

## Yugoslavia

# IMF and Russian wolves on the prowl

by Konstantin George

A crisis is now wracking the largest of the Balkan States, Yugoslavia, which is close to being dismembered into a half dozen or more feuding ethnic entities. As in the past, so once again, the Balkan tinderbox is threatening the world with a strategic crisis of potentially catastrophic dimensions.

The root blame for the real danger of a Yugoslav breakup lies with the austerity policies dictated to the country by the International Monetary Fund and policed by Western private and government creditors. These austerity policies have broken the back of the national economy. The ensuing economic devastation has made many citizens pliable material for the machinations of those forces internally and abroad who wish to dismantle Yugoslavia.

During 1984, the already precarious Yugoslav economy collapsed. Inflation is the highest in Europe with an official 57% annual rate—unofficially and realistically at 100%. Officially registered unemployment has risen to 1 million, with youth unemployment now at 14%. The crucial industrial-investment indicator has fallen a staggering 10%, and living standards by 9.3%. An enormous black market and flourishing smuggling trade from Austria and Trieste has arisen, thriving on the scarcity of basic commodities like coffee and household detergent.

On Oct. 22, an article by leading economist Zoran Pjanic in *Ekonomiska Politika* bluntly warned that if the economic situation continues to worsen, "serious social unrest might result." On Nov. 14, Prof. Stipe Suvar, the Minister of Education of Croatia, one of the six republics, expressed alarm at how prevalent the view has become within Yugoslavia that "society has collapsed," the country has been "feudalized and the party federalized. . . . The republics and provinces are headed by ethnic and bureaucratic oligarchies who are destroying Yugoslavia."

A West German source with many years experience in Yugoslavia recently said: "The economic reform program was a total failure. Politically, there is not one party, but eight parties [one for each of the six ethnic republics and two ethnic autonomous regions] whose representatives at the federal level no longer dare to make any concessions to one another. In this sense, Yugoslavia is no longer a nation. Each leader represents the position of his native republic. In Belgrade itself, they are worried whether the country will survive."

Wounded Yugoslavia is being avidly eyed by neighboring predator states: Soviet Balkan proxy Bulgaria and Stalinist Albania, with respectively "Greater Bulgaria" and "Greater Albania" expansionist pretensions. Bulgaria claims the Yugoslav southernmost Republic of Macedonia, while Albania claims the ethnic-Albanian-inhabited Kosovo autonomous region of the Serbian Republic bordering on Albania. In Kosovo, the scene of Albanian-separatist terrorism over the past four years, the situation has recently worsened. The Christian Serbian minority there has been fleeing en masse, emigration that began after the first riots erupted in 1981. The regional capital of Pristina, formerly with 30% Serbian inhabitants, is now perhaps as low as 10% Serbian.

Albanian and Bulgarian territorial claims on Yugoslavia have been painstakingly documented by the Yugoslavs, most recently in a document by Tanjug, the Yugoslav news agency, "The Anti-Yugoslav Pretensions of Enver Hoxha"—Albania's Stalinist Party head—and a document by the Belgrade publishing house Narodna Kniga, "Contemporary Aspects of Greater Bulgarian Nationalism."

The strategic backdrop to this Balkan tinpot expansionism is its promotion by the Kremlin leadership. The Soviets are engaged in a rapprochement with Albania in the context of a massive Stalin revival in the U.S.S.R. itself. Both campaigns have direct, complementary, and threatening implications for Yugoslavia (see *EIR*, Dec. 25: "The Imperial Policy of Patriarch Pimen"). The Soviets' wooing of Stalinist Albania is an extension of a Yuri Andropov policy, first signaled in *Pravda* on Nov. 29, 1982: "The Soviet Union . . . has repeatedly reaffirmed its readiness to restore normal relations with Albania."

The "Bulgarian Connection" in this Soviet drive was overtly proclaimed by the Politburo's reputed "Crown Prince," Mikhail Gorbachov, on Sept. 8 during a visit to Bulgaria: "Our country favors normalization of relations with the People's Socialist Republic of Albania. With good will on both sides, this issue can be resolved. . . ."

The other "Bulgarian Connection" is with Albania. The "share the spoils" alliance between the Bulgarian wolf and the Albanian vulture is signified by the curious fact that, although Albania officially left the Warsaw Pact in 1968, seven years after the rupture with Moscow, it also annulled all other treaties with Soviet bloc members except one. Albania retains its December 1947 treaty of "mutual friendship, cooperation and aid" with Bulgaria.

The Belgrade daily *Vecernje Novosti* ran a commentary on the Bulgarian-Albanian alliance, reprinted in the Pristina daily *Rilindja* on Nov. 7: "It is . . . no accident that Bulgaria is the only country with which Albania has not annulled such a treaty. . . . Sofia is surely giving the wink to Tirana that it is bound by the stipulations of a treaty that calls for a unified attitude and behavior toward the 'common enemy.'"

This mixture of Balkan expansionist aspirations and empire games, be they Russian, British, or Hapsburg, can lead to big explosions.