

An Adventure in Construction

*Prepared by British Volunteers on
The Youth Railway
Samac-Sarajevo, 1947,
and edited by*

Edward Thompson



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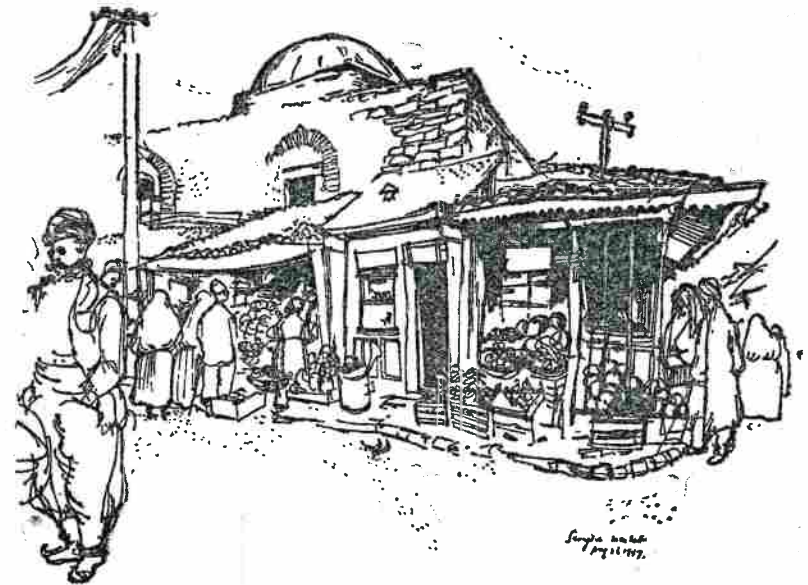
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The Market, Sarajevo

Ronald Searle

Preface

THIS is the story of the building of a railway. There is nothing very unusual about the railway itself, although it is an exceptionally good one for the mountainous Balkans. It starts just across the Sava in Slovenia, and crosses the river on great wooden stilts protected by solid ice-breakers. It passes the small market town of Samac, where in mid-summer the peasants doze over great piles of water-melons, apples and pears. Then it traverses Bosnia, following the winding course of the river Bosna. The country becomes increasingly rugged and mountainous, until at length the railway reaches the mongrel city of Sarajevo, a confusion of modern flats, Moslem coffee and cake shops, peasant markets, Turkish minarets and young growing industries.

There is nothing very remarkable about this railway. It is a good railway, of standard Continental gauge, 150 miles long. At first it will be run by steam, but when, in three or four years' time, the electrification schemes of the Five Year Plan are completed, the railway too will be electrified—overhead, of course, because, however well fenced, it would be impossible to prevent the Bosnian goats and the Bosnian dogs and even the Bosnian children from straying on the

line. There are seven tunnels, and one, Vranduk tunnel, is over a mile long. There are a good many bridges criss-crossing the Bosna, and culverts over water-courses—dry and stony trickles in the summer, but brown frothy torrents in the autumn or when the snow on the mountains melts in spring. There are many wayside halts by the clay-white villages.

The unusual thing about this railway is the way in which it was built. It is a Youth Railway. People in England when they first heard about a Youth Railway thought it was some sort of practical game or a propaganda stunt or a big Boy Scout camp. Some of them even imagined toy trains.

But there are no toy trains on the Youth Railway Samac-Sarajevo. This strip of metal, speeding through the Bosna valley, is a sinew of the new Yugoslavia. It will carry coal, iron and metal ores, machinery, timber. It will bring prosperity to Bosnia, one of the most backward of the six People's Republics. The new industries which grow along its path will enrich the people of all Yugoslavia. The construction of this Railway was the most important project undertaken in the whole country in 1947.

It was not built by underpaid Irish navvies or by unemployed drawn from a pool of "labour reserves." It was not built slowly, shoddily, and at great expense, by a foreign company, remaining as a tentacle to suck more wealth out of the impoverished peasantry.

This Railway belongs to the people of Yugoslavia. They talk about it as "our" Railway.

The construction of the Railway was conceived, executed and carried to a successful completion by the People's Youth of Yugoslavia.

In the course of its construction hundreds of thousands of tons of soil and rock were moved. Great embankments were heaped up. A path was hacked through rocks and under mountains.

The old Austrian-controlled companies which built much of Yugoslavia's pre-war railway system might have completed this work in nine years. The Youth Railway was started on the 1st of May, 1947 and the first train ran from Samac to Sarajevo on the 15th of November.

This work was carried through, night and day, by volunteers between the ages of 16 and 25—young men and women from industry, university students, boys and girls from schools and peasant farms.

The great bridge over the Sava at Samac was built, ahead of schedule, by engineering students and disabled ex-servicemen and ex-partisans. Many of these young men and women had lost one of their limbs in the war. Vranduk tunnel was built ahead of schedule. Among the workers who built it were young peasants, mining students from Belgrade, young refugees from the terror in Greece. The work at these projects was supervised by two or three trained engineers.

The workers had compressors and drills, dynamite, tip-wagons, mining equipment.

But most of the work went on without supervision and with only the most primitive tools—bare hands, picks, spades, heavy wheelbarrows. And the work was always finished ahead of schedule.

The work was driven forward, not by threats or by personal incentives, but by songs and an amazing spirit of co-operative will. It was a very great honour for the young Yugoslav peasant boy to hear himself proclaimed a shock-worker. But it was an even greater honour if he belonged to a Brigade, representing his district, his valley or his town, which had once or more been proclaimed a Shock-Brigade.

In the evening, in the hot afternoon sun, or in the early morning they would march, singing, back from a seven or eight-hour shift, not to sleep, but to take part in a comprehensive educational and cultural programme. In their camp life they learnt, through constant practice, qualities of leadership, of democratic self-government and responsibility, and the positive values of community life. And at the end of their one or two-month stay they would crowd into garlanded and slogan-chalked cattle-trucks, brown and tired, proud of their part in building the great Railway, proud to return to their homes as "brigaders," but full of regrets at leaving so soon. The twin slogan of the Railway, "*Bratsvo, Jedinstvo*," "Brotherhood, Unity," would haunt their ears for months. They would go home assured that they had never had a holiday so good before.

For three months the British flag flew in a beautiful part of the valley of the Bosna. Every day parties marched up to work (five minutes late and in untidy-blob formation) under the Union Jack. The British were among the many foreign Brigades which came to the Railway at the invitation of the People's Youth of Yugoslavia.

It is in this sense—as workers ourselves on the project, and as spectators of the feats of our friends, the Yugoslav youth—that we present this book to you.

There are many people who would be more qualified to write it. The Yugoslav Government spokesmen could explain in more detail the part the Railway will play in developing the economy of Bosnia. The statisticians of the Youth Movement could tell the numbers of cubic metres of earth that were moved and of concrete that were laid. The educationalists could tell the percentage of illiteracy that was liquidated. And there would always be people to say that this was all "propaganda."

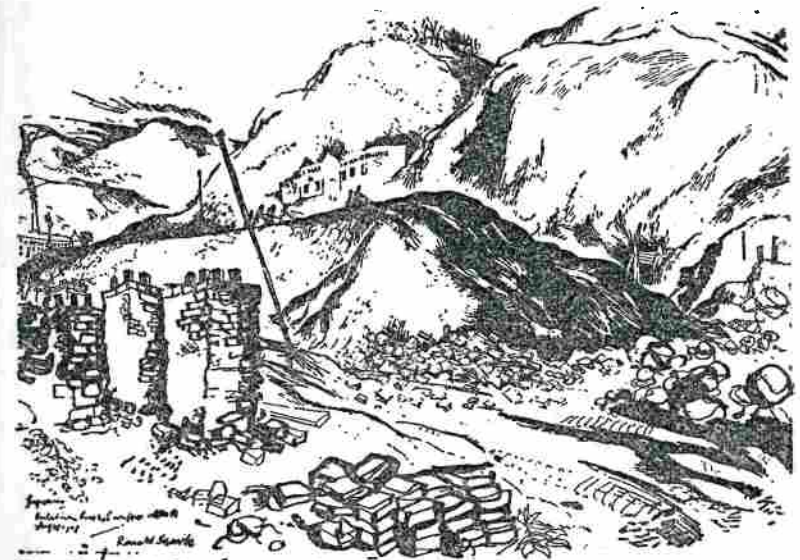
This book is not propaganda. It is the story of what we saw in Yugoslavia while we worked among the "brigaders" on the Railway; of what we heard when we talked and argued with everyone from

distinguished lecturers and youth leaders to cooks, clerks and school-boys; of what we felt when we danced the *kolo*, shouted or sang with our friends around the bonfires in the evenings. We tell something of the short trip we had around Yugoslavia as guests of the Youth Movement when our work was done; of our very good friends and close neighbours, the Greek Brigade "Georgi Siandos"; and of the formation of a British Working-Group which left us to help in the building of a mountain road in Bulgaria. If there is undue emphasis on our own part in this huge enterprise, this is not because our part was of great importance, but because it is our aim to introduce readers to the Railway as we saw it ourselves.

At the end of the book we include some comments representative of various points-of-view—of what we liked, and what some of us liked and others did not. And finally we draw a few conclusions.

But it is no wish of ours to point lengthy morals. If there are morals to be drawn, then they are implicit in the text. There are many lessons which we might learn from the Yugoslavs of the spirit in which to face economic difficulties and problems of reconstruction.

We wish this book to be, above all, a token of the friendships we made with countless individuals and with the whole Youth Movement of Yugoslavia. They are friendships which we shall not quickly forget, for they are founded on common experiences and on a common achievement. We are confident from what we have seen and taken part in that the youth of Yugoslavia will surmount the gravest obstacles before them, and come through with resilient gaiety and good-humour. We have seen the features of a determined, self-confident and creative people. We know that our friends, enquiring and widely-informed, democratic and proud in their spirit, will sternly resist any attempts on their liberty from outside or inside their country. We are confident of this, for we have watched the building in this Bosnian valley not only of a Railway, but also of strong bonds of international understanding, of a legend which will astound and inspire the future, and of a new, forthright and comradely generation of men.



The Youth Railway at Sarajevo

Ronald Searle

Omladinska Pruga

by E. P. Thompson

Commandant, British Brigade, August 15—September 15

"THE struggle for the reconstruction of the country, for the mastery of economic difficulties, is a component part of that great struggle on the battle-fields which cost the lives of many tens of thousands of young men and women of Yugoslavia, who sacrificed themselves so that others might have a better life. May your youthful soaring and ardour find expression above all in constructive work!"

Tito, 1/1/1946

"We build the railway.

The railway builds us."

Volunteers' song.

LAST summer, once you had broken through our own newsprint curtain into Central or South-Eastern Europe, whatever you did you could not escape from the songs. Wherever you went—Prague, Sofia, Belgrade—songs welcomed you, travelled with you, and left you only at the frontier. It might have been a rowdy party of boys and girls of any nationality leaving the Youth Festival; or a truck load of weary Bulgarian soldiers driving through the streets after a day's

harvesting ; or an impromptu concert in your carriage as your train made its slothful way down to Bosnia.

And in Yugoslavia last summer there was a new hit-tune. The sadder melodies of the partisan struggle are not often sung now—the memories which they recall are too cruel and too close. The song which the errand-boys whistled, massed choirs performed and citizens hummed as they strolled through their parks in the evenings was a song of youth and of reconstruction. This is the first verse :

*Samac-Sarajevo,
That's our target!
To build another railway
This summer, too.*

And here is one of the refrains, in an eager marching rhythm :

*Come on, let's work,
Let's build a new railway.
And as we work
Let's sing a cheerful song.*

In translation these words may sound a little self-conscious or priggish. It is impossible to translate the lilt with which they were sung. The words were not self-conscious simply because they contained no trace of external moral exhortation. They sprang directly from hard work and a daily-growing achievement. They expressed a living fact—that the youth of Yugoslavia were engaged, voluntarily and enthusiastically, in building a railway and that they were singing while they built it.

This railway was not the only thing which the youth were building last summer, nor were the young people the only ones to work on these voluntary projects. But the Youth Railway, Samac-Sarajevo, was the greatest project of this sort, expressing most forcefully the will to reconstruct which inspired the whole people. The workers on these projects were the natural inheritors of the spirit of the partisans. They were proud to acknowledge this. The positive qualities won in those days—the comradeship, self-abnegation and conscious unity—instead of evaporating, as in some other countries, in the swamps of economic anarchy, black-marketeering and renewed disruptions, were carried forward intact into the days of peace. In England some may smile when they hear of shock-workers and of heroic feats of labour. And yet there can be a heroism in labour equal to that in war. Its fruition and recognition appear to arise only in a society whose values are strange to those who have learnt the code of capitalism. It springs from the pride of ownership by the ordinary man of his own country, its sources of wealth and its means of production. The qualities demanded of a man for success in capitalism's heyday were those of individual

enterprise, private initiative in the face of competition, and others with less pleasant-sounding names. The values of a growing socialism are new values, those bound up in a co-operative ethic and in a new emphasis on man's obligations to his neighbours and to society. It is none of my business to examine which ethic is "better." I will only say that I found this atmosphere of social creativeness inspiring, and that all of us who worked on the Railway were so quickly infected by this spirit that we found the heavy work refreshing. Many of the British volunteers were ex-Servicemen, and if anyone had told us, as we walked in our civvies out of the demob. depot, that in a year or two's time we should be getting up at five a.m. and doing six hours' rock-lifting or a long day's cookhouse fatigue for *pleasure*, we should probably have knocked him down. It would be impossible to understand any of this story without accepting this change of values—to understand the slogans or the songs or the emulation at work. It would be impossible to understand how the miners of Vranduk voted to pierce their tunnel without air-shafts (their building would have delayed the work for three weeks) so that at the end of the shifts they were sometimes carried away from the face by their comrades. It would be impossible to understand how the Railway was built at all, for these new values were fundamental to its whole conception. The spirit drove forward the work until the work itself seemed to become possessed by the spirit, reinforcing the determination of the builders and converting a generation to a new way of life.

II

Without this spirit Yugoslavia could never have survived with economic independence for two years after the war. It was a torn and distressed country which the Nazis left. Of a population of fifteen million odd, nearly two million had lost their lives in the war. The retreating Germans had pillaged and slaughtered the peasants' livestock, burnt down villages, dynamited bridges and even gouged up the railways behind them. Lonely farms were razed to the ground, and railway junctions were pulverised by our bombing. I was told of one town that changed hands no less than forty times in the fighting.

Nor did Yugoslavia possess the industries essential for the task of recovery. Although rich in minerals and in natural resources, the country had remained before the war backward and dependent on the ministrations of foreign capital. Mineral ores were shipped directly from the country, and the mines themselves were technically undeveloped. The fact that oil existed in the country had been suppressed by the influence of foreign companies. Many sectors of heavy industry were entirely unrepresented.

At this time famine was not far from the thoughts of the people. Great Britain and Russia were licking their own wounds. America was hostile to any sign of recovery. UNRRA could help to stave off immediate disaster, but the Yugoslavs knew that if they were to maintain their new independence, gained in such an agony of sacrifice and held with such pride, they must make the future with their bare hands.

The natural resources were theirs. The will to create was theirs. But between these two lay a great gap. They did not have the tools to develop their resources, nor did they have the skill and training to use them.

The gap had to be filled at once. And they were to face this challenge alone.

III

The challenge was taken up, not by a Government order, but by the people themselves. It had started already before the war ended.

I have seen in Southern Italy villages where the rubble still lay across the streets two years after our armies had passed, and the dead remained unreclaimed. This could not have happened in Yugoslavia.

Yard by yard, as the Nazis were driven out, the people set to work to repair the damage. At first the work was spontaneous and unco-ordinated. The streets were cleared and homes were quarried from the ruins. Then the elected councils helped to direct the work—this stretch of road or that vital bridge needed emergency attention. Later the Government named the tasks of most urgency. As the people discovered how much could be done by sheer muscle and improvisation, so the spirit grew.

In many places it was the young people who took the lead in this work. Men and women of all ages took an active part in the partisan and resistance movements, but the severe physical hardships of necessity threw the heaviest burden on the young. The young people were those most willing to ignore the national jealousies and rivalries which had embittered for so long the history of Yugoslavia. Their formative years were spent in the struggle for national independence, and in these years they had gained boundless self-confidence. They had become impatient of those who spoke of impossibilities and insurmountable problems. Couriers served with the partisans who were sometimes fourteen years old or younger. There were heroes and commanders between the ages of sixteen and twenty. It was from their actions and outlook that the pattern of the new Yugoslavia was being fashioned.

In Britain we do not easily see an immediate need for a youth movement. It is difficult to persuade one's friends that youth has any

distinct contribution to make to the nation—or that it should be organised nationally in order to do it. But in Yugoslavia it is not difficult to see the special rôle of youth. The youth of Yugoslavia are not only, as statesmen always say, the standard-bearers of the future, but the masters of the present and the tutors of their fathers as well. Young men and women who learned to read and write in the partisans have gone back to their villages to teach the illiterates of the older generation. Here also they lecture on national and international affairs, explain new machinery and the Government's economic plans. Of course, the older peasants do not sit reverently at their feet nor do they always listen passively to all these new-fangled notions. But the members of the People's Youth of Yugoslavia do not feel self-conscious or foolish at being so. They are proud of their membership and conscious of their responsibilities.

Just as groups of shock-workers formed themselves among the workers in every factory, so the youth movement appointed itself to be the shock-group of the whole nation in meeting the problems, not only of reconstruction but of building a new country whose standards were set high above those of the old Yugoslavia of 1939. It was their own will to do this, but history forced the decision. They could see most clearly the future in which they wanted to live, and they knew that, if they did not take the lead in building it, it could never come about at all. This was most evident in the fields of technical and academic education. A great part of the pre-war educated class had been killed in the war or had been discredited by collaboration with the enemy. Men of forty, fifty and over were performing miracles of self-education, but the bulk of the teachers, technicians and professional men of the future had to be found among the students and young workers of 1945. They were faced with heavy handicaps. Not only were the survivors relatively few in number, but their normal school and training had been altogether broken by war. Some had walked out of their schools at the age of fifteen and gone to the forests, not to return for four or five years. Others had spent two or three years as prisoners in concentration or slave labour camps. The problems of psychological readjustment were considerable. Like many other Europeans they had grown up in isolation from the cultural and intellectual life of other nations. Even the raw materials of education—the text books, libraries, instruments, schools and laboratories—were in short supply.

It is characteristic of their mood that the Yugoslav youth met these problems, not by retiring into the silence of academic concentration, but by practical expedients and by collective effort. In this way the more fortunate could help on the backward. They aimed not to produce a handful of geniuses but to raise the level of their entire generation. And they decided in their holidays, not to cram up an additional syllabus, but to build a railway.

The decision was officially announced at the Third National Congress of the NOJ (the People's Youth of Yugoslavia) in May, 1946. But this was after considerable discussion behind the scenes. The spontaneous movement to rebuild of the immediate post-war months was increasing in girth and vigour and seeking new outlets. The NOJ wished to initiate a national project on an altogether new scale which would set light to the imagination of all its members. Meanwhile the planning commissions of the Government were preparing the details of the Five-Year Plan. Vital to this plan was the increased production of coal. Large undeveloped coal mines existed in the region of Banovici in Bosnia, but the area was isolated from the rest of the country. Plans to construct a railway line from Banovici to the main line at Brcko were studied, but were regretfully postponed for several years owing to the lack of labour, skilled direction and materials. The Central Committee of the NOJ challenged this decision, and guaranteed that the youth would voluntarily provide the labour for the work. Their suggestion was met with some scepticism. Skilled engineers shook their heads at the impossibility of building a railway with unskilled labour and in so short a time. The necessary equipment was quite unavailable and was being used in repairing lines destroyed by the Germans. The Central Committee put forward its offer once again. They persuaded a handful of experienced engineers to take the risk and direct the work. Their request was finally agreed to.

The results amazed the Government, the engineers and the youth themselves. Over sixty thousand young workers, peasants, students and older schoolchildren (together with some working-groups from other nations) took part. The first "brigades" arrived only two weeks after the preliminary surveying had started. Tents and temporary barracks were thrown up. A nucleus of skilled workers trained the first volunteers, and from among these earlier groups instructors for the later brigades were found. The railway—running for 56 miles through difficult country, and including tunnels and many bridges—was completed in six months, three weeks ahead of schedule. Throughout this time technical, educational and physical instruction was given, and the workers took part in hundreds of cultural activities.

Almost at once the railway was put into use. No time was given for the lengthy business of soil-subsidence in the embankments and trains still run cautiously and slowly. There have been one or two landslides. But the coal is being carried away from Banovici.

IV

The success of the Youth Railway, Brcko-Banovici, vindicated

the claims of the youth movement to be the shock-group of Yugoslavia. It stimulated the development of similar projects this year in Bulgaria, Albania and others of the eastern democracies. It also prepared the ground for the more ambitious project of 1947, the *Omladinska Pruga* or Youth Railway from Samac to Sarajevo.

This was to be nearly three times as long as the Brcko-Banovici railway. More than three times as many people were needed to work on its construction. All the services and activities existing in embryo on the previous railway were to be developed on a far greater scale. But, as before, the work was to be completed in just over six months. The Government would ensure the delivery of all available supplies. The rest was up to the NOJ.

The building of this railway, again in Bosnia, was in conformity with Article 5 of the Plan :

"to ensure a speedier tempo of development in the economically backward republics and remove all consequences of uneven development."

The Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, together with those of Macedonia and Montenegro, were the most backward and neglected parts of old Yugoslavia, and it is in these parts that it is intended to accelerate most rapidly the rate of development. In particular the Bosna Valley is to become a new industrial centre for Yugoslavia, based upon the rich mineral resources which are only now beginning to be fully exploited. Metallurgical and chemical industries will be established in the valley in the next five years, together with factories for turning out medium agricultural machinery, building materials and many other products.

At the beginning of 1947 the Bosna Valley was served only by one narrow-gauge railway, built by an Austrian company before the first Great War. Since all supplies and workers going to the *Omladinska Pruga* travelled on this line, we came to know it well. It was fantastically inadequate to serve the greater part of a republic. Over long stretches the trains were by regulation forbidden to exceed twelve miles per hour, on which occasions the narrow trucks wobbled and jiggled in the most alarming way. Gradients were very steep, and the curves so sharp that sometimes the wheels of two or three carriages screeched in unison for nearly a minute while smoke came off the line. And while the carriages at the rear were screeching one way, those at the front had already started to screech on the opposite right-angle. No wonder that the trains were known to fall off the line more than once on the journey from Zenica to Slavonski Brod—an event which caused very little comment since they never went fast enough to put anyone in danger.

To transform this into a serviceable railway would have needed complete relaying—new cuttings, more tunnels, new embankments,

softer gradients and slower curves. It was decided that it would be cheaper and quicker to cut an altogether new track for a wide-gauge continental railway on the opposite bank of the Bosna. Meanwhile the old *pruga* could screech and stumble through a last year or two of existence and feed in the supplies for its successor.

V

The Central Committee of the NOJ works is in a set of offices off one of Belgrade's main streets. A young sentry stands at the door to give dignity to the entrance—he can certainly have no other purpose, since I never saw him, by day, question anyone who entered. The outer offices have the usual air of bustle and great efficiency of any youth movement. There is from the minor administrative workers just that hint of bureaucracy one meets in a "base area"—for, while the Railway was being built, they resented being tied to their desks, and were keen to impress the visitor with their own indispensability. And indispensable they were, for it was from here that the 200,000 young volunteers on the Railway were enrolled and organised, while at the same time many other local schemes and different activities were coming under their supervision.

In the inner offices, those elected leaders of the NOJ who are not touring the country are constantly at work. I was able to interview two of the youth leaders and ask them about their part in organising the project. One of them, a man of about 24 of Moslem parentage, was wearing on his breast pocket the proudest medal of Yugoslavia, the silver 1941 star, worn only by the first of the partisans. The girl was also an old partisan fighter, while our interpreter, a slim and attractive girl of 21, had left school to fight for two years in the mountains and to spend a further year in the even more dangerous underground work in occupied territory. Now she was a student at Belgrade University, and had already spent her two months on the Railway. Such people as these are not Amazons or monsters of political single-mindedness, but warm-natured, sensitive and generous, in some ways very like their British counterparts, in others very different—more adult and rather wiser perhaps, more certain of their own capacities and limitations.

The work of preparation began in January, and this year the first surveying was carried on well ahead of the working-parties. The experience gained in building the line Brcko-Banovici was invaluable, and many of those who were trained in this work were leading the projects of 1947. Additional training courses were held during the winter in leadership and in certain skilled jobs. When the work began, these cadres were reinforced by several thousand experts (the proportion never rose above one in ten) including engineers, mining experts, foremen, quarrymen, mechanics and so forth. But this aid

was of a technical nature only, and the entire responsibility for organisation and administration remained with the youth themselves.

The recruiting of volunteers for the Railway started early in the year. The campaign was launched nationally and through the many branches of the NOJ in the factories and schools, universities and villages throughout the country. The age limits set for both sexes were from 16 to 25 years, and volunteers had to pass a medical examination before being accepted. No compulsion was set upon anyone to come, for, apart from all else, the Railway could only be built on time if every worker had the enthusiasm of a volunteer.

The campaign had, of course, official Government backing. Tito himself had opened the Brcko-Banovici line, and had said in his speech of January 1st, 1947:

"Let this year be the year of still greater contributions of efforts and energy by the young generation of Yugoslavia. . . . While school, vocational education, and physical and cultural training should be your tasks, your spare time should be spent in the reconstruction of your country. The building of new railway lines, roads, factories and mines and also new homes is awaiting your participation in 1947."

The NOJ is a powerful organisation in Yugoslavia, on a par with the great trade unions, and in its campaign it had the full support of the Popular Front and women's organisations. This last was of particular importance, for the younger peasants and the school-children had, of course, to receive parental consent before they came to the line. The way for many a rebellious Moslem daughter, eager to throw off the tradition of yashmak and subservience and to work alongside her own generation, must have been smoothed by a chat between her parents and the local Women's Committee.

It was aimed to start and complete the work with peasants' and workers' brigades. The students and schoolchildren took the middle shift, during the months of their summer holidays. The brigades were organised on a local basis—some towns had several brigades, with different numbers and names—while in the universities they were sometimes organised on a faculty basis (the mining and engineering students had their own brigades organised for special tasks). The size of a brigade varied, but three hundred volunteers was the average number. A certain semi-military flavour was given by the name "brigade" and this was confirmed by some aspects of the discipline and organisation on the line. We quickly discovered in our own brigade, which never numbered as many as three hundred at one time, that it was impossible to organise it without borrowing some elements from the routine standing orders of an army camp; we might have gained in efficiency if we had accepted a military pattern even more. There was nothing sinister in the fact that the camp-life, work, and collective activities of 200,000 young people were organised according to this pattern. This does not mean that the name

"brigade" was accepted purely out of convenience. The democratic army of the partisan war had left no bad taste in the mouths of its members or of the nation, and the builders of the Railway were proud that there could be soldiers of peace as of war. But, in spite of anything which newspaper correspondents who spent a few days in Belgrade and a few hours at the line may have written, there was no trace in this of the offensive *Führerprinzip*, the aggressive military tone of Fascist and anti-democratic youth movements. We, who spent weeks or months living on the Railway, know more about this atmosphere and know it to have been democratic. There was no kow-towing, strutting, bullying, saluting, or segregation of leaders. The discipline was ninety-nine and nine-tenths self-imposed by the volunteers themselves. The leadership was elected, either on a temporary or permanent basis, by the members of the brigade at its first formation. A good record of service, tact and patience were qualities far more in demand than a "leader" attitude. The officers of the brigade (Commandant and Deputy, Cultural and Sports Officers, Works Foremen, etc.), once elected, organised the work and arranged the brigade's programme; their orders on everything from personal hygiene to the issue of stores were obeyed. But they lived, ate, slept and worked in the most informal relations with the other volunteers, and anyone critical of their methods or harbouring a grievance could bring the matter forward in open meeting, through the Wall Newspaper or in conversation with the officer concerned. The only distinction of the officers was that they were expected to, and did, work longer and harder hours than the rest of the brigade. Those who wish to hint at comparisons between the youth of Yugoslavia and the movements of the Nazis do not understand the difference between construction and aggression, between education in self-government and authoritarianism. Nor do they know what they are talking about, for we know that they rarely went to the trouble to find out any but the most superficial facts.

Certain people have also questioned both the age and the voluntary nature of the labour employed on the line. The answer to the first question is simple. So far as it was in their power, the youth leaders prevented anyone under the age of 16 from taking part in the work on the Railway. A few youngsters did manage to squeeze through. Once they were discovered they were employed on jobs around the camp, and not on the heavy work on the line. Every brigade had one or two messenger-boys, and they were usually about 14 years old. Our neighbours, the Triestines, proudly owned to a boy of 12. He had come with his elder brother, who was his guardian, and he was his exact image—fair hair, blue eyes, and all—but half the size. He dressed up in railway "uniform" and cap and insisted on being treated with the respect due to a full "brigader." But he was



Vlada Begic, Shock brigade miner

Paul Hogarth

more of a mascot than a worker, and was packed off on goodwill delegations to other brigades to keep him out of mischief.

Certainly, some of the 16-year-olds seemed very small to us, but nothing would have been more tactless than to have said so. There were marked differences in the physical characteristics of the volunteers from various parts of the country. At the end of our stay two brigades of the same age-group were living beside us, one from the district of Maribor and one from the Dalmatian coast. The Dalmatians clearly developed physically rather earlier than their Maribor cousins, many of whom still looked like children. But, more than this, the casual visitor may have been deluded by definite cases of physical retardation. Rickets and the diseases of **undernourishment** were not uncommon in pre-war Yugoslavia and increased with ferocity during the war. The physical education and development of the retarded was among the primary rôles which the Railway was intended to fulfil.

At the other end of the age-limit there were rather more exceptions. The "Railway Fever" infected more than those who may strictly be called "youth" (the British Brigade can witness to this) and it was not unusual for older people to turn up and demand to be put to work. The villagers and peasants living beside the line were often as enthusiastic as anyone (they were compensated for their land, although some farmers insisted on giving it freely; they were the first who would benefit from the Railway, and relations between the volunteers and the local people were always good) and they sometimes gave a few hours' work. There were even cases of parents who found that their sons and daughters were going to the Railway, and decided to come as well. Anna, who cooked for several weeks for our brigade, is an example of these. The few who came worked as ordinary volunteers under the youth leaders, and had no more say than their children in the running of brigade affairs. Nor did an even more numerous group of older people, the teachers and even university professors who volunteered to come out and help with the educational work in the leisure hours, and to wield a pick or spade with their students on the line. They would give their advice if asked, but in the ordinary way they kept in the background. This really friendly and co-operative relationship between the teachers and pupils was one reason for the success of the recruitment campaign. Many teachers encouraged their classes to go, and those who went with their students to the line found that their presence there, far from weakening their natural authority, greatly increased the respect and affection in which they were held.

The part which these strong national organisations, assisted by the schools, played in the recruitment campaign may seem to have put a measure of compulsion on the volunteers. This is quite true.

But the compulsion was the moral pressure of a society whose total effort was directed to reconstruction. It may be fairly compared with the social pressure on a young man in a nation engaged in a fight for its independence, when no conscription exists and volunteers are wanted at the front. And this is only a fair comparison when it is understood that the pressure came not only from society, but from the conscience and inclinations of the individual as well. It is not difficult to see how the "Railway Fever" developed. In the schools it gathered strength like any craze—only a craze with a purpose, and with adventure and a good holiday combined. The majority of a class would take a resolution to go and work together, and those who were left out would feel shame-faced and isolated—especially in the later stages when boys and girls were already swaggering back with *Pruga* badges, a new repertoire of songs, and common shop-talk about Vranduk and Samac bridge and tales of their own prowess. In the factories the trade unions guaranteed the jobs of young volunteers, provided that they found two of their comrades who would pledge themselves to increase their output to make up for their comrade's absence. And, naturally, when he returned, bronzed and enthusiastic, from Bosnia, his two comrades wanted to take the same holiday as well.

In this way, to mix a metaphor, the Railway Fever grew like a snowball. Soon everyone was talking about it. The competing local brigades were followed proudly in their home towns or villages, as we follow football teams. The volunteers, wherever they went, were the special favourites of the nation. Parents exchanged gossip about the feats of their children. Brothers and sisters too young to volunteer were contented only when allowed to build a miniature *Pruga* of their own. Newsreel, radio and Press all boosted the volunteers (it must have been a great experience for the peasants, seeing one of their first films, to have watched the brigade of their sons and daughters flash upon the screen), while the local journals followed closely the progress of their brigades, recounting the successes and unexpected hold-ups, reporting the winners of the sporting or cultural events, and giving detailed statistics (and statistics, largely meaningless to us, mean a lot to the Yugoslavs) of the shovelfuls, barrowloads and cubic metres of rock, earth or cement that had this or that done to them during the week. When the local boys won the Section flag or became twice or three times honoured as a shock-brigade, then there were beaming faces at home and celebrations. The departure or welcome-home of a brigade at the station of one of the big towns was a sight to be seen—the trucks garlanded with branches and flowers and chalked with slogans, the tears and the laughter, perhaps a band and some songs and *kolos*, certainly the Serbo-Croat equivalents of "Now don't sit around in wet feet!" and "Remember to

write and tell us all about it," or "Johnny! How brown you look!" all over the place.

I asked many people this question about compulsion. From all of them, youth leaders or students with whom I chatted around the evening bonfires, I got a similar answer. No, certainly no one was compelled to come—but, then, "of course, we consider that it's everyone's duty to take a part in reconstruction." And that is the complete answer. No one worked on the Railway against his will (except for some German prisoner-of-war labour, which was used only to put up the huts, the showers, etc.), and no one who came reluctantly was *wanted* in that company. There were a handful of youths, uneasy about the part they played during the war in collaborationist households, who came to the Railway hoping to expiate past sins and thinking that a more wholesome record would serve them better in the future. But it was the compulsion of their own consciences and self-interest which sent them there. They were accepted into the comradeship of the brigade like any others, and I was told of several who set out with the only aim of working off a black mark in their past, and who ended as enthusiastic converts to the Railway spirit.

But, to tell the truth, it was a silly question for anyone who had seen the Railway to ask. Railways just aren't built like that out of conscript labour. People don't run uphill in the mid-day sun with heavy wheelbarrows or charge down on you whooping with a truck-load of slag if they have been forced to come by unmentionable threats! In fact there was keen competition to work on the Samac-Sarajevo project and many had to be refused. Samac-Sarajevo was the national project of the year, and by far the biggest. To this project came the foreign volunteers, the fraternal delegations and the greatest share of the concert parties and lecturers. The local projects in each Republic, although equally important, seemed in comparison humdrum and provincial. The only compulsion necessary was in persuading a sufficient proportion of the youth to stay and take their working holidays at home!

VI

The H.Q., or *Glavni Stab*, of the Railway was established at Zenica, which is situated towards the Sarajevo end of the line. It was a little less than fifteen miles from the British camp at Nemila, and was one of the very few sizeable towns on the length of the Railway. Those of us who spent several weeks on the line often jumped an afternoon train on the narrow-gauge line or hitched down there on business or pleasure. We came to know some of its haunts quite well. There were several excellent cake-shops, selling meringues and fluffy confectionery of an egginess and richness which would lead

to prosecutions in England today. Another shop sold good creamy coffee, bread, a saucerful of local butter and another of honey or marmalade for less than a shilling. Chocolate was a different matter, and if you bought several of the thin, fudgy slabs you would find that you were ten shillings out of pocket. We discovered that this was the rule in Yugoslavia. Essential foods or rationed goods, and even petty luxuries like cakes, ices or drinks, were cheap or very reasonable by British food-subsidised standards, and remarkable when compared with the ruling prices in Italy, for instance, or France. But luxuries—chocolate, hotel meals, off-the-ration sugar and so forth—were heavily taxed, and those who bought one luxury would have to choose to do without others.

Those who expected to find any amenities in Zenica were at first disappointed. On the station platform, all day and much of the night, there squatted and jostled a great throng of people, patiently waiting to jump and cling perilously on to the first train, "express" or goods, that was foolish enough to halt in the station (these station scenes were the most eloquent testimony to the need for the new railway). The long, rough and winding main street (the *only* street) looked more like a peasant market-centre than a growing industrial town. Water-melons and fruits were piled by the gutters, and all sorts of animals wandered among the barefoot yelling children, the old moustachioed peasants, and the veiled women drawing water from the street pumps. On one of these pumps I found a Turkish inscription, and, somehow, the occasional minarets circled by pigeons (and, perversely, floodlit with electric bulbs at the end of Ramadan) kept on reminding one of the Sultan's rule. But contrasts were not lacking to shock one back to reality. Railway volunteers of many nationalities were to be seen everywhere, and often a supply truck, an embussed delegation, or a bejeeped member of *Glavni Stab* would carve a way through with its horn. (The horn is still as useful a driving-weapon in Bosnia as the gears or brakes.) Entering a cake-shop, one was almost certain to find a Czech or Canadian volunteer, or a Bulgar *Udarnik* guzzling at the next table, and handclaps and "*Zdravo!*"s (the universal greeting) would be exchanged. Everywhere there are signs of busy industrialisation, for Zenica is to be one of the centres of the Bosnian Ruhr. Building and construction work can be seen all round the outskirts. Already before the war several industries were established here, including a light steel works (owned by the German armaments firm of Krupps) which has been confiscated by the Republic and which was then turning out rails for the *Omladinska Pruga*. The best buildings in the town have been turned into "Radni Doms," workers' clubs and canteens, which *Pruga* volunteers were always welcome to enter. At the invitation of the workers the finest club was often used by *Glavni Stab* for official Railway dinners and celebrations.

twenty-one years old, but he wore the proud 1941 star. He had a quiet, self-effacing manner, and he would drop in every now and then to see if we had any troubles or complaints. It was only when I had to work out organisational problems with him that I came to have a glimpse of his real qualities. He had a comprehensive grasp of every detail in the section under his leadership, and was quick to understand the problems arising from our own haphazard system of running our affairs. He made clear decisions and gave clear and patient instructions, and it was obvious that his staff and the brigade commanders regarded him with confidence and respect. He gave the impression of a man with a simple, muscular and honest mind, with a quick sense of humour and no trace of personal ambition or conceit. He may have been relieved when the British left his section, for we had given him more than one uneasy moment during our stay—but he left our final bonfire just as he left our camp on his other frequent visits, with the same cheerful and good-natured grin, as if to say: "Well, perhaps you will drop in again next year. Or perhaps I will come and visit you in England. What does it matter? The distance between our two countries is not so great, and if there is real friendship between our youth, why then, the distance is nothing to consider at all!"

VII

The brigade was the working unit on the Railway. Something has already been said of their formation in each locality, and more will be said later of their actual work on the line. Here it remains only to describe the way the volunteers lived, and how they settled into the new environment.

A brigade arriving in July or August would come down on the old screeching line. They would probably travel for some miles alongside the track of the new *Pruga*, already showing impressive progress, and, at the Samac end, with the tracks already laid. The volunteers, shovelling and pushing barrows all along the line, would stop to cheer in the rookies—or, if they were newcomers themselves, would increase their work to breakneck speed and try to create an impression of long service and great experience. When they had arrived at their destination, the volunteers would be shown to their huts, and, if they were lucky, be given a shower. They would be issued with strong, cheap boots (if there were enough to go round—the foreign brigades always got these first) and the Railway "uniform"—a two-piece suit of blue or brown denims or working overalls. In the mid-summer, boots or bare feet and overall slacks were more than sufficient clothing, although those of us unused to the sun were well-advised to have some covering for neck and shoulders. The suit served as a uniform on special occasions and rallies, but in the

evenings some people—particularly girl students and volunteers from the towns—changed into "civvies." In general, however, everyone worked, ate, danced, studied and sang in the same suit of overalls, which were washed, together with underclothes and socks, in the cold mountain streams. The suit remained the property of the volunteers when they left the line, and they could often be seen wandering round in them in their home towns.

The brigade huts were long wooden constructions, usually with a double tier of plain wooden bunks laid down the middle. Straw palliasses and blankets made up the bed. The huts usually had one or two small offices and a larger common-room tacked on the end. Meals were eaten in an open shelter, the roof sometimes twined with branches or vines, while the cookhouse stood apart. The incoming brigade would hoist their flag with ceremony, and set about improving their camp. They would tack up their name in large wooden letters above the hut, hoping that in a few weeks' time (the usual length of stay was two months) they could add the word *Udarnik*.¹ The ground would be carefully swept and the hut scrubbed, while small flower-gardens or five-pointed stars and designs in red and white stone would be set in front of the hut. Then the artists would set to work, painting slogans and designs on the woodwork—perhaps a large picture of an *Udarnik* badge, or the peasant costumes of their home district, or an heroic representation of a girl with an over-size pick. Later, slogans in white pebbles would be set into the embankment itself, giving the name of the brigade and the number of days in which the work was finished. The brigade artists would also design beautiful notice-boards, and a wall-newspaper would be started up.

A lot could be told about the nature of a brigade from the way in which they set about improving the camp. It was amazing what a bit of wood and ingenuity could do (as witness the Greeks) and although all the brigades lived on the same pattern, they soon developed different personalities. The brigade would begin to form a character as soon as it settled in. Some would be grimly determined to become shock-workers; some boisterous and happy-go-lucky; some would plunge into cultural activities out of working hours, while others would find the work on the line and around the camp more than enough for the day. Because all of the Yugoslavs worked like beavers on the line, some of the British thought that they were in some way "different" and that a harder upbringing had accustomed them to heavier work and longer spells of endurance than ourselves. But this was by no means true. For some of the peasants, no doubt, boots were an unaccustomed luxury, the work strained no unused muscles, and the food and living conditions were more than tolerable

¹ *Udarnik* means "shock worker"—or "Stakhanovite."

(as indeed they were). But for the city-dwellers from the schools and universities the first week or two of work were a real test of will and staying-power. There were even some who, having spent the war in Zagreb, Belgrade or on the Dalmatian coast, found the routine of camp life far less familiar than the largely ex-Service British.

There were other characteristics which marked the different brigades. The peasants followed, almost universally, the custom of shaving their heads in the summer, whereas this was less common among the other volunteers. It looked strange and a little ugly to us, but there was no doubt of its convenience for those working in the dry, pulverised earth or the black filth of the tunnel. The students, of course, were more "sophisticated" in other ways, gaining something in humour and tolerance but losing in spontaneity. The Greeks on our section, very few of whom could speak any language but their own, had made up for this by setting a terrific pace at the evening bonfires when we all met together. They had the whole business cut-and-dried, and no one could hope to compete at the same pitch of intensity. Slogans would be roared back and forth, and one would be thrown up into the air by laughing volunteers. Then, without any signal, one would find oneself with joined arms moving rhythmically round in a circle in the firelight, singing back the words of the leader. And then perhaps more shouting, or a swift and expert Greek peasant dance, led by a girl in working-overalls with her long black hair streaming behind her. The bonfires of the peasant brigades (and often of our own) followed much the same pattern, and when the Greeks marched up singing they would steal the show. But our good friends the Belgrade mining students stood a little aloof from this. Their bonfires were tranquil and informal affairs, and they seemed to regard the antics of British and Greek alike with good-humoured tolerance. They would sit round the fire in groups, resting after a heavy day's work, and occasionally the accordionist would strike up dance music and couples would shuffle round on the uneven ground. Here one had more chance to make individual friendships and to talk² or argue at leisure. I sometimes had to rub my eyes to persuade myself that I was not among a group of British students on an English summer evening.

Volunteers of both sexes lived in the same huts, with wooden partitions between their quarters, and worked in the same brigades. No distinctions were made in the life and very few in the work, although the men did the greater part of the tunnelling, the drilling,

² Communication was never a great problem, if one was prepared to push on regardless. Many Yugoslavs spoke German, some French and a few English. Our interpreters were always ready to help out. A famous figure of our brigade was Sean, the Irish International Brigader. When he became Bde. Q.M. he used to carry on long conversations in what sounded like pidgin Irish interspersed with gestures and Spanish expletives. But he always brought back the food and stores for which he asked.

dynamiting and rock-lifting. Girls made up something in the region of 25 per cent. of the volunteers on the line. They undertook the heavy work at their own insistence, and fiercely resisted attempts at discrimination like shoving them on to permanent cookhouse (a very heavy job in itself) or on to camp duties. The relationship between the sexes was one of the healthiest things about the Railway. It was a remarkable victory when one considers the peasant tradition of much of Yugoslavia and that in the villages alongside the *Pruga* the veil is still worn. The sexes lived in complete equality, although the proportion of girls holding the most responsible positions is still low. It was a new experience to us—and somehow very moving—to catch our first glimpse of the boys and girls pushing loaded wagons down the rails together. Many of us thought, when we came out, that we were freed of superstitions and that our ideas were "advanced." But we found on the Railway a truer comradeship than we had known between the sexes, because it was based upon common work in which was gained a greater knowledge of each other and a new respect. We realised how rarely, even in our enlightened society, a woman can win the unqualified respect of men unless she fights for it tooth and nail. At the same time, on the Railway a very strict moral code was observed. It would not be true to say "imposed" because it was somehow a part of the spirit of the *Pruga* and of the common work, and it was rarely questioned. If this had not been so, then parents and educationalists would undoubtedly have raised opposition to the whole project. But the atmosphere seemed even to frown on the conventional chivalries which we and the French and Swedes brought with us, and in the Yugoslav brigades cases of serious transgression against the *Pruga* code were pretty well unheard-of.

VIII

The work on the line lasted from six to eight hours, according to the age and decision of the volunteers themselves. After work the cultural and educational programme would begin. These activities are treated more fully in another section. It remains only to say that these activities were not by-products of the work on the line, but an integral part of the whole conception of the Railway. "The Railway builds us" ran the *Pruga* song, and the truth of this was borne out in every action of the volunteers. It can be seen most clearly in the technical and vocational training. In the work itself the shortage of skilled men in Yugoslavia was rapidly being made up. Not only linesmen, drivers, mechanics, miners, engineers, etc., but also telegraphists, clerks and typists, postal workers, doctors and architects were being trained. Not all of these youths will continue with the job they learned on the Railway, but the total effect will be to increase greatly the general quality, experience and resourcefulness of Yugoslav

labour. Equally complementary to the work on the line was the physical training, already mentioned above. Great emphasis was set on this, and P.T. and sport had honoured places in the programme. Those of us who attended a great sports meeting at Zenica and who saw the narrow shoulders and undeveloped bodies of some of the young volunteers can appreciate an enthusiasm which (in the case of P.T.) we failed to share.³

But physical and vocational training did not end the work of the Railway as Schoolmaster. Last year, of the few thousand illiterates who worked on the Brcko-Banovici line, several hundred escaped uncured. This year they set themselves the target, as did the partisans, of letting not one of the volunteers who came to the Railway leave it without being able to read and write. Academic work was carried on for one or two hours after work, the volunteers squatting out in the sun, or in the shade of the embankment. Military training was also given. Its importance has, naturally, been put quite out of proportion by one or two correspondents. The training was neither sinister nor secret. One "training-ground" was a few hundred yards from our camp, and the British could watch it as they walked to and from the shop at Nemila where we went to buy tins of grapefruit-juice. It amounted to the first two or three weeks general introduction to fieldcraft and infantry tactics which a British Army recruit is given—how to crawl, how to move across ground in formation, how to throw a grenade, march, and fire a rifle. I saw nothing more advanced than is given in the Junior Training Corps in our public schools. Needless to say, foreign brigades did not join in.⁴

It would be difficult to make an exhaustive list of the many other Railway activities. Everything from film-shows to chess competitions were held. Visiting professors and men of letters gave lectures on the Five Year Plan, international affairs, history, economics, popular science and agricultural technique, civics and literature and the arts. Any number of discussions were held. There were political rallies, sports and cultural meetings and P.T. displays. Reading groups, libraries and wall-newspapers all performed an educative rôle. The brigades formed their own choirs and art societies. Orchestras and dramatic companies from the cities visited the line, while the volunteers produced their own concerts, sketches and plays. The Youth Railway newspaper—*Borba*—and the wall-newspapers published

³ And did not take part in, except for one Sunday morning of evil memory when the girls shamed us by doing jerks before breakfast.

⁴ A deputy commandant of our brigade—an ex-officer whom we called "the Colonel"—was once so exasperated at our continual defeats at football that he offered to pick a team of British marksmen and challenge any brigade on the Section. He will not soon forget the horror on the faces of the Yugoslavs, who were busy combating foreign propaganda that they were training an International Brigade to intervene in Greece.

poems by the volunteers, and the best of these were recited by the authors at every ceremony. The Railway had its own photographic and film units. The traditional peasant dances were encouraged and performances of them were given round the bonfires in the local costumes. Each brigade had, of course, its own tame artists who decorated the place, but students from the arts schools had their full-time job in portraying the work on the line. Not one of the volunteers with whom I spoke, peasant or schoolboy, thought this strange in any way. They respected the artist's work as being equally important as their own; they were eager to pose, and crowded round the canvas or demanded to look through the sketch-books. Everywhere one felt this new healthy attitude of the people to the arts, as a normal and manly occupation and one which somehow reflected credit on them. They were proud that exhibitions of painting, drawing and sculpture were being held, done by their comrades and showing themselves at work: they were proud that young architects and art students were designing the wayside stations; and they were proud that national artists and writers would often visit the Railway to talk with them and draw inspiration from their example.

But, more than this and yet including all this, the Railway was building a new generation. I remember that, when I spent a day or



Girl Bricklayer

Paul Hogarth

two on the Bulgarian Youth Railway, Sofia-Pernik, I saw a group of young girls sitting under a haystack and talking eagerly together. I asked my interpreter what they were saying. "They have appointed themselves a shock-group in the brigade and they are saying, 'Everything from the standard of work to the way the girls leave their shoes at night depends on us.'" The Railway taught, as no course of instruction could ever have done, democratic initiative and self-government and the true values of community living. It taught the youth about each other, and about the various nationalities which make up Yugoslavia—and as they grew to understand each other better so they grew more united. It taught the responsibilities of the individual in a society in which only the co-operation of every member resulted in the success of the whole. It taught the new value of labour, of labour freely and enthusiastically given and honoured in achievement. It taught the youth to read, to think, to govern themselves, to organise, to instruct others and to lead. In the West, while cherishing democracy and fearing all personal usurpers, we often leave little room for true democratic leaders to arise; our party system and safeguards leave the way open instead to charlatans, demagogues and mediocre yes-men; and, as in the late war, leadership at every level is trained in the bitter school of disaster. But democratic leadership is not an inborn characteristic; it is the fruit of testing and experience and responsibilities successfully met; it is the product of a society as much as of an individual. For this form of leadership the *Omladinska Pruga* was an excellent school. Imagination and decision, resourcefulness and patience, were demanded at every level. Those in positions of leadership in the Yugoslav brigades were under the constant critical eye of their friends and comrades, while, since they were elected representatives, they could feel confident of the most loyal support. They could make their first mistakes without greatly endangering the happiness of those under their guidance. Once elected, they were expected to lead; the problems of organisation and administration were theirs to sort out, and they were not expected to take refuge either in the orders of superiors or in endless committees. If their brigade or group or section succeeded in its job, that was their reward. But if they spared themselves in their work or showed self-interest, if they sought to create privilege for themselves or assumed an autocratic manner, then they were quickly removed from power. They were moved because they were hindering the building of the Railway, and the Railway itself was building new industries, new knowledge and new friendships, new relations between the sexes, a new outlook, new qualities in Man, and a new society.

IX

The Railway completed its remarkable work by building bonds of friendship between the youth of many nations. Invitations were

sent to the youth of all countries represented in the World Federation of Democratic Youth, and fifteen or so nations sent one or more brigades—the British, French, Bulgars, Greek refugees, Danes, Hungarians, Palestinians (Jew and Arab), Roumanians, Triestines, Czechs, Italians, Canadians, Belgians, Poles, Swedes and Albanians. There were also a number of smaller working-groups from other countries—Australia, Holland, India, Switzerland, the West Indies, and Austria were among them. No brigade came from Germany. The Soviet Union sent no brigade, because, I was told, the Russians wished to give no grounds whatsoever to their enemies for complaints that the eastern democracies were under their domination. I feel myself that they were over-sensitive on this, and we all regretted that we had no chance to get to know the Soviet youth. We also regretted that the U.S. State Department refused (on the pitiful grounds that they could not "protect" their nationals!) to allow American youth to enter Yugoslavia. One or two American students working in Europe managed to squeeze through and were welcomed to work with our brigade. I should say at once that, on our part, we encountered no official resistance to our visit. There were minor cases of bureaucratic interference in getting transit visas on the way out, but the British Embassy in Belgrade gave us a warm welcome and every assistance. Together with the Consul at Sarajevo they supplied us with flags, films, exhibition materials and photos, regular information bulletins and packages of papers ranging from the *Times* to the *Daily Worker* and including illustrated periodicals. The Ambassador himself was always ready to welcome British volunteers. The Military Attaches' department must have worked overtime many times to sort out the Trieste and Austrian transit permits, and yet every new British volunteer who arrived at the office was given prompt and cheerful attention—and a *Player* as well.⁵

Two "International Brigades" were also formed at the Youth Festival in Prague. They were largely spontaneous affairs, formed from delegates who decided to put to an immediate practical test the resolutions of friendship which they had passed in the conference halls. One brigade was led by an Englishman, Bill Horne, and British groups served in both. Some bright entrepreneur faked up—from their presence and from the other foreign brigades—a story of the imminent invasion of Greece by an international force, passing along an under-

⁵ Unfortunately the same cannot be said of all H.M.'s servants overseas. It was reported that members of the Palestine brigade were victimised on their return. Trieste was a flagrant example. Danish, Italian and British volunteers passing through were viciously assaulted by small Fascist groups at the station or in public parts of the city. Although the offenders were well known, the British refused to protest or attempt to protect even their own nationals, and the British-trained and Fascist-infiltrated police were openly hostile. From this experience those of us who were victims gained an even greater respect for our Triestine *Pruga* comrades who, on their return, faced serious injury and disfigurement.

ground route (Vranduk tunnel?) through the Balkans. He converted himself into an "authoritative source" and sold the story on the international anti-Communist market. Among British papers the *Daily Telegraph* and the *Daily Graphic* made use of it. All I can say is "God help the democratic Greeks!" But this is unfair to the International Brigades, which had taken on a more tricky job than building the Tower of Babel and whose members did not get off to the same flying start before the Almighty intervened against them. Australian Communists and Dutch Catholic Youth worked well enough together, but—as one story has it—the Czech National Socialists were so keen to prove their devotion to the ideal of personal liberty that they would down tools every now and then and hitch-hike about the neighbouring countryside sight-seeing. The brigades settled down and worked very well in the end, although from a distance the curious medley of beards and exhibitionist hats seemed always to be obscured in linguistic fog.

The problems of organisation for the Yugoslavs were, of course, immense, particularly since they insisted on every foreign brigade taking, at their expense, a week or ten days tour of Yugoslavia at the end of their work. Throughout the summer, hotels at Dubrovnik were reserved for the foreign brigades, and though there was rarely enough room for everyone and the railway system was slow and congested, the trips were a great success. The foreign volunteers were met, wherever they travelled, with a really sincere welcome from all classes of people. But it was travel and exit visas which provided the NOJ with their greatest headaches. Most countries sent brigades which worked, took their holiday and crossed the frontier in both directions as one group and on the same bloc visa. Others, through no fault of their own, came in ones and twos and small groups, and wished to split into various different parties to make the return journey. In our brigade, for instance, some wished to remain in Yugoslavia as tourists; some to visit Bulgaria, Greece or Albania; and one girl wanted to work her passage on a Yugoslav cargo-boat to Singapore. Since most of us entered on group visas especially granted for Youth Railway volunteers, the necessary permits meant special application to Government departments. For a time the youth organisers struggled with the problem, but finally an edict was issued that the individuals should depart with the same group and leave at the same place at which they had entered. For many of us this was a disappointment, and various interpretations were set on the action. I have seen it quoted as an Awful Example that two foreign volunteers who, in their enthusiasm, arrived visa-less as stowaways at a Yugoslav port were sent without ceremony back to their homes, although the Embassy concerned was prepared to countenance their arrival. But Yugoslavia

is not a comic opera state, and she expects the customary etiquette of entry and exit to be observed. Security considerations may have influenced the final order. But I am convinced that organisational problems were the over-riding consideration, and while acting as commandant of the British Brigade I had more than one chance to look over our provincial hedge and see some of the work involved. I do not mean to run down the work of the British on the Railway. But we have a lamentable tendency to assume that we have a right to travel abroad when, where and as we please, without the formalities demanded of lesser races. One Scotsman arrived, kilt and all, with a complete blank in his passport where his visa should have been; and several of us, myself included, cheerfully overstayed the date stamped in the book. Nor were we by any means the only offenders. The NOJ had many brigades to look after, and they suffered from an absolute shortage of personnel. Nada, in her Belgrade office, coped pretty well single-handed with all of us (when her abnormal patience was tried to breaking-point she would say pathetically, "But I'm not a travel agency") and her "consulting-room" was always furnished with insistent patients of several nationalities. The NOJ was supposed to have an up-to-date picture of how many foreign volunteers were wandering in which parts of the country at any time, and the state of their visas, and, to be honest, I cannot believe that their figures were not often cooked.

The foreign brigades department of *Glavni Stab* at Zenica had other worries as well. Several of the eastern democracies had similar projects of their own, and the volunteers from these countries fell quickly into the routine. The Bulgars and Albanians, in particular, were monstrous workers and set a pace in every activity which only the Greeks and the crack Yugoslav brigades were able to equal. They became three or four times Udarnik brigades. But other parties arrived with the haziest of ideas of what was expected of them, and thought themselves embarked on a novel sort of holiday. (They were.) Some volunteers arrived in one brigade with a couple of trunkloads of clothes apiece. We were told an amusing story of one brigade (no names, no packdrill). On arrival they were shown their huts, and the embankment where work was already in progress.

"Aha! It is magnificent! What an inspiration!" They were shown the tools which they were to use.

"How interesting! Ah yes, and how primitive!" They were shown the tools once again.

"But what is this? A moment, please. We do not understand."

"This is where you will live, comrades, and here are your tools. You can organise the work as you please."

"But what is this? We understood we had come here to take part only in *travail symbolique*."

Not all the problems of the foreign department could be passed off as good-humouredly as this. Individuals sometimes flagrantly ignored the travel regulations (these applied only to group travel and exit; wherever we went on the line or the trip we were free to see all we could in the time and talk with whomever we pleased). There were other abuses of hospitality. One brigade—I never discovered which—sold its issue of blankets on the market at Dubrovnik. No wonder Bogdan sometimes appeared, black around the brows and with sweat on his forehead. Bogdan was the leader of the department and he became, in the brigade's last weeks, our very good friend. At first he was only an impressive figure who appeared at our brigade "presentations" when a group was about to leave; but, as we grew to know him better, we discovered the easy-going temperament and fund of caustic humour under the imposing surface. Before he came to the Railway he was the Editor of *Jez*, the country's leading satirical paper. He was, I believe, the only youth leader over 30, and he was chosen for the job because none of the younger generation had the same knowledge of the eccentricities of foreigners. A student in the 1930's, he had done post-graduate work in Paris and had travelled widely in Europe. He had returned to Yugoslavia before the war to carry on illegal political activity. A prisoner much of the war, he later managed to join the partisans. One day when he came to lecture he stayed and chatted of his experiences far into the evening. Hearing of the persecution which Communists and anti-Fascists received from the old Yugoslav régime, one realised sharply how few of his friends of student days had survived concentration camp, execution squad and partisan battle to take a part in building Yugoslavia today. As he watched the young miners at work there was something proprietary, almost paternal, in his eyes. For him the Railway was a new chapter, the chapter of achievement, while for many volunteers it was the beginning. And something in his manner and in the bitter lines of humour on his face prompted the mind to ask—how great was the cost?

Good friends of our brigade also were Zuko and Velezar, Bogdan's right-hand men. Zuko was a young partisan leader, very capable and well-liked by all the foreign brigades; but he was troubled by an old wound, and he was in hospital when our brigade left. Velezar looked after cultural relations, and tried to supply us with lecturers on the aspects of Yugoslav society which interested us most. Several times he came to talk himself, and he had a genius for appreciating the subtler shades of difference between our national traditions, and for explaining developments in Yugoslavia, not in jargon but in terms of our own experience and our own forms of democracy. He was a student of 23 or 24 and a fluent linguist. I heard him after one sumptuous international beanfeast translate after-dinner speeches into four different languages without making notes or fumbling for a

word. We had other good friends among the small staff of interpreters and organisers at Zenica. The work which they all did towards increasing international understanding would be difficult to over-estimate.

The slogan of the Railway was "Brotherhood, Unity!" It was roared out at the bonfires according to a formula whenever anyone shouted the words "Omladinska Pruga!" If slogans have any meaning—and they have—few will be found to pick a quarrel with this one. There was no formula about its practice. Foreign volunteers were hustled in their free time almost to the limit of their energies. The brigades were invited somewhere nearly every evening, to meet either another foreign brigade or the Yugoslavs themselves. It has been suggested in a section of the British Press that, since several of the foreign groups did not work long enough on the line to repay the cost of their keep and the holiday trip, the Yugoslavs were serving sinister propagandist ends by inviting them. What mean, contorted and contemptible nonsense this is! In one column "iron curtain" and in another this! If the Yugoslavs had anything to hide, what a ridiculous business to invite thousands of young people to come to their country! It is a worthless piece of provocation—but let us examine it all the same. The business of promoting true international friendship has changed overnight from a garden-party luxury into a question of human survival, and it is time that we looked it in the face.

The Yugoslavs have a different form of society from our own. They regard it with pride, since they are building it themselves, and they were keen to show it at advantage to visitors. Certainly the eager volunteers on the Railway were the best showmen the nation could have found. When they talked with us they naturally gave us their own interpretation of national and international affairs. They were particularly welcoming to the British since they are distressed at the post-war deterioration of relations between our two countries, and believe, rightly or wrongly, that the offences against friendship have been largely on our side, and that if our people learn more of their country our mutual goodwill will increase. But visiting brigades were not subjected to a high-powered propaganda campaign. The British, for instance, learned most of their secondhand information about Yugoslavia not from the outside lecturers whom we ourselves invited, but from the interpreters and delegates who lived amongst us. We all came to know their characters, their tastes and prejudices and enthusiasms, and we all became their personal friends. But, supposing they had wished it, they could not have prevented us from forming our own opinions. One met on the Railway, not only young Communists, but republicans and monarchists, Protestants and Catholics and non-politicals—although it was noticeable that "politics" seemed irrelevant on the Railway and political opinions were not questions

one often thought of asking. On the trip the foreign brigades usually spent several days in Dubrovnik, passed up the Dalmatian coast and visited Zagreb, Belgrade or Ljubljana—all places where the opposition is most vocal and where the disgruntled flock around the English-speaking like wasps and blue-bottles round a jam jar. Nor were the foreign volunteers themselves, as has been suggested, all "hand-picked Communists." One met the most remarkable medley of political opinions, and some amusing contrasts. A Canadian loudly pro-Soviet arguing with a Roumanian equally loudly anti-Communist, or Swedish Marxists going hammer-and-tongs at Czech exponents of "western democracy." If the percentage of Communists in any brigade was unduly high, this was emphatically not the fault of the Yugoslavs (who were childishly pleased whenever they heard that some Conservatives had come to our brigade), but of the youth of those countries who did not take full advantage of the invitation, or of their Communists for bagging all the seats. As far as Yugoslavs were concerned everyone except drunkards or Secret Service agents was welcome.

But the Yugoslavs did *not* regard the Railway as one more friendship jamboree. If the World Youth Festival was the drawing-office of international unity, then they intended the Railway to be the foundry. They realised that *travail symbolique* leads only to *amitié symbolique* and they had a far profounder aim in view. They believed that hard work would lead to hard-headed understanding. They were impatient of foreign groups reluctant or unable to do their full share of work, both because the work was urgent and had to be done, and because they knew that the workers themselves would become frustrated, secretly ashamed of themselves and poorer for the experience. They did not hide their hope that the British would come on future occasions organised as a working brigade, prepared to stay some length of time and to compete on equal terms with the others. On the Railway, perhaps for the first time in history, large-scale international friendship was taking on really tangible form. And it turned out to be something quite different from what we expected. It was not a rather dreary business of sympathetic condolences, a gloomy aura of not feeling any particular malice towards anyone. It was made up of a number of dislikes, irritations, and fits of anger, as well as laughter, songs, sudden attractions, gratitude and admiration. Nationalities developed friendships as people do, not unquestioningly but with qualifications, disliking certain characteristics or weaknesses, but accepting the whole. We found that some nations had a particularly quick sympathy for each other, and that this had little relation to geographical, political or cultural affinities (I believe that it was the Triestines, Australians and the Balkan peoples with whom the British found most in common, and not the Swedes, Canucks, French,

Czechs or Italians), while other nations might even find for each other initial antipathy.

I think we came to understand and like the Yugoslavs far more through the occasional mistakes, frictions and organisational disasters than we would have done from any number of expressions of goodwill. Our minds were first and foremost on the job, and the Railway—that wonderful mason and agent of change—did the rest. Our Press and our statesmen have, since the war ended, discoursed endlessly on friendship, as if it were something which they could offer with a gesture but which other nations had chosen to withhold. But if we are serious for a moment we will see that friendship is not in our gift but is yet to be made, by mutual intercourse and common effort. Of the two great post-war schemes to build this real friendship, the World Youth Festival has been regarded by some with indifference or hostility, while the Railway has been mentioned by the same people only in terms of abuse. I can only suppose that those who rush, with such hearty ignorance, into the attack, do not *wish* such ties of friendship to develop when the Yugoslavs and Balkan peoples are included. If this is not so, let us hear from them practical proposals for a scheme as courageous, broadly-conceived and tenaciously executed as that of the People's Youth of Yugoslavia. For, let it be understood that they have one alternative only if they do not find such a scheme—and that is to prepare for war.

The Yugoslav youth leaders had one further purpose in mind when they invited the foreign brigades to their country. Their youth had been isolated from the world throughout the war. Now reconstruction was claiming all their time, and the lack could best be remedied on the home ground. But they did not fuss unduly once they had got us all there. They mixed the ingredients together and let the chemical agencies of language and common work break down the barriers until "*Bratsvo! Jedinstvo!*" had a meaning as real, as gritty and as robust, as *Omladinska Pruga* itself. We felt as if it was international friendship which had formed the hard callouses on our hands.

X

Turning over these pages I find that very much has still remained unsaid. Many of the details which brought the Railway to life have already slipped from the memory. I find that I have said little about "politics," not by design but because nowhere did such a digression seem in place. Arguments and discussions were plentiful on the line wherever the foreign volunteers went, but the job of building the *Omladinska Pruga* itself was one which we never thought to question. Whatever our various opinions the need for the Railway was obvious, and we could get on with the job in a spirit of unity and with a good

heart. I gained the impression that the attitude of the majority of young Yugoslavs to their own national affairs was very much the same. They followed all matters closely. But the unity of war and reconstruction went very deep, the problems before them were urgent and left little room for argument except in points of method. They got on with these jobs with all the speed they could, and they seemed to regard our attention to party tactics, political auctioneering and parliamentary jockeying as a curious form of western fixation. The Railway was a great social phenomenon, and although different interpretations may be set on the cause of its arising, it cannot be defined in conventional party terms.

But, more than this, I feel that I have failed to give flesh and blood to the story. Perhaps this can never be done unless one goes to see *and work* oneself. I have spoken endlessly of the Railway spirit, although, of course, the earth was moved and the *kolos* were danced not by spirits, but by very real young men and women, and it is of them that the strong visual pictures remain. They have thronged my memory as I have been writing. I remember the entrance to Vranduk tunnel, and the miners coming out at the end of their shift, smudged with black, exhausted and smelling of the carbide from their lamps, or the dawn at Nemila, when we crawled out of bed and went up to the spring, the sun catching the mountain tops, while handkerchiefs of mist still clung to the wooded slopes, and in the valley a neighbouring brigade marched singing back from the night-shift. Or the presentations when the cheering and slogan-shouting matches began. The Greeks, a sectarian crowd, would launch straight in with "Stalin-Tito - Dimitrov!" or "Harry Pollitt - Zahariades - Harry Pollitt - Zahariades"—to which someone invented the reply of "General Markos Zilliacos!" Most of all I remember a delegation up to the Samac end of the line—watching the Zagreb students drilling in mid-stream the rock foundations of a bridge, and attending a huge evening bonfire with speeches, exhibition dances and songs. Throughout all these memories there winds the *kolo*, the leader with his head thrown back at the clear stars, singing out the lines in an open half-oriental voice:

*"Broaden the ring, Lolo from Kozara!
Make it wider still, then we can move better.
Comrade Tito, little white violet,
All our youth loves you.
Comrade Tito, little blue violet,
You are fighting for the people's rights.
We are two brothers, both in the fight.
Weep not, Mother, if we should perish
(We are brothers, from below Kozarica)
For as many leaves as there are on Kozara,*

*There are still more young Communists.
And as many branches as there are on Kozara,
There are still more young partisans . . ."*

Sometimes a girl would break from the wide circle moving slowly round the fire, and would dance lightly in the centre, keeping her face always towards the one or more young men who followed her in, and who swooped and swerved round her with arms outstretched, leaping, clapping and shouting in time with the music. Then another girl would come in, and the first would take once again her place with us in the circle. And finally the bonfire would die down and a few groups would be left sitting on logs and talking by the fire. British and Yugoslavs would sing the Railway Song together once again:

*"Samac—Sarajevo.
That's our target.
To build another railway
This summer, too."*

Two other lines of the song have stuck for a long time in my memory and continually thrust themselves forward:

*"Dan am zivi, zivi rad
u novoj slobodi."
"Long live our labour
In our new-found freedom."*

Work

by Bill Francis

Brigade Works Foreman, August

"FAITH moves mountains" is an apt description of the stupendous achievement of the Yugoslav youth of both sexes, who by voluntary effort built the railway line from Samac to Sarajevo. The secret behind this gigantic feat is the boundless creative spirit released by the new democratic organisation of labour. Yugoslavia is ablaze with this new spirit; to the foreigner paying a visit or working in the country, it is a most inspiring and exhilarating experience.

To realise the magnitude of the task which confronted the planners and volunteers, it is essential to have a picture of the nature of the work and the means at their disposal to carry the job through.

Because of the technical backwardness of Yugoslavia before the war and the vast destruction of property and terrible loss of life caused by the Fascist invaders, there was no reservoir of skilled labour to

tainty of succeeding in the completion of this Railway in six months—an apparently impossible task—was one of the most remarkable features. The energy formerly dissipated in inter-class and inter-racial struggles has been transformed and magnified into a fight for a common cause. It was this enormous enthusiasm which struck us all in Yugoslavia, in working, dancing, singing, teaching the local peasants, discussions, physical training and youth rallies. Where the potential forces for good in united youth movements were perverted to militarism and training for war in Germany, they are here used in the constructive battle for peace and prosperity. Conditions were primitive enough, food was limited—but all this mattered so little in their battle for the future. Sometimes they were over-ambitious—in their desire to show their country to the British, for instance, their efficiency collapsed under the general difficulties of understaffing and extreme pressure on their still hopelessly inadequate railway system. Nevertheless, the uncalculating generosity of the intention outdid the inconvenience caused.

Returning to England, filled with a sense of solidarity of our two peoples, which should be able to overcome any misunderstanding between our governments, I felt I had been part of a tremendous adventure, inspired with energy, courage and confidence. My return through an Austria of lifeless depression, a Switzerland of smug self-contentment, a France of embittered divisions to an England of purposeless disillusionment, made me realise how much more than mere material achievement has been won in the new Yugoslavia.

IV

BULGARIA

by Dr. Mary Barrow

Medical Officer to British Brigade, July and August

ON the invitation of the Bulgarian Ambassador in Belgrade, who visited the Youth Railway, a group of twenty-seven volunteers formed the "Frank Thomson" working group to visit Bulgaria and to take part in reconstruction work there.

Under the leadership of Deric Beech, a young worker of Coventry, the group spent ten days working at Hain Boaz on the construction of a new motor road. In addition, the members of this group had opportunities of studying at first hand various aspects of social, political and cultural developments in Bulgaria.

They were received everywhere with traditional hospitality, and were greatly impressed with the spirit and enthusiasm prevailing amongst the Bulgarian youth and people.

POSTSCRIPT

from "Joe" Dvornik, Interpreter to the Brigade

Dear Comrades of the British Brigade,

I want to send my comradely greetings to all of you, members of the British Brigade, who worked together with our youth on the Youth Railway Samac-Sarajevo. In a few days—fourteen days ahead of schedule—the obligation will be fulfilled, the Railway will be opened and the trains will start running over that monument of the youth's spirit and unity. There in the Bosna valley between Nemila and Vranduk tunnel, in the embankment, stream bed, rock face, you have left an imperishable proof of your friendship for our people, of your will to fight for peace, international collaboration and democracy. Remember those days you spent in our country working together with our youth, when you witnessed the tremendous creative energy of our people awakened by our revolution, our national-liberation struggle, by our new democracy, directed not only towards the lifting of our standard of living through our Five Year Plan, not only towards a rapid cultural advance of our peoples, but also towards the establishment and deepening of friendly brotherly relations with all peoples.

Receiving letters from some of you and reading British papers, I can see that you are fulfilling your promises. Thank you for your contributions to the triumph of the truth about our country.

Living with you this summer I learnt to know and love your people. I wish you a happy and prosperous Britain.

Long live the brotherhood and unity of our two peoples!

Death to Fascism! Freedom to the People!

Conclusion

THIS is the end of our story. In days of austerity and "Work or Want," some people have become bored with stories of reconstruction. We hope that this story has held their interest.

The British who shared in this experience returned with many opinions. On the Railway some defended fanatically every aspect of Yugoslav life—including some which the Yugoslavs themselves were most keen to erase. Others looked for political police under every wheelbarrow. Some did not like the slogans, the marching, or the military training. Others were so rushed off their feet that they could not decide what they liked at all.

But on two things we reached complete agreement. The Railway was a genuine attempt to forge international understanding. May there be many such schools for friendship in the next years! Our hosts, often with poor facilities, did all they could to make us at home. They did not pry into our affairs, nor did they try to stampede us into unquestioning support for their country. The Yugoslavs whom we met at great gatherings were warmly welcoming, and curious to know more about our people and our country. The Yugoslavs who lived with us, our interpreters and delegates, were not dogmatic and impenetrable sphinxes, but people like us, with a fund of humour and quick-understanding, thoughtful and independent, making up their minds for themselves.

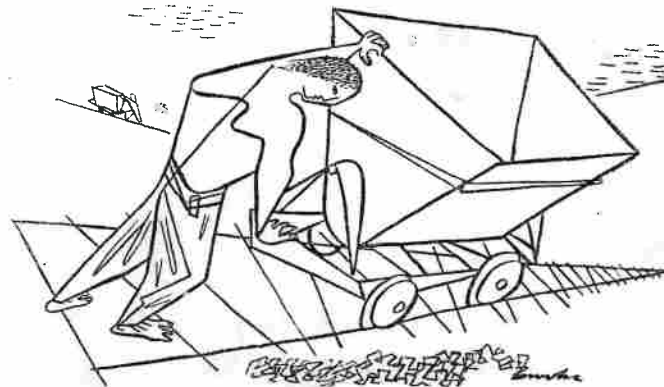
And we agreed on the enthusiasm and remarkable capacity for work of our friends. We have testified to this in our book. But now there is greater evidence than this. For on November 15th the first train, garlanded with autumn branches, nosed cautiously up the 150 miles of new-laid track from Samac, steaming past the rock-face and the deserted hut at Nemila where we lived, through Vranduk tunnel, to Sarajevo, where it was met by Marshal Tito himself.

We are proud that we took part in this work, and glad that, in these ill-tempered times, there were British youth working beside the other nations. We made many friendships and we did not overstay our welcome. But we are not altogether satisfied with our part. We worked with a will, but we might have worked better. We had little to show in other activities, in athletics and sport, in theatre, entertainments and song. Our song-books were dull, and we knew none of our own folk-music. The Scots did not bring their kilts or their pipes (and what could a piper *not* have done in Bosnia for British-Yugoslav friendship?) and few of them knew their own reels and dances. As for the English, we often felt shamefacedly that we had less home-made culture in our hearts than any nation we met. Our choir, quite frankly, was a joke, and the nearest thing to a part song we produced was "London's Burning." These faults came from inexperience and lack of foresight, and from the system of organisation which sent us to the brigade in small groups and dribbles, and which took us away again as we were beginning to get to grips. We hope that, on a future project, a British brigade will go out ready to meet all these demands, going with good organisation and a competitive spirit, taking with it more young workers and trade unionists as well as students. For the British this year lacked nothing in will and enthusiasm, and we are convinced that, so organised, it could return proud of the account it had given of our people, having been in the forefront of all activities.

Finally, there are those who suggest that we should not have left to work in another country in the time of our own crisis. We believe

that international friendship is in no less critical a state than our economic affairs, and is no less vital an affair to our people. We believe that if a similar scheme were organised in our own country the Yugoslavs would gladly take time off from their own reconstruction to help us. Moreover, we believe that we have returned inspired with a greater will, and with a clearer idea of how our problems can be faced. The Yugoslavs, with a backward and shattered economy, are certain of the future. We returned to find our own country, with its great industries and skilled people, humiliating itself before America and doubtful of its own ability even to survive. What is wrong with us? Where is that spirit we met in Bosnia—to work *and* want and enjoy it, so long as we maintain our freedom? For we are engaged in a common struggle still alongside the Yugoslav people, a struggle which is only the complement and conclusion of our common sacrifices in the war. Peace did not end the struggle for the Yugoslavs, because the second half of their great war aim was not finally and irrevocably secured. The slogan of the partisan struggle still inspires every activity of today. Leaders shout it at the end of speeches; it runs along the length of the tram-cars in Belgrade; it is at the foot of every official letter passed on the Railway.

Death to Fascism! Freedom to the People!
Smrt Fasizmu! Slaboda Narodu!



Ern Brooks