

Croatia, thus presenting a united front on Serbia's western borders, but the Serbian "rear" will blow up, in the province of Kosovo. Serbia is in no position to handle a multi-front crisis.

Slovenia and Croatia are both rather well armed; they probably have at their disposal 50,000 quite well-trained militia, plus a very large number of potential partisans, ready to fight from bases in the many mountains which compose the Croatian and Slovene landscape. Not accidentally, part of the arms equipping these soldiers have been funneled to Croatia from Hungary, which looks with great sympathy on the struggle of this republic, which was once part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

It is also said that Slovenia has locally manufactured a sophisticated, very lightweight machine gun with a 150-round cartridge and a revolutionary laser sighting system. Such weapons are not possessed even by the Yugoslav Federal Army, which has 250,000 troops, 1,600 tanks, and around 500 aircraft. Thus Croatia and Slovenia are not in the same situation as Lithuania and Latvia, and any attempted military coup might meet with a forceful answer and lead to a long, bloody guerrilla war in the mountains.

A further factor is that the Kosovo region in the south of Yugoslavia, inhabited by ethnic Albanians, is perpetually in revolt against Serbia, which administers it and which has unsuccessfully tried to put down the unrest there. The Kosovo situation is boiling now, just beneath the surface.

In the neighboring Balkan state of Albania, there is emerging a kind of "Romanian" response to the demise of communism. Ramiz Alia has taken on the guise of moderate communist reformer, supposedly an Albanian Gorbachov; but the Albanians are not so foolish as to believe this lie and are strenuously contesting the legitimacy of the present leadership. This in turn affects the situation in Kosovo, and following elections in Albania on March 31, we may expect to see renewed demands by the Kosovo Albanians to join Albania. This factor is also at the heart of the bitter factional war raging in the Serbian elite. Despite all of Milosevic's efforts, Kosovo has not been crushed.

As for the situation in the Yugoslav Army, there are large numbers of Albanian and Bosnian *Muslim* conscripts, paralleling the situation in the Soviet Army. Muslims comprise some 40% of the Yugoslav Army. This creates further imponderables for Serbia in any effort to launch military intervention against other republics.

Yet, there is one result of the unstoppable move by Croatia and Slovenia toward independence which the Draskovic faction may be counting on to bolster Greater Serbia in the longer term. When the two northern republics quit making net budgetary and other economic and financial contributions to the center, that will end the subsidies which are the only basis for existence of the more backward eastern republics, Montenegro and Macedonia. Those republics will then be forced into the Serbian orbit.

## Yeltsin declares war on Moscow

by Konstantin George

Some 500,000 people, probably the largest crowd ever in Moscow's history, marched Sunday, March 10, in support of Russian Federation President Boris Yeltsin, demanding, as has Yeltsin, that Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachov and his presidential cabinet government resign. The march followed the definitive break that had occurred in February between Yeltsin and Gorbachov. Yeltsin had appeared on Soviet television to demand that Gorbachov resign, and soon thereafter, speaking in the Belorussian capital of Minsk on Feb. 25, Gorbachov denounced Yeltsin and the "so-called democrats" around him in all but name as traitors, working with "foreign centers" to "weaken" and "destroy" the Soviet Union.

A very hot spring is about to begin. It need not end in tragedy, but without the implementation of Lyndon LaRouche's "Productive Triangle" proposal for infrastructure and economic development radiating out along "spiral arms" throughout Europe from its area of greatest productivity in the Paris-Berlin-Vienna area, the Soviet Union is going to explode into civil war. The crisis of the 1905 Revolution prompted the Russian elite to adopt a program of industrial, technological, infrastructural, and agricultural investment and growth, in what became known as the Stolypin reforms.

At this moment—a moment of opportunity to secure the Triangle—what many never dreamed to see, takes place: Half a million people pour out against the regime. But what are they campaigning *for*? Their standard-bearer, Yeltsin, has identified himself with the radical, free market poison of the Shatalin Plan. This is the British liberal policy that is currently destroying what is left of Poland's industry and agriculture; applied to the Soviet Union, it will make the current desperate situation even worse.

### Protest against new Union Treaty

The February break ended the year-long period where Yeltsin, popular with both the urban population of the larger Russian cities and in the non-Russian republics, whatever his intention, had played a useful role for Gorbachov in containing raging ferment and unrest from going out of control. During that time, while pretending support and affinity for the "reformers" around Yeltsin, Gorbachov, in an ever-more transparent fashion with each passing month, swung to support rule by the Empire's institutions of "law and order": the military, KGB, and the Russian national elite, who are opposed to any form of loose confederation, let alone dissolu-

tion of the Empire.

Yeltsin and his followers, in turn, have launched a counteroffensive, exploiting the enormous well of rage and discontent in the population against the country's leadership, as both the size of the Sunday demonstration and the new outbreak of coal strikes in various parts of Russia and Ukraine in the first week of March, showed. These events likely foreshadow the most serious episode of mass protest and turmoil inside Russia itself since the wave of troubles that culminated in the 1905 Revolution.

The next wave of protests are expected on, or right after, the March 17 U.S.S.R.-wide "referendum" called by Gorbachov, where the population will vote for or against what is called the "new Union Treaty." The outcome, which is expected to be for the treaty, and thus for preserving the U.S.S.R. "Federation," will form the immediate trigger for mass protest.

Heated opposition to Gorbachov's referendum was at the center of the huge Moscow protest on March 10. The marchers, organized by the deeply fragmented and disparate Russian reform organization, "Democratic Russia," and some of the new moderate and liberal parties that sprung up in Russia last year, called for an emphatic "No" in the March 17 referendum on the new Union Treaty for the Soviet Union, where a "No" vote would be a vote of no confidence in Gorbachov. Yeltsin himself did not appear at the rally. The speakers included Moscow Mayor Gavril Popov, his deputy Stankevich, the liberal historian Yuri Afanasyev, Telman Gdlyan, the former state prosecutor canned by Gorbachov, Akyushits, a co-founder of the Russian Christian Democratic Party, and a representative of the striking Donetsk coal miners. Placards included: "No to the Referendum," "Away With Gorbachov," "Yeltsin, Yeltsin," "A No to the March 17 Referendum Means Freedom," "Either a capitalist European Union or an Asiatic Union of the Apparatchiki." The rally was held in a sea of pre-Bolshevik Russian flags, along with numerous Ukrainian flags and flags of the Baltic republics.

The protest in Moscow was only one of many held throughout Russia and Ukraine. According to TASS on March 10, though no numbers were given, companion pro-Yeltsin, anti-Gorbachov, anti-referendum demonstrations were held in Leningrad, the U.S.S.R.'s second largest city, in Kiev, the capital of Ukraine, in the Russian cities of Sverdlovsk in the Urals, in Kazan on the Volga, and in the Siberian cities of Irkutsk, Novosibirsk, and Ulan-Ude, and in the Far Eastern city of Petropavlovsk.

### **Yeltsin declares war**

The March 9 anti-Gorbachov demonstrations followed a Yeltsin speech where the Russian Federation President declared war on Gorbachov. Gorbachov exercised his powers to limit the impact of the speech, which was not carried by any Soviet state media, being broadcast only by a pro-Yeltsin Russian Federation radio station, Radio Rossiya. Yeltsin began

by calling Gorbachov a "liar," in his claim that the Russian Federation had endorsed the just-published text for a new Union Treaty, and for having pretended to be a reformist. Yeltsin insisted: "We have dozens of the most serious criticisms of the draft treaty," he said, and, regarding "Gorbachov the reformer," he added: "Now we must open our eyes and realize it was all a lie. Let us declare war on the leadership of the country which has led us into a quagmire. Believing in Gorbachov was a mistake." Yeltsin repeated his earlier demand that Gorbachov and the present leadership resign.

With this speech and the demonstrations the next day, Yeltsin has begun a "now or never" offensive to reverse his fortunes. In the past months, Gorbachov had succeeded in weakening Yeltsin's position. Yeltsin had hoped to become a power in Moscow Center through the vehicle of the U.S.S.R. Federation Council, the central executive organ (at least in theory) which, until December, had consisted of Gorbachov and the Presidents of the 15 republics, with Yeltsin as a sort of Russian *primus inter pares* in that group. Then, in December, Gorbachov succeeded in neutralizing Yeltsin's hoped-for Federation Council power by expanding the Federation Council to include all 20 Presidents of Autonomous Republics, 16 of which are in the Russian Federation. Thus, overnight, Yeltsin collapsed from a *primus inter pares* to a mere one voice among 17 from his own federation.

For Yeltsin, it became clear that if he continued to play by the rules of the game, which were being defined by Gorbachov and the ruling triad, his demise was assured. Yeltsin's rise to the level of power he has attained was only possible under conditions of mass ferment. His staying in power requires a new round of mass ferment.

Yeltsin thus must take to the streets, a risky gamble, but, given the weakness of his forces, it is his only weapon. The weaknesses in the Yeltsin camp were admitted by Yeltsin himself in his March 9 Radio Rossiya address: "We've wasted many months. It is time to go on the attack. Democracy is in danger. March will be decisive. Either the democrats will be strangled or they will not only survive but will win this year."

Yeltsin also admitted that his attack had to begin now as the only way of changing domestic political momentum before March 28, when a critical special session of the Russian Federation Congress of People's Deputies convenes. Its agenda will include a motion of no confidence against Yeltsin, where the vote could go either way. Last June, Yeltsin was elected Russia's President on the second ballot, by a narrow margin supplied to him by Gorbachov. He has never had a parliamentary majority of his supporters. In his Radio Rossiya address, Yeltsin also admitted that the timing of his all-out attack was not of his own choosing but forced on him, when he told the forces of Democratic Russia and allied movements to stop being disorganized and fragmented. "Only an organized movement can help us at this crucial stage," he warned.