1 DM = 10 Bosnian bans/ 1 000 000 BH Dinars.

Weather & war: nice and hot, no shells during the last few days. Just like two months ago, everybody is talking about the coming BH offensive on Brčko, the frontlines are active, *Tuzla Airport remains closed.

Distribution: our friends at the T. U. understands that there is an evaluation going on in IWA concerning the distribution agreement which was made in March this year. (It gave the T. U. the full responsibility for the final distribution, and was signed by T. U. President Fikret Suljić and Else Christensen for IWA.) They have assured that from now on, IWA staff will be able to participate in every aid-distribution, and they will provide additional paperwork.

They also ask IWA to understand that they are not professionals, they have never dealt with food distribution before, and that our support for them is vital for the T. U. at the moment.

I'll come back to this next week.

"MI DOLAZIMO !"

("We will win" Slogan of BOS – Bosnian Youth Party, Tuzla.)

ULRIK [Kohl]

International Workers Aid – Tuzla – Bosnia & Herzegovina

*SRETNO!

Source: ARAB, AK, 16

DOC. 20: DAY-TO-DAY WORK IN TUZLA

INTERNATIONAL WORKERS AID – TUZLA REPORT # 4. OCTOBER 14TH 1994. “SHOPLIFTERS OF THE WORLD! UNITE AND TAKE OVER...”

(The Smiths: “Strangeways, here we come!”)

The info in this report is actually not totally fresh, it’s from last week but I haven’t had time to get it typed down before now. Enjoy:

- > IWA Tuzla has moved home address to a new, nicer and cheaper place, which is more centrally located than our old flat. We have got two rooms (sleeping space for 4 to 6) and are sharing living- room, kitchen and toilet with a nice Bosnian chap called Robert. Water and electricity supplies are the same as in most of Tuzla; water some hours in the morning and in the evening (a bit irregularly, though) and electricity almost every second day. Address: Blagoja Parovica 47, 75000 Tuzla, phone: +387 75 210 133. (Fax and office no. is still the same) IWA activists are of course welcome to stay at the flat when there is space available, and even more than welcome to contribute to pay the rent.
- > Michel, Eva X and I agreed on establishing a weekly Holy Communication Hour, to improve the contact between the Tuzla and Stockholm/Int’1 office. Stockholm should try calling the Tuzla FLAT Wednesdays at 1600 hours. If you can’t get through, one of us is going to call you from the UNHCR phone before 1700 hours.
- > The expenses of IWA Tuzla in September were kept within our 500 DM budget. The biggest posts on the budget were accommodation, communication and translation. Let me know if you need to see the balance sheets and receipts.
- > Our friends and comrades from *SOS Balkanes have borrowed the Tuzla office a bicycle. This vehicle is absolutely phantastic for getting around in town and it confirms the proletarian profile of IWA, when compared with the big expensive white-painted cars of the bourgeoisie humanitarian agencies. However, the bike is not really the right vehicle for going on 20-30-40 km expeditions to visit the pits of Northeastern Bosnia. We will be looking into renting a local car for some time in order to be able to visit all distribution points and make direct contact with the miners, without depending on the assistance from the TU Executive Board. We’re going to hire a good interpreter too. I hope that expenses for this purpose, which will certainly exceed the normal budget, will

be provided by one of the national campaigns, since the Makarska budget is too tight for this.

- > During the discussions between Catherine Samary and Fikret & Omer from the TU Executive Board, the idea of organizing an international TU conference in Tuzla emerged. Omer has later requested IWA assistance for this project. Considering the decisions taken last month at Stockholm Int'1 Coordination Meeting, I propose that we try to realize this conference with European and Bosnian (and, if possible Croatian and Serbian) TU representatives in Tuzla this winter and then, depending on the outcome and experiences and counting on the support from the TUs, which participated in the Tuzla conference, move on to organize the tour. It is a lot easier to bring foreigners to Tuzla, than to bring Bosnians out of Tuzla/BH.
- > On Thursday 6/10, I met together with Michel and Eva X, Vehid Sehic from the FTC [*Forum Tuzla Citizens] for a briefing and up-date on the two conferences in November [see previous document]. [...] FTC sees the gathering of 100 progressive people in Tuzla as an example for other European countries, which are also confronting extrem nationalism and fascism, and a help for the democratic (not military) fight against nationalism in BiH and the rest of Europe. It is also going to be an important opportunity to show the Bosnian people that not all Serbs are *Cetniks, that not all Croats are *Ustashe, and that not all Muslims are Mujahedeens. According to Sehic, although the ruling party *SDA is generally opposed ot the idea of the conference, FTC counts on the individual support of Premier Haris Silajdzic, who is likely to be present at the second conference. [...] It would be very interesting to know who are going to be the IWA-delegation-members for the two conferences. Could Stockholm please let us know? [...]

That's all for now, Franziska B. from IWA Germany is at the moment in Tuzla, I have been in Croatia for the last week, but I'll be back in Tuzla on Sunday.

*SRETNO!

[Ulrik Kohl]

Source: ARAB, AK, 16

THE TRADE UNION MAGAZINE

Shortly after the establishment of the IWA office in Tuzla, discussions with members of the Coal Miners' Trade Union led to the idea of supporting the creation of a magazine. It took more than a year to implement the idea, but this was to become IWA's most enduring cooperation and support project, with 31 issues published between December 1995 and October 1998. Originally called *Sindikalna Informacija* (Trade Union Information), the publication was renamed *Rudar* (Miner) in March 1998. Spanning the years 1994 to 1998, the reports in this section illustrate the development of this idea, the reasons why IWA attached such importance to it, and the role that it played for trade unions and workers. (See also text part, pp. 68–70)

DOC. 21: THE BIRTH OF AN IDEA

IWA TUZLA PROUDLY PRESENTS:

A solidarity project for the founding of a trade–union newspaper of the Tuzla coalminers.

This project has been formulated jointly by the Coalminers Union and IWA, after an initiative taken by union activists from the Kreka–branch.

The purpose of the newspaper is to enable the union to communicate with their members. In the present war situation, the union plays an important role as a social protection force for their members. However, even though the union's Executive Committee meets regularly, it is in a sense cut off from its members, since no annual general meetings are held and other ways of discussing/ communicating are not possible. Another important aspect is to provide the members of the union (that means practically all workers of the coalmines) with independent and reliable information about trade union–activities, their workplaces and the general political and military situation. Finally, "*Sindikalna Informacija*" will be a concrete expression of international workers solidarity. It is thought that articles from "*Sindikalna Informacija*" or its journalists could be exchanged with articles from union or workers papers in the rest of Europe.

Background: The Coalminers Union is by far the biggest workers organization in the Tuzla area (more than 12.000 members). It organizes workers of all three major nationalities in BH. Before the war, a newspaper was regularly issued by the company of the coalmines, with space set aside for trade–union news. This year, only twice has the company had resources enough to issue a small bulletin, but without any space for information from the union or the workers. "*Sindikalna*

Informacija" will, if realized, be the first independent newspaper of the Coalminers Union, and probably the only trade union newspaper to be published regularly in BH during the wartime (a single issue of a union-paper was published in Sarajevo for Mayday '94)

Preparations: At the moment not all details concerning the editing, printing and distribution of "Sindikalna Informacija" have been decided upon. An informal preparation group consisting of the two activists Mujesira Džambić and Mr. Arslan has been established. Significantly enough for the multiethnic character of the project and the involved activists, they have asked a Serbian colleague, the journalist Nedeljko Maksimović, to join the preparations. [...]

IWA Tuzla 24.11.94, Ulrik [Kohl]

Source: ARAB, AK, 18

**DOC. 22: IWA'S EDITORIAL IN THE FIRST ISSUE OF
SINDIKALNA INFORMACIJA, DECEMBER 1995**

Introduction.

International Workers Aid (IWA) has decided to support a union paper for the miners in Tuzla. We think it is necessary for the union to be able to communicate with its members. During the war it has not been possible to issue a continuous paper, and it has been difficult for the workers to get information. We would like you to see this as your paper, and in future issues there will be a column for you to comment on any subject you find relevant.

Everyone is pleased that a peace agreement has finally been signed, but only time will show if it is a lasting peace. Anyway it will bring a new category of problems. Soldiers will return to their normal life, which means that they will look for work, and even more people will be unemployed. It is therefore important to have a strong union.

At the same time everyone expects a big part of the industry to be privatized. Although it is unlikely that this will happen in the mining industry, it will affect the whole society.

It is important that the unions are strong enough to participate in the public discussion about privatization and working terms. In order to do that the union must be able to communicate with the workers and vice versa.

The editorial board will meet frequently, to discuss the publication of the next issue, even if it is not possible for IWA representatives to participate.

Nedeljko Maksimovic will be the chief of editorial staff. Feel free to contact him (210 132) or the IWA representatives (ph. 210 133) with any comments.

Because of financial reasons we can only publish the paper every 3rd month for the moment, but we hope we are able to raise money for a monthly paper later.

On behalf of International Workers Aid,
Lone Degn Rasmussen

Source: PA Woods, 1. – This text was translated into the local language and published (with slight modifications) in the first issue of *Sindikalna Informacija*.

DOC. 23. EXTRACT FROM TUZLA REPORT 28.07.1996

The union paper: I cant help saying it again – this is such a good and well working project. We have made a contract with Nedeljko to employ him for one year. When we were in the pit in Lukavac yesterday, the poster was on the wall and all of the workers had read the paper, they didn't agree with all of it, so they had and argue with Nedeljko. But it's really positive to get a reaction and some discussions. Some of the articles in the next issue will be:

1. Short interviews with the workers about their expectations for the elections
2. The union in front of transformations: membership, congress in England, experience from other unions and an answer from Muhamed [Gutić] on the interview in the last issue, where the workers are accusing the union for the not doing enough for the workers.
3. The strikes in Midbosnia and in Mramor [part of the Kreka mines]
4. A statement from the Serb entity, which is part of the united opposition for peace and progress.

The statement is about the opening and coherence of the economy in the different parts of Bosnia, specially in connection to start to sell coal to all the parts of Bosnia. [...]

Helene Bach, IWA Tuzla

Source: PA Woods, 4

DOC. 24: THE COAL MINERS' TRADE UNION ON *RUDAR* (1998)

MEETING WITH KREKA UNION

Last week I had a meeting with Muhamed Gutić and Fikret Suljić, president of the miners union in Bosnia. As I have not been in contact with the board of the union to discuss *Rudar* and future work and I thought it was time now. But Fikret invited me to a meeting even before I had the chance to invite him.

So we spoke of course about *Rudar*. Fikret said that he was sorry that he did not earlier contact me to congratulate IWA and the *Rudar* staff for the good results with *Rudar*. He said that he wanted to thank IWA about our excellent work with *Rudar* and that he always gets good comments all around Bosnia concerning *Rudar*. We discussed the matter that the union is not in the board of *Rudar* and Fikret and Nedjo said that was actually Fikret's own idea, he did not think that the union had so much to do with the actual information within the newspaper. Fikret also stated that he feels better this way because nobody can accuse him of interfering with the facts or the news.

Of course I am not always satisfied with the articles Nedjo is writing concerning union or me, but I must accept this, said Fikret. He also compared *Rudar* with other newspapers in Tuzla and Bosnia and said that *Rudar* is for sure one of the most professional newspapers. For five years ago there was only *Sindikalna Informacija* working as a union newspaper in Bosnia, today Fikret has seen other examples of union newspapers, but just simple leaflets not as advanced as *Rudar*, and certainly not as big as *Rudar*. Fikret explained that he is happy to see that other unions are starting up something similar to *Rudar*.



Celebrating the publication of the first issue of *Sindikalna Informacija*, December 1995, with (from right to left) Rešad Husagić, Nedeljko (Nedjo) Maksimović, Tihomir Babić, Omer Kamberović, Muhamed Gutić, Helene Bach and Lone Degn Rasmussen (author of the photo).

Future plans and other areas

Fikret said that he thought that we should start to think about if we could not increase the area of distribution also to Zenica and middle Bosnia. The miners in this area just get a few copies of *Rudar* every time and Fikret said that we could involve writers from this area that would send texts to us. Mainly the texts would be from the Tuzla area but also some events from middle Bosnia. This was good because then the miners in this area also got informed and the union of mine workers would of course get stronger. Nedjo also thinks that this is a good idea, but both Fikret and Nedjo said that we should just start to think about this.

When it comes to involving *Republika Srpska [RS] Fikret said that the miners union in Bosnia had several times invited the union in the mining villages in RS to cooperation but that they were not interested. He also talked about when Nedjo and Agneta were in RS and met some stupid nationalists. Fikret thinks it is time for the union there to change but he also thought that *Rudar* was a good way of starting better communication.

Economical situation

I said to Fikret that IWA as an organisation will of course not be in Tuzla for ever and that we are interested in how the union can take over the costs of running the newspaper in the future. He said that as long as the responsibility concerning unemployed, retired, invalids, medicins and costs for hospital visits and so on rest on the shoulder of the union and not the State they cannot afford the newspaper. Fikret thinks that this problem will remain for the following two or three years. I am sad to say this, but if IWA or the economical support to *Rudar* will withdraw before 2-3 years then the production of the newspaper can not go on said Fikret. I told him that we are trying to apply for new money all the time but that we can never be sure. He said that he was glad because of our engagement and effort. [...]

[Author: Li Skarin]

Source: PA Søndergaard: Tuzla report, September 1998 (extract).

ACTIVITIES IN SUPPORT OF AND IN COOPERATION WITH WOMEN IN TUZLA

From the very beginning, supporting and working with women in Tuzla became an important action field for IWA. IWA representatives had been in contact with women's groups in Tuzla since shortly after the arrival of the first convoy in November 1993 (see doc. 35 below), and IWA went on to develop and implement a range of activities, not only convoys containing material and goods specifically for women, but also a number of local projects, of which the *IWA Saliniana* women's centre, opened in 1997, became the most important. The documents in this section provide more insights into these projects, their development between 1994 and 1998, and the IWA philosophy behind the projects.

DOC. 25: PROPOSALS FOR SOLIDARITY PROJECTS WITH WOMEN IN TUZLA

IWA-Flanders to International Coordination Office Stockholm for distribution, Bruxelles, 6 juillet 1994

OBJECT: SOLIDARITY WITH WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION OF TUZLA

[...]

Second: the women's association of Tuzla

[...] In fact this association is the old "yougoslavian" women's organisation and I am pretty sure, the women in charge are still the same, may be not all of them but anyway. That's no problem for us. They have a broad action field, have multi-ethnic and even feminist way of action. The most active women are also active for instance in Civil Forum [*Forum of Tuzla Citizens] or trade unions, etc. Especially they show a great concern for the danger of "getting women back to the three K's" [Kinder, Küche, Kirche = children, kitchen, church]. They want to be professionally active, wear short skirts if they please and have a "modern" life (and husbands) in general.

For the moment their life is exhausting them. Only one example: Last time they proposed 10 little programs, but now they thought they would not be able to use the collected money for this because they had no energy left for developing themselves a program. They are busy with surviving themselves and their households –and they are supporting families from front soldiers, orphans, battered and raped women, etc. So, that's why they proposed we should deliver concrete material help (in the form of goods).

Third: why a women's project ?

For a number of reasons a solidarity project with women of Tuzla is especially useful.

First because this association play a role as an anti-nationalistic force. And then women are very sensible for dangers that are inherent in super-nationalism and fascism. Always those ideologies have been disastrous for women's lives and rights. That is why women are often so in front for acting against nationalism and war.

Second because they play a very important role in daily life during war. This need no explication. They take the burden of family and survival on their shoulders.

Third because often they are more victims than men. Not only by enemies, but also because after two years of war, a lot of man have become violent –also against their own children and wife. This is not just a tale, we saw it ourselves.

And also, for our own campaigns such special solidarity projects with women are very good. It broadens our campaign, more people (women) get active, find a way to involve themselves, etc. Especially in those countries where there is still an active women's movement.

Fourth: solidarity action with Women's Association of Tuzla by IWA

1. AN INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR A MAMMOGRAPH-MACHINE.

In the letter they gave me, you can find that they are asking for such a machine. We still have to find out some important details for this (which hospital is going to work with it, what kind of staff and material they have, etc.). Via our convoys we are trying to get this information.

Women are especially sensible for this cry for help, because of the very nature of this mortal and mutilating disease.

We can:

> collect money (is in any case necessary for transport, paper-work, spare parts, films, etc)

> try to find a machine (at a hospital, trade union of nurses...), this can be a second hand machine, but it must then be very good (only what is good enough for ourselves can be good enough for them)

Maybe we have a lot of luck and some rich hospital of doctors group offers us a machine right away –but it can be that we have to make this a long campaign.

All depends of how many women's groups will be getting active in Europe for this. Just let's try and see how far we get!

2. THE "SPECIAL" OCTOBER CONVOY (LET'S FIND QUICKLY A NAME FOR IT)
If everything will go well, we propose in Flanders to do our part of this convoy as "a women's convoy".

We will have a truck in October (touch wood) that is meant to stay in Makarska and will ride between Makarska and Tuzla afterwards.

We will try to get this truck ready by October and fill it (some 10 tonnes) with aid for the women's association.

We will collect and buy:

- > hygienic goods (all kinds, from shampoo to skin care)
- > underwear for women and hygienic stuff
- > preservatives
- > shoes
- > make up and nice things

Then, we want to have women-drivers who go all the way from Flanders to Makarska to Tuzla. If any of the campaigns have such women in view –grab them! This would give a special kind of impetus of the campaign.

216 /

If we could find enough women drivers, that would be great! For one: it would diminish a bit the machismo of "we guys and the truck business" (I hate it! Don't you think women have such a sensible way of looking at things: like trucks are means of transport and not totems? The ideal would be if we could find a women mechanic also. Sorry, I'm carried away).

And last: we want to have this truck accompanied by as many women as possible. By camionette or by personal cars (they can go to Makarska or to Tuzla, depends on the situation and what people are ready to do). If there are women of other countries who want to go with us, they are very welcome. If there are a lot of women who want to join, we even can organise some kind of event here in Belgium when we leave.

Voilà, those are our plans. Reality is something else, but then today's reality can be the dreams of yesterday, isn't it (old Flemish saying).[...]

Love from your friend Jenny [Mees]

DOC. 26: DISTRIBUTION OF WOMEN'S PARCELS

INTERNATIONAL WORKERS AID

Tuzla-report – Wednesday 950201 (W.P. = women's parcels)

At Thursday, 12 January, 5 trucks from Atlas left Split, 4 days later they arrived in Tuzla. After customs procedure and a very chaotic meeting with different organisations, the parcels were put in 3 different warehouses.

Women of KREKA took care of 900, and the rest, approx. 4300, were stored in 2 different places.

During the four days I spent in Tuzla I became acquainted with a number of people. Together we've discussed the distribution of the W.P.

Name lists of the following categories are being prepared:

- > all female staff of medical attendance, approx. 1850 persons
- > employees within the school system, ca 1500
- > The 167 KREKA-widows from a [mining] accident [on *August 26 1990]
- > 144 postwomen.

A meeting in the Town hall took place: Mirza Kusljagic, head of office ph# 221 119, 237 095, will produce coupons for the distribution in order to keep track on who got w.p. [...]

Women's Association (WAT) [...] We've had some problems in getting lists over the persons who will receive w.p. via WAT so I have therefore frozen distribution from WAT until this has been solved.

The distribution of the 900 KREKA – w.p. have started. I attended for a while and it was a VERY touching moment. Everybody was very pleased with the content of the w.p.

Contact persons at KREKA is Mujesira # 212 111, room 219 or Hasiba 212 111, room 678. These women have on several occasions appealed for help for all the families in KREKA. I will look into the possibility in distributing [more] w.p. to KREKA.

*SRETNO

Emina [Bitic] (Translation: Agneta [Falck])

The space below should be used to either write or draw something nice and then return to us. The winner gets a secret prize

Source: PA Woods, 4

DOC. 27: THE SHOE PROJECT

[July 1995]

MEETING WITH THE KREKA WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION "HEART TO HEART"

After being busy with all kind of other projects and having them wait for such a long time, now at last we had a meeting with them to create a project that actually already has started in IWA-Belgium.

When Jenny and Aldegonde were in Tuzla last April, the Kreka women suggested to start some shoe-project because on that front the situation is very bad.

We decided together with them on two different lines of this campaign:

- 1) To raise money (more or less on the same principles as the bread-campaign) with the goal to be able to buy one pair of shoes for each women. There are some 450 employed women and 550 unemployed, let's say it's about 1,000 pair of shoes.

We discussed that it would be most sensible to make a contract with a shoe-factory of the region. We will do further investigation and visit two factories later this week ("Aida" in Tuzla itself and "Fortuna" in Gracanica).

The different reasons why we decided on this are: It will be cheaper (Jenny and Else did investigations in Croatia), it will support the local economy and it will not create problems with sizes, models, etc.

- 2) We also try to collect money and machinery for setting up a little shoe-repair shop in Kreka-building. To be used for all employees and members. For this of course we also have to collect repair-material (leather, soles, mending material, etc.)

We hope that other campaigns will link up with this project.

After this, they asked us for support of another initiative they have started in their association. [...]

Also, just to inform you, the Kreka women collected some clothes and shoes for the new refugees from Srebrenica who are still at the Tuzla-airbase. They plan to visit the refugees on Friday and we will go with them.

Source: PA Woods, 4: Extracts from reports written by Jenny Mees and Franziska Bachmann about different meetings they had in Tuzla, sent on 25 July 1995 by the IWA coordination office in Stockholm to the national campaigns.

DOC. 28: SETTING UP THE WOMEN'S CENTRE

REPORT FOR THE INTERNATIONAL MEETING

[IN COPENHAGEN, NOVEMBER 1996] – WOMEN'S CENTER IN TUZLA

13 October 1996

In this project are Jenny, Franziska, me and the field officer [in Tuzla] at that time (Helena, Mattias, Peter) and Gölin involved. It is decided in Amsterdam that it's an international project.

Belgium received this nice grant from the E.C. in September 1996 **A Support to the Women's Association**, to assist it in the realization of different projects in favor of women in B&H in particular, based on promoting women's cultural, educational, political and social activities.

By the time the grant was allocated the structure within the Women 's Association had changed. There main desire at that time was the opening and equipping of a communication-office and the start of the publishing of a women's information-magazine.

Because of the unpleasant experience with the women's magazine, [...] we decided to stop our cooperation with the association. We preferred to work with independent women of Tuzla.

The grant should be used before September 1996. Monica did a great job, she managed a postponing. The grant is now until April 1997.

/ 219

BRIEF BACKGROUND OF THE PROJECT

For women of Bosnia – Herzegovina it is of high importance to have a space of their own – A place where they can meet, discuss and work together.

For women it is not always easy to get access to information, to broaden their horizon and to gain the same influence as men in organising their society. In politics, in economic life and in other sectors of society, women are under-represented.

To improve this situation it is therefore of high importance for women to connect, to make link and to start a network to support each other.

AIMS AND ACTIVITIES OF THE WOMEN CENTER

- > Room: to offer a space where women can come together, drink coffee, discuss their own concern, their projects, their problems and their wishes and organise meetings,
- > Library: to offer women the possibility to get access to information more easily,

- > Courses on women related-issues: to organise workshops about several topics related to women, womenrights, women and politics, ...
 - > Database: include all identified women's organisations and initiatives in B&H
- Newsletter: monthly description of women's initiatives, funding sources for women's programs,...

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

The woman working in the centre will be paid, but for a great part the center will be run by volunteers (which will be supported by the paid staff). A local board will be established by women from different (women)organisations from Tuzla.

I have two months (10 september- 10 november) to get this started [...]

A announcement for a coordinator for a future women's center

To make it more democratic, we made 50 announcements and distributed them mainly by the local NGO's. We had 8 applications. The interviews will take place Monday–Tuesday, 14– 15 October.

JOB DESCRIPTION (extract out the announcement)

The coordinator would be expected to:

1. assume overall responsibility for the coordination of the women centre, reporting to the IWA office on regular basis about the activities and the finances.
2. start the center, establish a board, follow the activities of the center.
3. the highest priority to make it as an open and attractive centre, to attract as many women as possible.
4. maintain regular contact with all kind of women's organisations.
5. in the future, undertake and support fundraising activities.) [...]

THE EQUIPMENT

I am trying to find out were it is the cheapest to buy the computer, it looks like it is 1/4 less expensive in England. Still I prefer to buy it in Tuzla. You support the economy and it is much easier for spare-parts and reparation.

QUESTIONS AND REMARKS TO THE INTERNATIONAL MEETING

1. The neo-kolonisation type

I do feel very strange with this project. It is a upside down way of working. Normally you have a project and then you try to raise money. Now we have money and we have to create a project. All women I meet find a wonderful

project, they will surely come, but no one does really any effort to get it started.- Meliha from the faculty from philosophy, started to help to find a space, because she liked the project. She was the only one.

Mostly I am running around on my own, 'a Belgian who really thinks it is necessary to have a women's center'. Not for traumatised and refugees women (they can come, of course), but for local and educated women. Like the women houses we still have.

I am only wondering if it isn't too much imposing our ideas on people, o.k. they are interested, but no one of the Tuzla women tried to organise themselves and now I am here with the money, they aren't effectively helping. You do it, when it's finished we will come.

2. The future of the project

We have enough money to get it started, to pay 1 year the rent and to pay 1 or persons for 1 year. What is next?

1. Will IWA continue to support the project ? (It isn't started, somehow I want to know this).
2. There will be a need to follow it up very closely. If we don't want it to turn out a totally different project. Maybe Gölin will follow it up ? Peter ? But until the end of the next year it will need our support. There should be someone working on this. I am leaving 9 November, can Peter handle this on his own ? Isn't it better to find an extra person, someone who is aware about the situation of women in Bosnia and understand the project and is enthusiastic to continue what I have been doing. Preferable for a longer period. I don't mind to come back sometimes for 14 days, but until July I am not free for a longer period.
3. Just a crazy idea. There is money in the budget to pay maybe 3 women to come to Belgium, Holland,...to have a tour to see what a women's center means there. Is the Belgium-campaign or another interested to organise this before April ?

ALL THIS ARE STRANGE QUESTIONS, WHEN YOU KNOW WE ARE NOT STARTED YET. I do feel lonely, to make all the decisions on my own. I hope to get some response.

I feel sorry that I cannot come to Copenhagen. Moneywise, but I also like to spend as much time I have on the project. [...]

GREETINGS TO ALL !!!!

Aldegonde [van Alsenoy]

Source: PA Gysin, 1996

DOC. 29: THE IVA SALINIANA WOMEN'S CENTRE IN 1998

IVA:

Between the last international meeting in Antwerp and this one the ones involved in the support of the IVA center suffered a typical IWA case of communication problems. Some reports had been written by the IVA sub-group in Stockholm but somehow not been sent out which resulted in the other IVA groups [in Belgium, Denmark and Germany] not communicating with Stockholm and that again in frustration in Stockholm because they didn't get any replies...

Anyway, the center in Tuzla is working very well as we were also able to follow in the reports about the center written by Mira. Li told that IVA is trying to find a new location since the flat they are staying in now is very expensive. [...] The IVA center has 180 members by now. An idea they are currently working on is to try to build up a kind of sister-center outside Tuzla (Gornji-Tuzla), where lives one of the center's coordinators, Ramiza. This way IVA hopes to reach as well women living in the countryside. [...]

Li has been talking with former *Ship to Bosnia representative Gunilla, who is now working for WHO in Sarajevo about the IVA SOS phone line. She was quite pleased to see how they run it having heard many horror-stories about other such phone lines in Bosnia. When the IVA women get a call they usually write it down and get in touch with real professionals in each different subject and then call back to the woman asking for help, instead of giving them unqualified replies.

The IVA center has already worked out a plan of activities for the whole year. It has been sent to Stockholm some time ago where they after some complications could get it translated into Swedish. Ulrika promised to get it translated into English and send it out to the whole campaign.

The meeting also had a discussion about the courses offered at the center and the fact that there are two men participating in the computer-course. The IVA ladies in Tuzla see this more as a nice fact that men are getting interested in the center. We could understand that point more or only if it would be f.e. men participating in workshops about non-violent discussion or similar events. Li will carefully discuss this matter with the center since it is probably as strange for them that we think it is completely out of mind to have men in computer courses offered at a women's center as it is for us to do so.

Since the IVA center has a possibility to get sending time for free at TV Tuzla they want to prepare a little promoting spot or film. Not only for this it would be

very good to have a video-camera at the center. If anyone should have the right connections to fix one it would make quite some women in Tuzla very happy. There are also talks about doing a radio-show. We all think it is fantastic if they use as many different ways of promoting the center and its ideas as possible.

The meeting also wants to suggest them to start a regular newsletter, maybe it could develop in an other try of a women's paper one day... This could be good because even though specially according to *SIDA there are already enough papers in Tuzla by now, there is still no serious, good and independent women's paper in Bosnia. "Zena 21" is by now mainly consisting of tips about make-up and on other terms *SDA dominated.

[...] Another thing Li will talk about with the center is that it is already time again to apply for a new budget. They should try to get a 3-year-budget from the EC which anyway would leave the usual 33% to finance with other means. [...]

The German campaign gives 200 DM to Li so the center can subscribe newspapers from Croatia or buy books. We should keep in mind that any small donation is still of big use for the buying of various small things for the center.

The communication of all IVA interested will look as following in the future: Mira will keep writing her reports, maybe with some little changes that f.e. the swedish campaign suggested to her. These reports will be sent out to the international campaign. If people in the campaign have reactions on those reports we should send them to Stockholm where they will prepare a respond letter to Mira's reports. Also the IVA active people should send a short report about their activities around every 25th of the month to the Stockholm IVA group and they will prepare summaries of these reports to be sent out to everyone. If anything happens on "the womens' front" in our countries that could be used for *Rudar (f.e. women and union) or just interesting for the visitors of the center, we should send it to Li in Tuzla by every 25th of a month together with the contribution to Rudar we all have to send anyway.

Source: PA Gysin, 1998: Minutes of the IWA-meeting in Basel, 1998 (extract).



IWA trucks trucks outside the IWA office/apartment in Tuzla, in the first floor of Blagoja Parovića street, November 1995. (Photo: Agneta Falck)

November 1995 in Tuzla:
Theo Mewis (IWA Tuzla),
Michel Wenzler (IWA Makarska),
Robert Mesić (owner of the
apartment where the
IWA office was located).
(Photo: Agneta Falck)



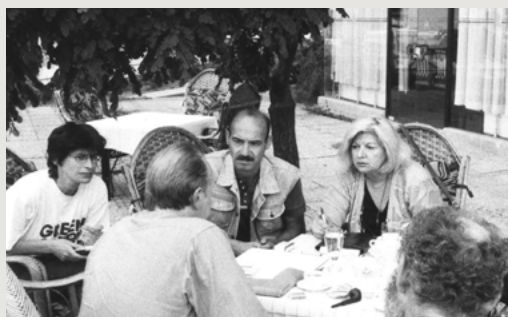
Inside the IWA office/apartment, in 1995: Bottles and pots filled with tap water. During the war, the tap water often only ran for some hours a day. (Photo: Lone D. Rasmussen)



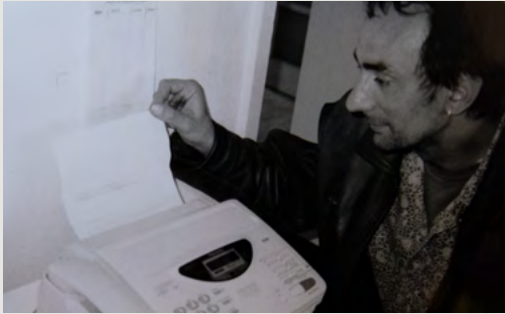
Fikret Suljić, president of the Kreka miners' trade union, presenting an award of recognition to IWA to Mick Woods at the trade-union office in Tuzla, 1994. (Photo: Kristian Buus)



One of the famous UNHCR-accreditation cards (“blue card”), which facilitated access and mobility within Bosnia and Herzegovina during the war. Here for Yannick du Pont from IWA Holland, spring 1994. (Photo: SPARK Archive)



Meeting with the Tuzla teachers' union to discuss school cooperation projects, Tuzla, August 1996. From the left: Marlene Soder (IWA Switzerland), Vagn Rasmussen (Support Tuzla's Schools), Tihomir Babić (interpreter for IWA), Murveta Stević (Tuzla teachers' union). (Photo: Hanspeter Gysin).



IWA's most important communication tool: the fax machine. Here with Robert Mesić, in Tuzlas IWA office, 1996. (Photo: Agneta Falck)

Inside the *IWA Saliniana* women's centre, with Lola Koncul, 1997. (Photo: Agneta Falck).



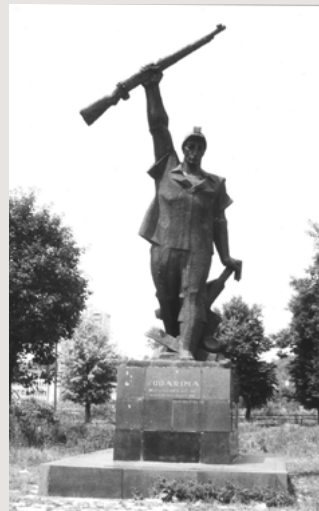
Eva Moberg, Mick Woods and Jenny Mees in Tuzla, 1994. (Photo: Agneta Falck)

Visit to one of the pits
of the Tuzla coal mines
in Đurdevik in 1996...



...with Marlene Soder,
Helene Bach and Tihomir Babić.
(Photos: Hanspeter Gysin)

The iconic Miners' monument in the
Kreka neighbourhood in Tuzla, celebrating
the miners' rebellion in Husino in 1920.
(Photo: Hanspeter Gysin, 1996)



E. DISCUSSIONS ABOUT TUZLA, THE TRADE UNIONS AND MULTI-ETHNIC BOSNIA

Support for Tuzla, the trade unions and multi-ethnicity were strong political priorities for IWA, but this did not preclude controversial discussions within the organisation about the meaning and forms of this support. The documents in this section illustrate different aspects of these discussions.

DOC. 30: HUMANITARIAN VERSUS POLITICAL WORK?

Finding a balance between humanitarian and political work, and also between the cooperation with trade unions and other anti-nationalist forces, was one of the challenges regularly discussed within IWA. In this letter to the other IWA sections from 1994, IWA Flanders explains the importance of the work with trade unions but also with other groups, and raises the question of whether the political dimension has been too greatly neglected in IWA's work with the trade unions in Tuzla.

Dear friends,

First, some remarks

228 / At the IWA-conference in Brescia, we decided to continue the bread programme. We are also to organise a "special" international convoy in October for supporting multi-ethnic forces in BiH.

We also thought other minor projects could still find a place in our work – like supporting students, schools, teachers union, women's association. The backbone is still our bread program and the direct links with Kreka-miners, but smaller campaigns can do a lot to broaden our action radius. All kind of groups and individuals can be "put to work" (what an awful expression, sounds like forced labor, but I don't know another in English) in those areas they are interested in. And then, our political aim is to support multi-ethnic Tuzla and all forces that can contribute to that. IWA wants to be active on the field of international solidarity, especially because IWA opposes nationalistic frenzy, fascism and racism.

Through our campaigns and projects IWA wants to become a reservoir and instrument of internationalistic experiences this to the use of European labour movement. That is why the backbone of IWA remains the trade union work: we give priority to relations with trade unions and try to involve them in our home countries, not only as money-givers, but foremost as terrains where we can discuss and involve them concrete in our solidarity-campaigns (so not only the top and responsables, but also the members at factory-level and the activists on level of trade union work). That is also why our projects have to be as concrete as possible, they are connected with "daily life" (like the bread program) –but they also have to be on a higher level about democratic rights, trade union organising, etc. This last bit, we have not been able to do yet, or almost not. In the meantime, the smaller projects have a more explicit "political" face, especially solidarity with free press, civic forum, etc. I think we should take care that there will not be a very deep division between our "humanitarian" work for trade unions and "political" work for other forces. Up to now, I think we didn't have any political discussions with the trade union people of Tuzla (about organising trade unions, democracy in trade unions, future of BiH...).

In fact, why shouldn't we propose to them some discussion-rounds and some public meetings. We ourselves could learn a lot of it I think. Maybe the conference of *Verona Forum in October is a first and good opportunity to look around and do some field-work. [...]

Love from your friend Jenny [Mees]

Source: PA Woods, 3: IWA-Flanders to International
Coordination Office Stockholm for distribution, Bruxelles, 6 juillet 1994.
Object: solidarity with Women's Association of Tuzla (extract).

DOC. 31: GOING BEYOND TUZLA?

Tuzla quickly became the centre of IWA's activities, but this led some to wonder whether IWA was focusing too much on this one city, and whether it should work more closely with the Sarajevo-based Federation of Trade Unions of BiH. This question was discussed, for example, at the IWA meeting in Austria in October 1995, in connection with two proposals. One was to close the office in Makarska and establish the IWA warehouse in Zenica instead, from where, it was argued, convoys could more easily reach other parts of BiH. The other proposal also involved closing Makarska, and keeping the Tuzla office as IWA's only presence in BiH. Beyond the decision on a logistical question, the debate became a discussion about IWA's political priorities, with a number of interventions emphasising the importance of Tuzla. In the end, the meeting agreed to keep the focus of its work on Tuzla. (See also text part, pp. 47–50)

DISCUSSION:

S: We should continue to concentrate on Tuzla. It is unclear in the proposal if the food parcels are for the miners in Tuzla or for the trade unions elsewhere. [...]

B: What kind of political project do we have? Politically the main question is: do we support the Federation of Trade Unions of BiH or do we just focus on Tuzla. We have something very new now. Linked to our past we support the multiethnic society in Tuzla. If we have something new, we need a new explanation. Also to carry the campaigns internationally. Tuzla is everything: Trade union, multiethnic society. You never find it nowhere else in Bosnia. Leaving Tuzla is also leaving a symbol. It is a very powerful symbol of campaigning. The women organisation, the civic society. Helping the Bosnian trade union to reconstruct itself also is a new question. If we decide to say the Bosnian trade union in fact does not exist, they want to reconstruct themselves, maybe we can help them. Will we do this with convoys and delivering humanitarian aid? Maybe we can do it in a different way. Maybe we can keep Tuzla as the multiethnic machinery and support, maybe we can help the Federation of TU BiH with contacts. We know the leadership of those trade unions. They are bureaucrats. We are trade union activists. They are people of the old system. Of course we can help to reconstruct the Bosnian trade union but not linking all waggon on them. In Tuzla we are on safe ground. Because in Tuzla we have multiethnic society and whatever. About [Sulejman] Hrle [President of the TU-Confederation BiH] we are not so sure. To reconstruct the Bosnian trade union: Is it only Bosnian-Bosnian territory to defend, or also on the liberated

territory? And what about the Serbian territory? [...] We should be very careful about choosing Zenica and know everything very exactly. The financial argument is the only argument for Zenica. otherwise I would prefer the difficult way of Tuzla. Then we can do small things but correct things.

Dk: We should still have our main activity in Tuzla. We can do the other things symbolically. It does not matter if we have the bread-program or food parcels, as long as the receiver group is the same. Small projects like the supporting of the mushroom project with 5.000 DM could be done as a single project of one country and need some linking papers on that. IWA should concentrate on the Kreka miners and the [trade union] paper.

[...] How shall we cooperate with the union? There is a split in the union of Bosnia. It would be suicide supporting the wrong. In Sarajevo we had a meeting with the leaders of the trade unions. And they quarrel against having Hrle as a president of the union. [...] He is elected until the end of the war. These two groups have very different views on how the influence of the working class after the war, who is going to own the companies.

A: I would support the construction of a trade union. I would support activists, workers, unemployed people to construct structures on the basics, to build a democratic system with democratic structures and to learn of all the mistakes made in the trade unions in Western Europe. That is a very high level. I would be very careful about building the basis of the trade union with people who come out of a traditional bureaucrat structure. In Austria we have done a lot of work to bring into public that symbol of Tuzla. Now turning around and argue in a different way for us would be very hard. I also want to keep Tuzla as main project because of all our contacts to the people there. For the political work it would be a step forward to have our HQ in Tuzla. If a delegation is going to Tuzla our center also is in Tuzla. We should not think that those two proposals are so close together and that a compromise is possible. We should discuss about the differences. Building up a trade union in Bosnia must be a main project. We have two main projects to decide on. The project of the Federation of Trade Unions of BiH with a little support for Tuzla, or Tuzla as main project with some other convoys to other cities. I would prefer not to decide it here. These proposals were in those meters of faxes we received yesterday, I read it quickly but I was not aware of the importance. I did not see the big differences. I would prefer to concentrate on the campaigns that IWA has started and to go on with Tuzla and these four projects.

CH: [...] If we work with and build up trade unions we would like to have a new trade union as a result. This is heavy stuff. We have to prevent to get caught by some groups, so we must distribute our help. Tuzla has been the symbol. I would prefer to continue supporting mainly Tuzla, but it would be wrong to focus only on Tuzla. Doing these convoys to Sarajevo and Bihac was right. The 5.000 DM for the mushrooms is not the end of a campaign. It is a beginning. [...]

D: We did not want to drop Tuzla, we still want to keep it as the main point of the campaigns. Our roots are there and it would be stupid to cut off the roots. But now food is needed in other places. In Sarajevo and Bihac. we have the starving people. Sarajevo is a multiethnic city too. That split inside the trade union is a conflict I do not want to touch. I do not think it is really a political problem. It is a problem of opposition as you have it in each organisation, a personal conflict. I do not want to support one of them. I do not know enough about the links and the splits. [...]

Dk: The split in the trade union is definitely a political split There is a very fundamental difference in what the two sides want the union to work after the war. How they want the companies to function. I am really opposed to making a decision to support one side.

CH: Talking to these people in Tuzla I could hear a lot of mistrust. From trade union president to trade union president, to basis people. We are going to develop this here. It is not a melting pot where everybody agrees with everything. I don't think we will find the truth. Just avoid to support one tendency.

B: You can support the trade unions on different levels. Sometimes you can help with very small money. Like the Greek campaign. The money was collected by Greek women and they wanted to support women. They gave it to nurses who organized a new branch of trade union. Maybe they give up after five months, but those people really want to defend themselves, they are no bureaucrats. About Zenica I have no good feelings. Maybe it's true that all the humanitarian organisations move there. But is this the place where we want to go? I am for keeping Tuzla as HQ. May be it is more difficult. Why don't we go into the UNHCR building in Tuzla? It is the cheapest. We do not do it because we are no humanitarian organisation. We are a political campaign. Zenica would be a bad place. It is very nationalistic.

GB: IWA is not a humanitarian organisation. It is a political organisation that uses methods of a humanitarian organisation. Our decisions are political decisions. The decision is to be based in Tuzla or in Zenica. [...] I think we agree it would be a mistake to drop Tuzla and jump from opportunity to opportunity. Tuzla was chosen as the focus of our work not only because it was suffering. It was a symbol of the multiethnic resistance to the nationalist project. Not just because it is a multiethnic city, as a lot of places in Bosnia. Tuzla is not under the control of the *SDA, not a center of nationalism. It is a symbol of the future we hope to see in all of Bosnia. This is why I think the organisation should be based in Tuzla. It would be politically useful. Financially we have to discuss it. The fact that all humanitarian organisations are based in Zenica is one reason why we should be very careful about being based there. The question is what is our point of reference. Is it what these organisations are doing or is it what the people we work with in Bosnia are doing? In particular I am interested in the women project and the teachers-students campaign. It will be relatively easy in GB to get limited support. The union paper is a really important project. It is not only work we are doing in Bosnia but it is also work we are doing in our own country. To raise the contacts in Bosnia and in the workers movement in our own country. It could play an important role in the struggles for a non-national progressive socialist alternative. We should translate it in English to show it to our unions and give information about the situation and the unions in Tuzla, the antiracist multiethnic alternative for a greater understanding. The more activists we can get involved, the more we have the possibility to create in Bihac, in Sarajevo projects like in Tuzla.

D: The Federation of T.U. BiH is the roof of the working class. It is important to work together with them and support them. It should be organized democratically and multiethnically. They also can help us a lot in our work for Tuzla and for *Ship to Bosnia. Driving convoys to other places than Tuzla is not only symbolic. In Sarajevo is the real need. But it is a cheap and politically important way for us to support the Federation of T.U. BiH and to continue with our work in Tuzla. IWA should be a link between trade unions. If there might be a problem of SDA-controlled areas, we speak about the trade unions, not about the government.

[...]

Source: PA Gysin, 1995: "International IWA meeting, Annental, Hainfeld, Austria" – Minutes of the IWA-meeting in Vienna, October 1995 (extracts).

DOC. 32: TAKING A POSITION ON THE MILITARY QUESTION?

The meeting in Austria in October 1995 took place shortly after the first substantial NATO intervention (against positions of the Army of *Republika Srpska*) during the war in BiH and the BiH Army's successful offensive in north-western Bosnia. This triggered a lengthy debate among the participants about the arms embargo, the NATO intervention and the role of the Bosnian army, and whether or not IWA should take a stance on these issues. The discussion illustrates the different positions that existed among the campaigns, especially regarding the arms embargo and the NATO intervention, but also their agreement that IWA as such should not take a position on these questions and should continue to focus on support for trade unions and other forces defending the idea of multi-ethnicity, with an emphasis on IWA's ethos of grassroots solidarity. (See also text part, pp. 54–55)

DISCUSSION ABOUT THE SITUATION IN FORMER YUGOSLAVIA

A: If we remember how the war in Bosnia started we have to face that the war started with the plans of Milosevic and Tudjman to separate Bosnia into different parts and to risk ethnic cleansings. All the so-called peace-plans are in the same logic. In our opinion each separation of Bosnian territory is ethnic cleansing. Neither the NATO-bombings, nor the negotiations, nor the offensive of the Bosnian Army are the correct way to find a solution for Bosnia. I think its common sense among us because the reason, why we work in the projects of International Workers Aid is to help those initiatives, groups, trade unions who don't base on nationalistic ideology. These groups and initiatives are very weak at the moment. [...] We think it is the correct way, to base on the non-nationalistic groups, even if they are weak.

I hope we will get more information about the offensive of the Bosnian Army in the last days by those who come from Tuzla and Makarska. In Austria we had intensive discussions about the character of the Bosnian Army with the journalists [from Tuzla] who visited Vienna in April. We got an article of Fatmir Alispahic, the speaker of Selim Beslagic in Tuzla, with an analysis of the Bosnian Army. He writes that the Bosnian Army does not defend the multiethnic ideas. We must face the fact that the Bosnian Army has changed all it's leading-corps. Now nationalistic forces represent the leading-corps. [...]

B: Our campaign of course has political discussions. But it is hard to find an opinion. A lot of things are going on in Bosnia. The bombardments, the offensive, not everybody is agreeing in everything. But the most important thing for our campaign is that people like me show very concrete solidarity to people in

Bosnia, who stand for the same values as us. Whatever happens on the political and military level, we have no influence in fact, our campaign is so small. Instead of doing nothing we can build our campaign, concrete projects, talking to people and explaining that the multiethnic society still exists in Bosnia and that they need our help for the future. They cause the future in Bosnia maybe more than the bombardments now. If those people can stay in their towns, if they can keep their ideas, if they can survive, they will be there to build up the new society. That is why we develop a basic solidarity. From school to school, from hospital to hospital, from women's group to women's group. All based on the same values. Maybe of a friendship-revolution. You can not speak about socialism. But about solidarity, about democratic values, about living together and let other people live together. Building a democratic society and a society for these goals. That is our stand and we think, we can keep the campaign living with that stand. Although we talk about politics. About the opinions about the bombardments and the Bosnian offensive. We have an opinion about this but that is not part of the campaign. The campaign is a concrete, very down-to-earth-solidarity.

GB: To issue a statement in support of Western bombing will be a disaster for IWA. We think that we should make a statement against. But a position to support the Western bombing would destroy the work we are able to do in GB. [...] We find it very necessary to take an explicit position both against the NATO- and UN-bombing and for the lifting of the arms embargo. It is a necessary position for the campaigns. I completely agree about what Austria said about the aims of Milosevic and Tudjman and the aims of the West. These are the lines we take in our leaflets. [...]

Dk: In Denmark we concentrate on mobilizing for multiethnic forces in Bosnia. The very important political issue in the Danish campaign is exactly this one. There was a debate during the summer if it is an ethnic war or if it is also a political war with multiethnic forces against nationalist forces. People in Denmark think: it is an ethnic war, those people are crazy, to make a solution in dividing, and all kinds of opinions. Politically it is very important to have the multiethnic perspective as an alternative to all of this. But we have a discussion about the arms embargo. Most of the leading persons of Convoy to Bosnia are for a lifting of the arms embargo. We see it as an alternative to Western bombing. If we don't want NATO to defend Bosnia, the only way to do it is to give arms and the Bosnian people can defend themselves. But not all people of the convoy do think so and we decided not to make it a part of the platform of the campaign. Somewhere I read that the character of the Bosnian Army was different in different places. Some of the corps

were nationalist and some not so much nationalist. It is very difficult to know much about this.

S: We have felt a need to try this ideological discussions about the NATO-bombings. But it takes so much time to discuss it deeply and often. So we could not make clear statements during this summer. But in the Swedish campaign we say, we defend Tuzla, the Tuzla spirit. Of course Tuzla is defended by the Bosnian Army. We talk about that in our campaigns. It is very dangerous to identify the Serbians with the *Cetnik Army. [...] The national meeting in Sweden made some ideological statements. It will be published in our newsletter and discussed in the different groups. We have not been defending the NATO-bombings in our messages worldwide. Even according to the lifting of the weapon-embargo we have no clear standpoint. Some people think we will make a campaign about lifting off the weapon-embargo, I think we will not. This is not our role in the play.

CH: We have to find a way out of this mess now. Some of us want UN and UN-Forces out of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Others want a lifting of the weapon-embargo. Some of us even think that NATO can liberate Bosnia. In this Bosnia-Release-Watch from Sweden I read that peace and justice in Bosnia will not be achieved without US-leadership and credible fright of NATO-bombings. This may make you think what people think in this office sometimes. I know, it is not a position of the Swedish HQ, but it is a problem. If you talk to the people in Tuzla about these NATO airstrikes they are maybe not happy but after years of such a pressure it is like a lifting of pressure, for the people. We have to look at a psychological level what it means for the people to be four years in war. This problem should be discussed. How can we blame people for calling police? They call the police. That is the point. They don't believe in their own strength. Of course they do not with the weapons they have. I think the discussion is interesting but in the moment I do not see a reason to change the platform of IWA. There is still the consensus to defend those people, who are for multiethnicity. About the character of the Bosnian Army there is a reason for doubts. There are a lot of differences, not all troops are of the same character. There are troops like the seventh corps that are almost only Muslims. I would like to have newer information about what the people think about the Bosnian Army. And if we have doubts about the character of the Bosnian Army: how shall we be for the lifting of the weapon-embargo? Who is going to profit from these weapons? [...]

A: The journalist delegation in Vienna was not homogeneous, they had many political differences. But I had the impression that they had the same opinion about the

Bosnian Army around Tuzla, that they are not defending the multiethnic idea. For Izetbegovic, Tuzla is a sort of island he does not like politically. The Bosnian Army would not defend the multiethnic people, but the Bosnian territory, the Bosnian integrity. I only could be for delivering weapons to workers milices of the trade unions for instance, to defend the trade unions, to defend the territories that are multiethnic. There is no reason to be for the lifting of the weapons-embargo. [...]

B: For the Bosnians multiethnicity is not only a question of ideas but also a question of survival. A lot of people have no other chance than to survive multi-ethnically. And that is why the Bosnian side is different than the Karadzic side and the Croatian-nationalist side. The weapons-embargo is a big crime. A lot of people died in the beginning of the war because there were no arms. In that time Bosnia was recognized as a member of the United Nations. Any member of the UN has a legal right to defend itself. Only Bosnia did not have that right. The people in Tuzla said, why didn't we get arms, we want to defend ourselves. Then the war and the tiredness of the people. Of course everybody is very happy about the bombardments, at least they had not been bombarded for a change. I always compare it with the liberation of Belgium by the American Army. People in Belgium were glad, when they were liberated by the American Army. [...] And about the Bosnian Army we discussed in former meetings that it is a big support for the multiethnic society in Bosnia. Imagine there is no Bosnian Army. There is no more multiethnic society too, because no one is defending it. [...]

D: [...] What I noticed in Tuzla is, as they know, we have the multiethnic attitude, they of course claim their place as a special multiethnic. Because we bring goods in. It is no surprise, that they suggest you to believe Tuzla to be a multiethnic island in a muslim-nationalist area. Because they want to have the exclusivity of the Tuzla situation. [...]

DK: We talked about the political fight inside Bosnia and asked what we can do. One thing that could be very important is to support for example the Trade-Union-Newspaper, to support their political fight.

CH: [...] There is a lack of information. You hear a lot of rumors and beliefs, from the newspapers and TV, from people who take sides with nationalities in the conflict. What we are faced with very often is neutralism because of this lack of information. Neutralism in fact is supporting the stronger side. I have never heard Bosnians talking about a bigger Bosnia. I have heard many Croatians and Serbians talking about this. And even their governments. This is the important

difference. The question for us is, whom do we support? Of course the trade unions. I want to know more about them. If democracy should develop, it needs these basis-orientated organisations. Trade unions, women's organisations, youth organisations. They are a minority in this country. We are a minority in our country. These are the partners we have to support. Not the Bosnian Army, the Bosnian government, NATO. Whoever is intervening in this war has his own interests. We have our interests. [...]

GB: There have been lots of differences. For me these are very typical differences about the weapons-embargo and the NATO-bombing. I do not even know if there is any disagreement between us. Where differences are is how we can campaign in our own countries. Whether it is useful to raise these issues as part of our work. So I think it would not be right for IWA to have a position on this as an organisation. We have to accept the different need in various countries. I think it would be very wrong for IWA to support or in any way seem to support the NATO-bombing. It would be a tragedy in Germany and also in GB or in other places. The focus of IWAs work is to support the multiethnic forces or the opposition. At times what we are doing is also support the government. But that is not why we are doing it. What we support is the people who are trying to maintain, trying to advance the multiethnic, multicultural future in Bosnia. That is what is unique about IWA. It is workers to workers. And it is supporting a future for the people of Bosnia. [...]

238 /

CH: Without the Bosnian Army we would not have to defend multiethnic organisations in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Because there would not be multiethnic organisations. This is the simple fact. Nothing else. And this does not mean any sympathy for Bosnian Army. Maybe after this war we will have to defend these multiethnic organisations against the SDA. [...]

B: I think the multiethnic society is still there, in Tuzla. It has changed, and it has become under stress. But it is still there and there are still forces in the local government, all kinds of civic organisations are for this multiethnic Bosnia. We do not have to change our opinion about Tuzla. And we will go on supporting them. A lot of journalists are going there and talk to the wrong people. They come back with reports, how horrible the situation is. Everybody can find a very horrible situation in Tuzla. But we must see the over-all picture.

Source: PA Gysin, 1995: "International IWA meeting, Annetal, Hainfeld, Austria" – Minutes of the IWA-meeting in Vienna, October 1995 (extracts).

DOC. 33: THE SITUATION OF THE TRADE UNIONS IN TUZLA DURING THE WAR

While the Coal Miners' Trade Union was IWA's main cooperation partner in Tuzla during the war, the organisation also became aware of the various problems faced by trade unions, due partly to the war and partly to the way they had been organised in socialist Yugoslavia, as appears in this report from October 1995.

[...]

And the miner-trade union?

It isn't easy to get the picture of what is taking place. The Kreka-TU officials are concentrated on the food aid and its distribution (like most people are concerned for food and survival).

Before the war the structures of the former Yugoslav regime were still intact. Everybody was in the Union and paid automatically a contribution. The TUs took care for some social services (holiday and vacation for instance).

But what are the TU's now? Most miners are in the army or are unemployed. What means it for them to be a union-member? And ordinary people have to think about survival.

One of the things inherited from the former system was a discredit caused by the close cooperation between the management and the TU-leadership (TU's as a transmission belt for the management). Of course such a policy undermines the confidence of the workers in their TU.

/ 239

And what are the real possibilities to influence things in the conditions of war?

1. Fact is that there is a low degree of involvement of the miners in trade-union activities. People are trying to stay in their employment, otherwise the men would be mobilised in the army. So people keep a low profile, even if they aren't paid. Everything is better than to go to the front. And even this must be relativised because there were very many volunteers among the miners that went into the army. It seems that the Union structures are nearly empty and only the people in the TU-board and -commissions are involved in some union-work. If asked the TU-officials say that there are some 10 or 20 people really active. The weight of the situation makes that the TU is very timid in its approach. This very specific situation will last until the end of the war.

2. A second element is the fact that people, during the war, have to take care for their survival. Even the smallest thing becomes a struggle. So people don't have the time nor do they feel the need to take risks by getting involved in trade-union activity. They worry about other things. Everybody who has been for some time in Bosnia noticed a kind of psychological disorientation of people, people that are forced to live under continuous stress and pressure. It must be very hard to think with a broad view and a clear mind when you live in a town that is shelled, when your husband is at the front, your son must go into the army.
3. Before the war there were several strikes, mostly concerning wages. Some of the present Kreka TU-officials were involved in it. These strikes were more part of a spontaneous movement without a settled leadership rather than consciously prepared actions.
4. We must keep in mind that in the former system in many cases the TU's worked together with the company management. That isn't forgotten. You can make the constatation of the habit of the TU-officials to keep in close contact with the mine management. In general, the TU in the former Yugoslavia hadn't a great credit among the workers because they were in many cases a transmission instrument, not in theory but in practice, from management to the workers. They were mostly no real fighting organisations for the workers interests.

Source: PA Woods, 1: Theo Mewis, Report
"The Kreka coalmines and their future. The miners,
the Kreka-trade union and IWA", 30.10.95 (extract).

F. VOICES FROM TUZLA

The sources in this section allow us to hear the voices of the mayor and other inhabitants of Tuzla, illustrating their take on the political and humanitarian situation during the war, and also how they perceived the outside world and IWA. IWA saw it as one of its tasks to make people from Tuzla heard in the various member countries, in order to familiarise societies at home with the realities of the war, to counter stereotypical images about BiH and the ongoing conflict, and to mobilise more support for Tuzla and its citizens.

DOC. 34: INTERVIEW WITH SELIM BEŠLAGIĆ, NOVEMBER 1993

When the first IWA convoy reached Tuzla in November 1993, the five drivers and passengers stayed for more than 10 days, meeting not only the trade unions but also other organisations, as well as the city's mayor, Selim Bešliagić. This is an interview which Jenny Mees conducted with Mayor Bešliagić in November 1993, in which he speaks about the situation in Tuzla at this time, international policy towards BiH and the work of IWA.

Jenny Mees: What do you think about the current situation in Bosnia?

Selim Beslagic: The world refuses to face the truth, the world refuses to call to account the aggressors and war criminals. The world avoids saying that Radovan Karadzic (leader of the Bosnian Serbs) and Mate Boban (leader of the Bosnian Croats) are fascists who want to nail the Bosnian people to the stake. No, public opinion puts the aggressor and the victim on the same level. The Bosnian people, and especially the Bosnian Muslims, are threatened with death. They are the victims, not one of the three warring factions which are referred to nowadays. In Bosnia all the people want to, and can, live in peace. Tuzla is the proof of this. We have no other choice: our population has lived together for centuries and is very mixed. Because of the war life has become so hard that I fear even here extremism can gain ground. The nationalist parties want to claim that the war, starvation and deprivation are the results of our policies and that our ideas are therefore wrong. But we know that we are acting correctly and the multi-ethnic composition of the population demands such policies. The world must know the truth about Tuzla and help us.

J.M. What is the biggest problem for the region?

S.B.: Hunger. People are hungry and, if the situation does not improve, the weak and the poor are going to die through a combination of hunger and cold. Because of the blockade, no convoys are getting through. You started out with fifteen lorries and only three reached our city. No other civilian convoy has been able to get through. We have no diesel and therefore no transport, which also makes the situation very difficult.

J.M. Our convoy led a campaign to open up the so-called Northern Route (the Posavina corridor). Do you think that this route is possible?

S.B. Yes, it is a logical route! But there are other possibilities, through Banja Luka or Belgrade for example. But everything comes down to a question of political will and the relationship of military forces. The best way of saving our people now is, however, to open up our airport in Tuzla.

J.M. We tried to force a way through the Northern Route. That cost us a lot of time, energy and money. Perhaps it was a mistake or stupid to do that?

S.B. No, it was brave! We are pleased that you gave this issue its pressing political importance, that you have exposed the facts about this route. The Bosnian people are equally brave and if we ever decided to force a way through this passage it would not be a question of stupidity but of exceptional bravery.

242 /

J.M. Tuzla now has 70,000 refugees, particularly Muslims coming from central and eastern Bosnia. Does that not create tensions now that the ethnic composition of Tuzla has been changed?

S.B.: The problem of the refugees is not on such a scale that it has changed the original ethnic composition of our region. But, of course, there is a massive shortage of housing and food for these people. A large part of the refugees are housed with families. Only the refugees get aid from the United Nations High Commission for Refugees but for some months only 20 to 30 percent of their needs have been met. Our own population gets no aid from anyone. The city administration has two bakeries and, in the past, we also had several kitchens. For the moment, however, they are all closed because we no longer have the basic necessities. Our conception is that all the refugees must be able to return to their own region. We do not accept that frontiers can be drawn by force, we don't accept a peace which deprives people of their home!

J.M.: What do you think of the way in which the peace negotiations are progressing? You are, yourself, an important participant.

S.B. Well, no war has ever been stopped because of a slip of paper. What matters is the military relationship of forces. No lasting peace is possible if it is unjust. We don't accept having to negotiate with war criminals, we don't want to find ourselves on an equal footing with war criminals because we are legally elected. We want peace. We are in favour of negotiations, but we don't want to sign a peace which will mean the death of our Bosnian population.

J.M. You mentioned the airport at Tuzla which is usable but cannot be opened. International Workers Aid led an action in several countries on 11 November to demand its opening. What are your views on this?

S.B. I am very pleased. Everyone here has been waiting for more than a year for the opening of our airport. I hope that you can put political pressure on your MP's and governments, and that this question can reverberate throughout your media and so become a burning political issue. I also want to say this. You arrived here with three lorries. It's not much and will in no way relieve our distress here. But the quantity isn't important. What counts is moral support. We cannot tell you enough how important these three lorries are for us. For everything you have done I thank you from the bottom of my heart. I wish you a good journey home and hope it will be easier than getting here. Goodbye until better times.

Source: Geoff Ryan (ed.), *Bosnia 1994: Armageddon in Europe. Why socialist support multi-ethnic Bosnia against Serbia's war*, London: Socialist Outlook, 1994.

DOC. 35: "DON'T FORGET TO TELL THAT THERE ARE NO THREE PARTIES IN BOSNIA, BUT FOUR!"

On that first trip to Tuzla in November 1993, Jenny Mees also met with the Tuzla Women's Association. The following document concerns that meeting, which can be considered as the starting point for IWA's commitment to cooperate with and support women in Tuzla (see also docs. 25-29 above). It reproduces the original voices of several women in Tuzla and what they said to the IWA representative.

A MEETING WITH THE WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION OF TUZLA WOMEN OF TUZLA: COURAGE, HUMOR AND WARMTH

The Women's Association of Tuzla numbers 10.000 members. I met the president and some active members. Those six women spent a whole afternoon with me in the icy lounge of Hotel Tuzla: the town has only 3 hours electricity per day and there is no fuel. We did without coffee too: one cup costs 7 DM... But our talk gave us warmth.

Mujesira Haman (a lawyer): "The most urgent problem here is hunger. We don't have food. Almost nothing is coming through because there's the blockade around our town. You saw yourself the market: everything is horribly expensive and the supply is very limited and poor. It's awful when you know your children are hungry all day long. We don't die yet, but when this winter nothing changes, this will certainly happen with some people. Bread is something you can only dream of: flour costs 15 DM/kg, sugar 30 à 40 DM, oil 40 DM/liter."

Aisa Mahmutagic (a teacher who translates for me) adds she earns nowadays but 2 DM per month! I already knew that wages are completely insufficient. For instance: a miner told me he got before the war 1.200 DM and now just 5 DM. The normal currency is Deutschmark, the Bosnian Dinar still exists but isn't worth anymore the paper its printed on: 100.000 BD doesn't value 1 DM. How in fact then do people survive? Vesna Ferkovic (a surgeon) answers they themselves don't know exactly how they make ends meet, but it's a very hard struggle. A lot of time and energy goes in the search for food and for fuel, wood, etc. Many families and neighbors cook together to economize their budget. Others have relations with villages nearby or can get some help for relatives outside Bosnia. Still others, and they are many, have to "sell their household" step by step. This also I saw at the market. And everybody cuts down expenses as much as possible and even more: no clothes, no shoes, no soap, no toothpaste, no candles, no nothing... only getting some food. Everybody's appearance has changed a lot: some people lost 10, 15 kilo's weight, you see a lot of emaciated faces. Some families are slowly sliding to the abyss. Aisa says: "We people of Tuzla are getting help from nowhere and no one. Only the refugees get food and support of UNHCR, but their needs too are only covered for some 20 à 30%."

Suada Kapidzic joins in and all the other immediately agree with her: "How is it that our airport isn't used. Why don't they open it? Do your people at home know that our population can be provided with an airbridge but that UNO hesitates to do this, to say it politely."

The Women's Association was, when war broke out May 1992, the first to organise in Tuzla the aid for many refugees. Most of them are placed with families (87%), and this is already a heavy burden. The women also organised help for families of soldiers at the front line. But now, they themselves need desperately help. Vesna: "Our lives are composed out of thousands small and big tragedies. Yesterday I dropped a bowl of matches in a pan with water, I cried for more than an hour from anger and despair. That is our reality."

A lot of people are without news from their nearest and dearest. They lost friends or relatives. Even the fact that pets have to be killed or die (for them also there is no food) is often a drama, especially for children or old people. Aged or disabled people are getting isolated in the high apartment buildings of 20 and more stores, because the lifts don't function anymore... And women of course are those who have to care: for children, helpless people, for pets, for relatives, for parents, for husbands, fathers and brothers... And who takes care of them? Who comforts them?

Mirsada Bozanovic gives me a dossier with 10 programs the Women's Association made. They are all very sensible, practical and modest projects that don't cost a lot of money and that are very carefully elaborated. All try to give concrete help to some special categories of the population. They ask me to go with the dossier to the European Union, or may be our women's organisations or trade unions are rich enough to choose a program and to subsidize it. "Jenny when you should come back to us with some practical help, you would be the first one..." It drops like a stone on my heart, because in my briefcase there are already projects of the orphanage, of the high school, of a students organisation, of the Portrait Gallery, of an independent newspaper, of, of... All so sensible, practical and modest, they too. And everybody asks to deliver messages, to search for relatives... How to do all this?

The women ask me if it's possible to bring Christmas presents for the children. That's impossible. But I promise to do my best for their programs. They believe me and console me by saying they know I cannot do fantastic things, but that they are convinced that ordinary people like us are ready to help. Dear Vesna, dear Mirsada and all the others... Anyway, they all agree that most important is breaking blockade round the city to bring food and fuel.

Our meeting ends with an exchanges of recipes. I give forfeit, because how do you prepare meals without ingredients and fire? When we numb with cold say goodbye, Aisa takes me by the arm: Don't forget to tell that there are no three parties in Bosnia, but four! And that we are fourth party, the party of normal people who want to live in peace. If they want to divide Bosnia, they should have to provide also some place for us."

Tuzla, 15 November 1993

Source: ABA, KtB, 1: IWA, Newsletter no 2, January-February 1994, edited by Convoy to Bosnia in Denmark: Jenny's report from women's organisation in Bosnia (extract).

**DOC. 36: "WE ASK THE EUROPEAN TRADE UNIONS
TO SUPPORT OUR RIGHTS TO A NORMAL LIFE"**

During the war, organisations and groups from Tuzla regularly issued appeals for support, which IWA then disseminated in its home countries. Here is a letter sent by the Trade Union Council of Tuzla in September 1994:

**INDEPENDENT TRADE UNION OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA
TRADE UNION COUNCIL OF TUZLA**

NO: 36 /94 – TUZLA 20/9/1994

For the humanitarian organization "International Workers Aid"

Object: Appeal for granting of humanitarian help to the workers of Tuzla.

We are asking the trade unions of Western Europe to help the besieged workers of Tuzla and their children, within the limits of your possibilities.

EXPLANATION:

Tuzla, the biggest town in Eastern Bosnia, is a town where workers plagued by war are not only growing old from starvation and exhaustion, but are dying in large numbers.

The most endangered categories of workers are those working in education, construction, mining, industry, medical care and social services where working conditions are primitive without adequate safety provisions. Workers are without salaries, meals and transport to work. If they do receive humanitarian aid it is irregular and minimal. Many receive nothing.

The situation in the Thermal Power Station "TE TUZLA" is also dire, without pay, spare parts and any other assistance workers are battling to keep an electricity supply to essential services such as hospitals.

Medical services have been under great pressure since the war began. There are shortages of medicines, sanitary goods and food for the sick. Medical staff are working for nothing. People are dying because of this crisis and from malnutrition before eyes of the whole world. Children are being killed by indiscriminate shelling of the city by the Serb-Montenegrin aggressors.

Education is in crisis because of school buildings destroyed by shells and shortages of learning materials. Teachers and university professors are trying to stay at their posts and do their jobs despite these problems and lack of money and food. Their selfless devotion to their profession means that the education of our chil-

dren is often the only light in our homes. Often classes are held in cellars without teaching materials and light. Both teachers and pupils are exhausted by long walks to school an empty stomach. Occasional help from *NORDBAT has been the only compensation for these efforts.

Pensioners have received only one food parcel from the International Red Cross and are now are in a very vulnerable situation. They are dying in large numbers for want of food and medicines, also they are unable to cultivate gardens as the rest of the population do to supplement their diet. They also must helplessly watch the suffering of their children and grandchildren.

We have always said, "We are working and living for our children". As parents we are now unable to protect our children from artillery shells, snipers and lies. What should parents do who are unable to buy food and clothes for their children?

There are many children in Tuzla, growing up malnourished, cold and ill.

We were all, young and old, happy when it was announced that the Pope was coming to Sarajevo, bringing peace, life and normality. That dream has now passed and it is difficult to live without hope, without plans for tomorrow or next year. This hell will continue for as long as the aggression continues.

The saltmines and the salt factory are working on producing salt which cannot get to the market or the needy because of the blockade.

247

The "Dita"-detergent factory has not been touched by shells but cannot produce cleansing materials because of a lack of imported goods. This shortage increases the chances of epidemics. So far we have done well to avoid epidemics but for how long we will stay lucky we do not know.

On top of all these difficulties Tuzla is full of refugees from Bijelina and the surrounding area who have been displaced or ethnically cleansed by the *Chetniks. We help as best we can and then there is less for us.

No citizen of Tuzla, Serb, Croat, Moslem or other, can say they are under threat because of their nationality. Serbs living in apartments in Tuzla face no problems from either the authorities or their neighbors. We Bosnian care for people and human rights. One example is that the Presidency of the Trade Union Federation in our town consists of two Croats, three Serbs and four Moslems and we work together like a big family. We have hosted several visits from European Trade Unions and delegations have twice come with convoys for the workers of Tuzla.

APPEAL: If you can help us in any way we propose you send us the following:

- FOOD - OIL, BUTTER, RICE, PASTA, FLOUR, SUGAR, OTHER FOOD.
- FOR CHILDREN - MILK POWDER, EGG POWDER, COOKIES, & CLOTHING. - SCHOOL EQUIPMENT - PENS COPY BOOKS etc.
- MEDICINES - FOR CHILDREN, ESP. "TUTAL" FOR CHILD ASTHMATICS, VITAMINS, OTHER MEDICINES.
- HYGIENIC AND CLEANING MATERIALS.

Considering that education, medical care and architecture are in a very bad situation we appeal to you to collect aid for the workers in these sectors.

We know that the worker/citizens of Europe understand our situation so we ask the European Trade Unions to support our rights to a normal life. Help us have electricity, water and other basic necessities which we now lack. We are Europeans, we want to live like Europeans to work and live from our labours.

We thank you for your understanding. Come to Tuzla to meet us.

*SRETNO

COMMON TRADES UNION COUNCIL, TUZLA.
PRESIDENT SIJERIC FIKRETA.

DOC. 37: "DON'T WE LOOK EUROPEAN?"

When the Belgian activist Lieve Snellings came to Tuzla with the women's convoy in November 1994, she stayed for several days with a Bosnian host family. After her return, she wrote a report, which was published in a brochure in Belgium, in which she talks about the conversations with her hosts:

[...]

Lot of times people asked us: what do you find about us ? Or men asked what we thought about the women. At first we didn't understand what they were saying. Then they continued : don't we look European ? We're not Muslims as in Saudi Arabia or Iran... We are modern women, not women with a veil, that we don't want neither...

My host family was Muslim. We talked about this a lot. Our culture, our origin is Muslim, they said, but lot of us don't practice anymore. It is not correct to

pretend, to suggest that Muslim-women always wear a veil. One of their friends was invited in Sweden, to talk there about Bosnia. Well the poster with the announcement of that meeting with her was a photo with a veiled woman. Their friend became so angry she put on a veil for the whole conference and even put a sticker on her mouth... We are just modern, European women, that's what you must tell in your countries, they said. We are against fundamentalism, even against Muslim fundamentalism. For us, our Muslim culture means we feel openness, we are tolerant to other people, we want a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic society...

In the streets of Tuzla you just see a very few women with a scarf on their head, I didn't see one woman with a veil. They are European looking women in an European country.

But something is moving, my host women said. The population of Tuzla redoubled by the arrival of the refugees. And slowly different ideas are coming into the mind of the people of Tuzla and the refugees. After all what these refugees went through, they have lost everything, are rounded up... there are refugee-women who start to wear a scarf on their head. They will be driven by fundamentalism if people in the West don't do anything, said our conversation partners. And these Tuzla women fear fundamentalism as well. [...]

You, the West, should support us just for your own good, the women of my host family said again. If we, after living together in a good way for centuries, if we can't make this open society to live, well, it looks bad for the rest of Europe. Nationalism will become greater and greater... you already can see it growing in all Europe, Belgium, Austria, Italy...

And indeed, it is highly necessary that the voice of these people of Tuzla, of Sarajevo... will be heard in Europe, in the West. Former Yugoslavia doesn't consist only of nationalist groups, there also are the multi-culturals, the population...

Isn't it hypocritical from the West to support multi-culture by words, but not to speak with those who support multi-culture, multi-ethnicity? [...]

Source: PA Bachmann: Lieve Snellings,
Report about the women convoy to Tuzla
(26.10.-8.11.1994), 22.11.1994 (extract).

DOC. 38: “TODAY, THE SPANIARDS BROUGHT DADDY AID”

Viktorija Jurić was 14 years old in 1994 when she first met members of IWA, through her father Viktor Jurić. As a member of the Coal Miners’ Trade Union Board, he worked with IWA to receive and distribute the goods that the organisation brought to Tuzla. These extracts from Viktorija’s diary from 1994 and 1995 give an insight into the life of a teenager during the war in Tuzla, the activities of IWA, and also the importance that people from IWA had for her.

[November 1994 – no precise dates]

Today I didn’t go out because shells were falling. They are falling close now. I heard that one guy was killed and two were injured yesterday. Terrible. They’ve started again. Tuzla was shelled three times. Tonight I had Jenny, Aldegonde and Franziska around. They came to sit with me. It was very interesting, we talked about everything. Tomorrow Jenny and Alda are going back so we said goodbye. When they left, Franziska remained. Dad and I were kidding around with her. We showed her books, we talked. [...]

Saturday: Hello diary, [...]. Today, the Spaniards brought Daddy aid, so I went with him, I translated, we joked, etc. We went to lunch with them. It was great. [...]

Tuesday: Hello diary, this Franziska is super. She has brought joy into my life. You can just laugh and joke with her. She wants to help you. We talk about school, books, guys. Today the poor went to the school for nothing, we didn’t have classes because of the shelling (this morning around 5.30). But she was proud to have found the way by herself. Great. She was with me until 7.30 tonight. We watched videos, etc. I’ll see her again tomorrow. Then we accompanied her. I told her a joke. I was in front of the building with Slađa, Neša and Emina. We joked and laughed so much that I couldn’t believe it was me. It hasn’t been this nice and cheerful for a long time. I don’t know if we are going to school tomorrow, and I’ve seen Esther and those Spaniards. [...]

Wednesday: Hello diary, what’s up with you? All kinds of things with me. We had a meeting of the YOUTH GROUP this morning around eleven (the last one with Franziska). There were quite a few of us. We had fun, we drank, listened to music, said goodbye, took pictures. [...]

[Spring 1995] Last week, a foreigner came, MIKE. A middle-aged man and very smart (35). [...] He came here to do something with the youth. He found us premises, he (I mean the Swedes) raised DM 70,000 to put towards building and setting up a youth club or council.

We had one meeting with him, Bilja, Nada, Emir and me, because they were already patiently trying something with Franziska. And I think there will be some of that. There will be a lot of sections – acting, music, art, modelling, etc., everything young people love. The four of us are like representatives. Mike is coming back in a month when we'll get started, and now we're meeting like this once a week and talking about plans and ideas, we're transferring it all to paper so we can explain more to him later. We'll probably have a café bar or something similar, we'll organise concerts... It's just hard now while these battles are taking place. I hope things calm down a bit. We have a meeting tomorrow, but I doubt I'll go because there was shooting today. If there's more shelling in the morning, there's no way I'm going out. And even if there isn't, I don't know. I have obligations at home. I have to guard the house, clean, cook, take care of my brother. [...]

Source: PA Jurić Mousa: Diary of Viktorija Jurić 1994-95 (extracts).

Translated by N.M.

GLOSSARY

Arbetarkonvojen (Workers' Convoy): Swedish NGO and IWA branch created in 1993.

Arms embargo: Imposed by the UN in 1991 against the (former) Republics of Yugoslavia, often criticised by those supporting the Republic of BiH as the latter was poorly armed, especially in comparison with the *Republika Srpska*, which benefited from the support of the Yugoslav People's Army controlled by Serbia.

Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina: Regular army of the Republic of BiH during the 1992-1995 war.

August 26 Foundation: Organisation in Tuzla established to support the families of the 180 miners killed in a methane gas explosion in one of the Tuzla coal mines on 26 August 1990.

Ayuda Obrera (Workers' Aid): BiH solidarity group in Catalonia, cooperated with WAB and then also with IWA.

Banovići: Town near Tuzla, and along with Kreka and Đurdevik one of the three main coal mine locations in Tuzla.

Bihać: Town in north-western Bosnia, under control of the government of BiH, besieged by the VRS until August 1995, part of the Federation of BiH.

252 /

Bosniak: Bosniak is the official term used since 1993 to refer to Bosnian Muslims in a national/ethnic sense, replacing the national/ethnic category of "Muslims" which had been introduced in Socialist Yugoslavia. Bosniaks are one of the three main national/ethnic groups in Bosnia and Herzegovina, along with (mostly Catholic) Croats and (mostly Orthodox) Serbs. Not to be confused with the term "Bosnian" which refers to all inhabitants of BiH, regardless of any ethnic or religious affiliation.

Bosnian / Croatian / Serbian (BCS): The three official languages in present-day BiH, replacing the term Serbo-Croatian used in Yugoslavia. Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian form three very similar variants of a common pluricentric language.

Chetnik (četnik): Originally a royalist and ultra-nationalist Serbian movement from World War Two, the term was often also used by pro-BiH citizens during the 1992-1995 war to designate those Serbs who attacked and wanted to destroy BiH, as opposed to the Serbs who did not support these ideas.

Dayton Peace Agreement (DPA): Agreement signed by the governments of BiH, Croatia and Serbia which ended the war in BiH, and which set up the new constitution of post-war BiH, comprising two main entities, *Republika Srpska* and the Federation of BiH. The DPA was formally agreed in November 1995 at the US air base in Dayton (Ohio) and then officially signed in Paris in December 1995.

Đurđevik: Town near Tuzla, and along with Kreka and Banovići one of the three main coal mine locations in Tuzla.

Federation of BiH: Created by the Washington Agreement in February 1994, and combining the territory controlled by the government of the Republic of BiH and by *Herceg-Bosna*; under the Dayton Peace Agreement it became one of the two entities of post-war BiH.

Forum of Tuzla Citizens (FTC; BCS: *Forum građana Tuzla*): Civil society organisation founded in Tuzla in 1993, important supporter and promoter of the “Tuzla model”.

Fourth International (FI): International socialist organisation established in 1938 by Leon Trotsky and his supporters as an alternative to the Stalinist Comintern; it has since split into many different and often rival groups.

Helsinki Citizens’ Assembly (HCA): Network of civil society organisations in Europe created in 1990.

HDZ BiH – Hrvatska demokratska zajednica Bosne i Hercegovine (Croatian Democratic Union of Bosnia and Herzegovina): Main Bosnian Croat political party, founded in 1990

Herzeg-Bosnia (Croatian: *Herceg-Bosna*): Para-state on the territory of BiH created during the war by the HDZ BiH with the support of the Republic of Croatia (official name: Croatian Republic of Herzeg-Bosnia).

Herzegovina: Southern part of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Humanitarna pomoć: BCS-term for “humanitarian aid”

HVO – Hrvatsko vijeće obrane (Croatian Defence Council): Military formation of *Herceg-Bosna*.

International Workers Aid (IWA): Umbrella organisation of BiH solidarity groups from different European countries, created in 1993. Not to be confused with Workers Aid for Bosnia.

IVA Saliniana: Name of the women's centre set up in Tuzla in 1997 with the support of IWA.

Kapija massacre: Atrocity committed on Tuzla's central square (Kapija) on 25 May 1995, in which a grenade fired by the VRS killed 71 people, most of them young.

Konvoj til Bosnien (Convoy to Bosnia): Danish NGO and IWA branch, founded in 1993.

Kreka: Neighbourhood in Tuzla, and along with Banovići and Đurđevik one of the three main coal mines in Tuzla. Kreka is also often used to refer to the mine's company and/or trade union.

Makarska: Coastal town in Croatia situated near Split, location of IWA's logistical centre in 1994-1995.

NATO bombing of 1995: First sustained air campaign by NATO in September 1995 against VRS positions in BiH, officially called Operation Deliberate Force.

NORDBAT (Nordic Battalion): Part of UNPROFOR; a combined force of 1,246 Danish, Norwegian and Swedish troops stationed in the area around Tuzla between 1993 and 1995.

Paz Ahora (Peace Now): Madrid-based BiH solidarity group, cooperation partner/member of IWA.

Posavina Corridor: Territory in the north of BiH, between Tuzla and the border with Croatia, controlled during the war by the VRS.

Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina: Official name of Bosnia and Herzegovina after it gained independence in March 1992, until the end of the war.

Republika Srpska (RS) (Republic of Srpska): Para-state created in 1992 on the territory of the Republic of BiH with the support of Serbia, which after the war, through the Dayton Peace Agreement, became officially one of two entities of the state of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Rudar (BCS: Miner): Name of the IWA-backed trade union magazine published in Tuzla (previously named *Sindikalna Informacija*).

Rudnici Uglja Tuzla (Coal Miners of Tuzla): Miners' trade union in Tuzla, with three main branches/locations: Kreka, Banovići and Đurđevik.

Sarajevo: Capital of BiH, seat of the legal government of the Republic of BiH during the war, besieged by nationalist Bosnian Serb forces/the VRS from April 1992 until late 1995.

SDA – Stranka demokratske akcije (Party of Democratic Action): Main Muslim/Bosniak party and leading party of the government of the Republic of BiH during the war.

SDS– Srpska demokratska stranka (Serb Democratic Party): Main Bosnian Serb party during the war, which created and led the para-state *Republika Srpska*.

Secours ouvrier pour la Bosnie (Workers' Relief for Bosnia): BiH solidarity group in France, cooperated with WAB and then also with IWA.

Ship to Bosnia: Project launched by IWA Sweden in 1994, which later became an organisation in its own right.

Sida – Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency: Government agency of the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs which supported several IWA projects.

Sindikalna Informacija (Trade Union Information): Name of the miners' trade union magazine launched in Tuzla in 1995 with the support of IWA, renamed *Rudar* in 1998.

Široki Brijeg: Town in western Herzegovina, home of the customs office of the *Herceg-Bosna* authorities during the war.

Solidarität mit Bosnien (Solidarity with Bosnia): Swiss NGO and IWA branch, founded in 1995.

SOS Balkanes (SOS Balkans): Basque BiH solidarity group.

Split: Coastal town in Croatia, important transit point for humanitarian aid delivered to BiH during the war and to refugee camps in Croatia.

Split tax: In internal IWA jargon, the name for the fee to be paid by a national IWA group bringing a load to Makarska, which helped to cover the running costs of the IWA office in Makarska.

Srebrenica: Town in eastern Bosnia, 70 km from Tuzla, captured by the VRS in July 1995, followed by the deportation of 25,000 women and children and the systematic murder of around 8,000 Muslim men and boys, later qualified as genocide by international courts. The deported women and children and the male survivors found refuge mainly in Tuzla.

Sretno! (Good luck!): Miners' salutation in Tuzla and (former) Yugoslavia.

Support Tuzla's Schools (*Štət Tuzlas Skoler*, STS): Project launched by *Konvoj til Bosnien* in 1994, which later became an organisation in its own right.

Tuzla: City in north-eastern Bosnia, known for its anti-nationalist stance in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the main focus of IWA's activities during and after the war.

Tuzla airport: Situated 20 km from the city of Tuzla, the former military airport remained closed for most of the 1992-1995 war. The local government asked for it to be reopened by the UN in order to facilitate the transport of humanitarian aid to the city; UNPROFOR took control of the airport but, for security reasons, did not use it for humanitarian aid.

Tuzla model: see Annex 4.

UATUC – Union of Autonomous Trade Unions of Croatia: Biggest trade union confederation in Croatia.

256 /

Una penna per la pace (A Pen for Peace): Italian NGO and IWA branch, founded in 1993 and based in Brescia.

UBSD – Unija bosansko-hercegovačkih socijaldemokrata (Union of BiH Social Democrats): Non-nationalist political party in BiH in the 1990s, successor of the Alliance of Reformists which dissolved in 1991; the main political force in Tuzla during and after the war under the leadership of Tuzla's mayor Selim Bešliagić. It merged with the Social Democratic Party (SDP) in 1999.

UNHCR – United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees: United Nations agency for refugees, in charge of organising humanitarian aid in BiH during the war.

UNPROFOR – United Nations Protection Force: Name of the UN troops deployed in BiH between 1992 and 1995, one of whose main missions was to guarantee the delivery of humanitarian aid.

Ustasha (Ustaša): Croatian ultra-nationalist and terrorist organisation in the 1930s, which became the main force in the fascist Independent State of Croatia between 1941 and 1945. Since then, “ustashe” (the plural form) has been used as a derogatory term for Croat nationalists.

Verona Forum for Peace and Reconciliation on the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia: Network set up to support anti-nationalist groups in former Yugoslavia, established in 1992 and based in Brussels.

VRS – Vojska Republika Srpska (Army of Republika Srpska): Army of the para-state *Republika Srpska*.

“War in the war”: War between the government of BiH and *Herceg-Bosna* between spring 1993 and March 1994.

Washington Agreement: Agreement signed in Washington in March 1994 between the government of BiH and *Herceg-Bosna* which ended the “war in the war” and created the Federation of BiH.

Workers Aid for Bosnia (WAB): British BiH solidarity organisation founded in 1993, not to be confused with International Workers Aid.

Youth Solidarity with former Yugoslavia (YSY): BiH solidarity group set up by students in Amsterdam in 1994.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This book originated in some fortuitous encounters and the coming together of various dynamics at the right moment. I had been doing research for several years on the solidarity mobilisations with BiH in Europe during the war, and had vaguely heard about International Workers Aid, but without finding any material on it. Then, one day, a mutual friend – thank you Dirk Auer – put me in contact with the former IWA activist Franziska Bachmann. We met up in summer 2019 in Berlin, where she told me about IWA, showed me her personal IWA archives, and then directed me to two other former IWA colleagues, Ulf B Andersson and Andreas Thomsen. They told me about the existence of the IWA archives of several former IWA members, especially the very comprehensive collection of one of the IWA pioneers, Mick Woods, who had died in 2018, and said that they were thinking about what could be done with them. It was a great coincidence that our interests converged. We agreed that I would make an inventory of these unexplored archives and an assessment of their historical value, and on this basis the Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung, where Andreas Thomsen is now working, and I later agreed to make this book. I completed my research, between two coronavirus peaks, by travelling first to Switzerland, where I was hosted by Hanspeter Gysin, who showed me his very comprehensive IWA archives, and then to Stockholm, because Ulf B Andersson had told me that the 24 volumes of the Swedish IWA branch had been deposited in the Swedish Labour Movement's Archives and Library. Later in the year, it was already too late to travel to Denmark to consult the archives of the Danish IWA branch in the Workers Museum Library and Archive in Copenhagen. But one day before the reading room closed because of the pandemic, Ulrik Kohl, whom I had first met on the Croatian coast some weeks before, took the time to go there, and we were communicating the entire day online while he was going through the documents and sending me photos of them – my first experience of remote archive consultation, and a great one! Since then, I have been in contact with many other people, and each new encounter, each new document consulted, each new piece of information, represented for me, who was not in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the 1990s, another piece of the jigsaw, allowing me to build up an increasingly comprehensive and detailed picture of IWA.

I would therefore like to thank all those who helped me in my research and in the preparation of this publication, and who helped to make it a rich and stimulating journey – first and foremost, all the former IWA activists I have been in contact with, who were so cooperative and supportive, telling me about their memories and experiences from the 1990s, showing me their archives, sending me documents or photos, helping to clarify things when I had questions, putting me in touch with other people and/or helping me in other ways: Ulrik Kohl, Ulf B Andersson, Franziska Bachmann, Hanspeter Gysin, Theo Mewis, Andreas Thomsen, Agneta Falck, Gölin Forsberg, Yannick du Pont, Xavier Rousselin, Michel Wenger, Lone Degn Rasmussen, Jorge Lattot, Marc Huusfelt, Peter Öholm, Jenny Mees, Kristian Buus, Thomas Proctor, Marlène Soder, Lucien Perpette and Ilario Salucci.

I am also grateful to the people from Tuzla whom I met in person or through Skype and who talked to me about their experiences with IWA in the 1990s: Viktorija Jurić Mousa, who showed me her diary from the war, Lejla Jašarević Majdančić, Viktor Jurić, Selim Bešliagić, Damir Arsenijević, Robert Mesić and Murveta Stević.

In addition, I want to thank other people that I haven't mentioned yet, who helped in different ways: Lola Koncul, Lieve Snellings, Marco Abram, Elma Hašimbegović, Bernard Dréano, Sarah Page, Annelie Akanova, Ajla Valjevac, Vjeran Pavlaković, Amira Sadiković, Nicole Perotti, Geoff Ryan, Tim Wise, François-Xavier Laurent, as well as the staff at the Swedish Labour Movement's Archives and Library in Stockholm, the Workers Museum Library and Archive in Copenhagen, and the Archives of La Contemporaine in Paris, and Sabina Babajić from the Public and University Library of Tuzla, who welcomed me like a king when I came to consult Tuzla newspapers from the 1990s. I am also very grateful to Irfan Salihagić, who specially created the map of Bosnia and Herzegovina with IWA's main convoy route for this book, and to Mélanie Heddrich who designed the present publication with patience, care and aesthetic sense.

Finally, a big thank you to the team at the Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung Brussels Office, and especially to Andreas Thomsen, Axel Ruppert and Alexandra Spaeth, for making this publication possible and for the good cooperation at every stage of the process.

ROSA-LUXEMBURG-STIFTUNG

The Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung is an internationally operating, left-wing non-profit organisation providing civic education. It is affiliated with Germany's 'Die Linke' (Left Party). Active since 1990, the foundation has been committed to the analysis of social and political processes and developments worldwide. The Stiftung works in the context of the growing multiple crises facing our current political and economic system. In cooperation with other progressive organisations around the globe, the Stiftung focuses on democratic and social participation, the empowerment of disadvantaged groups, and alternative economic and social development. The Stiftung's international activities aim to provide civic education by means of academic analyses, public programmes, and projects conducted together with partner institutions. The Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung works towards a more just world and a system based on international solidarity.

www.rosalux.eu

Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung, Brussels Office
Rue Saint-Ghislain 62, 1000 Brussels, Belgium
www.rosalux.eu

Head of Office,
legally responsible for publication
Andreas Thomsen

Brussels, May 2021

Editing
Linguanet, Brussels

Project Manager
Axel Ruppert

Cover photo
Thomas Proctor

Design and production
HDMH sprl

Printed in Belgium

Funded by the **German Federal Foreign Office**.



For the majority of people in Europe, the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina remained mainly a TV event; many felt that it did not really concern them or that nothing could be done about it. But at the same time there were also tens of thousands of individuals in countries across Europe who decided that they did not want to remain bystanders, just watching what was going on, but were determined to do something. This went way beyond professional aid organisations: many smaller civil society organisations and especially newly created, often informal, groups launched numerous activities and initiatives.

These had various aims, sometimes connected, sometimes not: to help refugees outside Bosnia and Herzegovina, to bring humanitarian and material aid to the affected populations within Bosnia and Herzegovina, to support the democratic and anti-nationalist forces in Bosnia and Herzegovina, especially at the grass-roots level, and/or to protest against the attitudes of passivity or duplicity of their own governments. International Workers Aid (IWA) was one of the initiatives that emerged from these civil society mobilisations during the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It was a highly original initiative in several respects.