

Socialist Worker

Get NATO out of the Balkans

Stop the NATO bombings

The NATO bombing of Serbia and Kosova has nothing to do with humanitarian concerns.

The real reason behind this terrible war is that the US and NATO want to assert their dominance over the region.

The majority of the Kosovan population are Albanian. Their language has been suppressed and many have been driven from their homes.

But NATO's bombing will do nothing to alleviate the situation. Instead it will make matters worse. The bombing has only united the Serbian population behind the nationalist thug, Milosevic.

Serbian troops have been stationed in Kosovan village and any bombing will murder civilians as well as troops.

No wonder Jonathan Eyal, the director of the Royal United Services Institute in London noted, "The biggest humanitarian disaster will unfold when the air attacks begin"

Milosevic will use the situation to drive thousands of ethnic Albanians out of the area and then re-partition Kosovo afterwards.

'Collateral Damage'

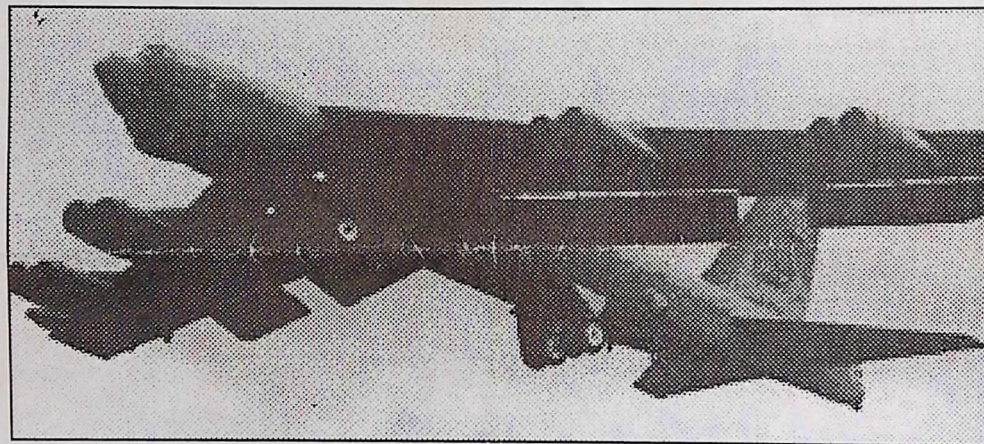
The Western media is trying to immunise people to the reality of war. Civilians deaths are once again being referred to as 'collateral damage'. Generals are appearing on television to play war games where the audience is invited to try to predict the next move in the 'game'.

This sick discard of human life comes from Western leaders who hypocritically denounce 'terrorism' across the globe.

The real aim of NATO is to achieve a permanent station for their troops in the region. In recent weeks, the US has expressed their opposition to Russia developing commercial contracts with Iran and Iraq. It has brought countries which border Russia into NATO.

By bombing Serbia, the US is showing that it has become the kingpin in an area that was once regarded as the backyard of Russia.

In the nineteenth century, these activities were referred to as 'gun boat' diplomacy. Today this terrible war mongering is played by generals who fire cruise missiles while they sit safely in their barracks and watch civilians die.



'Peacekeepers' who spill blood

Western "peacekeeping" intervention around the world has never solved conflicts. It has always led to more death and misery. The US in recent times has:

■Invaded Panama with 26,000 troops. The bombing of the poor quarters of Panama City killed 10,000.

■Invaded Somalia killing 10,000 people. Atrocities, including rape, murder and torture by "peacekeeping" troops, are still coming to light.

■Bombed Afghanistan with over 100 cruise missiles last year.

■Blew up the al-Shifa medicines factory in Sudan and then lied, saying it was manufacturing nerve gas.

Clinton, Blair and NATO

warmongers say they want to weaken Milosovic. In fact bombing will do the opposite.

Democratic forces in Serbia will be more isolated if the bombers go in.

Aggression

Western bombs will lead many Serbs to back Milosovic as he poses as standing up to big power aggression.

The US does not want to see ordinary people in Serbia or elsewhere in the Balkans rise up to fight for their own interests.

The US is not interested in protecting people from oppression anywhere in the world.

Clinton is conducting an undeclared bombing cam-

paign against Iraq and imposing sanctions, killing 6,000 civilians a month.

And the US has no qualms about backing brutal regimes around the world that oppress their populations.

The enormous NATO build up is about the US demonstrating its power, not just to Serbia, but to the rest of the world.

US special envoy to the Balkans Richard Holbrooke admits bombing Serbia is about "the credibility of NATO".

Leaders of other NATO countries like France and Germany do not even believe that bombing Serbia will stop the year long fighting in Kosovo.

Yet they send planes and thousands of troops to the Balkan region anyway.

Albanians in the disputed province of Kosovo make up 90 percent of the population. They are demanding independence.

Because of this they are facing full scale oppression at the hands of Serbian forces.

Television pictures of murdered villagers and a terrified population serve to bring home this horror.

But bombing Serbia is not going to stop the suffering of the Albanians in Kosovo.

Despite their rhetoric, it is not the plight of the Kosovans that is uppermost in Clinton and Blair's minds.

After all, the West denounced the Kosovo Liberation Army as "terrorists" last summer.

The Western leaders talk of the suffering of Kosovans driven from their homes, yet have begun scapegoating of those refugees who seek asylum here.

The West's meddling in the affairs of the Balkans has always ended in disaster. For over 100 years it has provoked bloodshed in the region. It has never brought peace.

*It was the 1913 Treaty of London that handed Kosovo over to Serbia.

*After the First World War Kosovo again suffered a similar fate at the hands of the West.

The victorious powers at the end of the Second World War, including the West, again shoved the province of Kosovo back into Serbia.

Every Western adventure in the Balkans has served to increase nationalist divisions and left ordinary workers and peasants at each other's throats.

Every intervention has sown the seeds of further bloodletting.

Today NATO threatens to drag the whole region into an even wider war, embracing millions of innocent people.

There is every chance that the neighbouring country of Macedonia could break up. This could draw in both Bulgaria and Greece, both of which have rival claims on Macedonia.

There is already military competition between the two big powers in the region, Turkey and Greece.

Why the West won't back the Kurds

THE Kurdish people of south east Turkey have suffered just as much as the Kosovan Albanians. Yet the West is backing the Turkish government and opposes Kurdish self determination.

Why? Because Turkey is a member of NATO and a key ally of the US and Israel.

The West has turned a blind eye as three million Kurds have been driven from their homes and over 30,000 killed in a 15 year dirty war.

The US allows the Turkish army to kill Kurds, including those in northern Iraq who are inside the safe havens the West set up supposedly to protect them.

Kurdish leader Abdullah Ocalan has done exactly as the Kosovo Liberation Army has done-taken up arms against a murderous regime.

Yet the European powers refused to give Ocalan

asylum and allowed Turkey, assisted by the CIA, to kidnap him.

Death Penalty

The first stage of his trial is due this week and he

faces the death penalty.

Over 1,100 Kurds were arrested in Turkey last weekend for celebrating the Kurdish new year, Newroz.

On Monday Britain

agreed to shut down Med-TV, the Kurdish language station which broadcasts from Europe into Turkey.

Arrested

This happened at the same time as Tulay Kocak, editor of socialist paper *Workers Democracy*, was arrested and sent to prison for daring to publish articles on the Kurdish question.

Kocak is being persecuted, amongst other things, for pointing out that 50 times as many Kurds have been killed by the Turkish state than all the deaths in the war in Kosovo up to now.

But they backed Tudjman...

THE WEST backed the Croatian regime of Franjo Tudjman during the Bosnian war. It is every bit as brutal as Milosevic's.

Investigators for the West's international war crimes tribunal say three

Croatian generals are war criminals for their role in driving 200,000 Serb civilians from Croatia in 1995.

Croatian forces rained over 3,000 shells on civilians in the city of Knin for over 48 hours.

NATO still backs Croatia. It excuses the atrocities as a legitimate military activity and defends the named generals.

The socialist solution

'We have tried everything else. There is no other option but bombing'

This is the familiar refrain of those who support NATO's bombing.

But NATO's solution is no solution. Much of the political establishment are already admitting that purely aerial bombing will not remove Milosevic.

The reality is that the oppression of Kosovo will only end as part of a general uprising across the Balkans.

Support

The situation in Kosovo is similar to that in East Timor.

For two decades East Timor was terrorised by the Indonesian army, with the support of the Western powers.

Yet when the Indonesian revolution occurred the way was opened to

independence for the island.

Today many of the East Timorese see their fate as being bound up with the deepening of that revolution.

Kosovo was the first area that suffered from the jackboot of

Milosevic.

Yet there is also huge opposition to Milosevic from a pro-democracy movement in Serbia.

The ending of oppression of Kosovo can only come about through a wider movement in the Balkans against the nationalists thugs who have terrorised the region.

It will never come from NATO bombs.

Stop the NATO bombing

**Protest at the Dail
Thursday April 1
7.00pm**

Speakers: Patricia McKenna (Green Party); John De Courcy Ireland; Richard Boyd Barrett (SWP)

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