

## Yugoslavia on brink of partition or coup

by Konstantin George

The final split of Yugoslavia along East-West lines—Serbia pitted against Slovenia and Croatia—has been confirmed by the speeches and outcome of the raucous three-day Yugoslav Central Committee Plenum, Jan. 30-Feb. 1. A showdown has now begun between Serbian party leader Milosevic and the Serbian-run military, versus federal party head Stipe Suvar, a Croat, and the Croatian and Slovenian leaderships. In the not-too-far future, Yugoslavia will either experience a military coup, or fragment along ethnic lines, with Croatia and Slovenia breaking from a Milosevic-led Greater Serbia, composed of Serbia, Montenegro, and Macedonia.

The CC Plénum, while *formally* rejecting Serbia's demand to remove Suvar as federal party head, and for an extraordinary Party Congress in 1989 to elect a new federal party leadership, submitted de facto to the Serbian ultimatum by voting to anticipate the next regular party congress from 1991 to 1989. Croatia and Slovenia have retreated to the fallback position of trying to stall this extraordinary congress until the second half of this year. By that time, at the latest, Milosevic will push to conclude his power play, and move to dump Suvar and all remaining

Milosevic opponents from the federal party Presidium. The showdown may come much sooner.

### Military coup threat

Suvar's opening speech to the Plenum underscored the total division of the country, with a dramatic warning that Yugoslavia "is on the verge of fratricidal war." He declared that Yugoslavia faces two alternatives—that of "democratic pluralism," or, referring to Milosevic and the Serbian leadership, "neo-Stalinism."

No sooner was Suvar seated, when the armed forces' political chief, Admiral Petar Simic, a Serb, spoke, issuing a blunt warning that a military coup is not far off. Simic announced that "from now on, the army will play a more active role" in putting an end to "ethnic conflicts" between the individual republics, and then, dropped a bombshell: "That which is now being called the 'Battle for Yugoslavia' will not be carried out without the Yugoslav Army," because "the situation in the country is fast reaching a crisis point" where "the party is losing battle after battle." Simic flatly declared that the country's "political system" is "dissolving."

The coup threat was repeated by Serbian leader Slobodan Milosevic in different terms. Restating the demand that his foes be expelled from the key ruling institution, the federal party presidium, he thundered: "If the institutions cannot be changed through the institutions, then they must be changed from outside the institutions."

Even before the Plenum began, political leaders in Western Europe and Great Britain were privately discussing the "inevitability" of "the military solution" being exercised in Yugoslavia this year. Talk of a coming mili-

consider it a strategic weapon to [attain] their goals."

What *El Periodista* finds most disconcerting is the document's assertion that "the intervention of the Armed Forces in this context is considered necessary, given that the increase in drug trafficking surpasses individual action." The magazine's editors, in the Jan. 19 issue, expressed outrage that the military document categorizes "Solidarity Organizations," that is, "human rights" groups such as the MTP or the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo, as mere front groups for terrorism.

Immediately after the La Tablada incident, Peronist presidential hopeful Carlos Menem shocked the political establishment when he stated that possible involvement by government or Radical Party officials in the incident should be the focus of a thorough inquiry. Peronists more closely linked to the international social democracy, such as Buenos Aires governor Antonio Cafiero, have toned down Menem's statement somewhat; but it caused a great deal of discomfort among government circles who may have something to hide.

It is no secret that members of the Radical Party's left-wing faction grouped in what is called the *Coordinadora*, sympathize with Argentina's human rights lobby, and have hobnobbed with members of the MTP. Alfonsín himself didn't hesitate to echo the MTP's attacks on Seineldín. Interior Minister Enrique Nosiglia, one of the *Coordinadora*'s visible leaders, has been called before Congress for questioning on the government's handling of the La Tablada incident. Carlos Becerra, secretary to the presidency, and UCR deputy Marcelo Stubrin, are other members of the *Coordinadora* whose sympathies with the MTP make them suspect.

To take the heat off somewhat, Alfonsín ordered the creation of a National Security Council, and announced that the new body would advise the government on antisubversive policy. However, although the council includes the heads of the army, navy, and air force, it reportedly can only deploy state security, not military forces, in the fight against subversion, a fact which considerably weakens it. The fact that

tary coup in Yugoslavia dominated the private group discussions held by Western European parliamentarians, both conservative and socialist, in the corridors between the sessions of the annual military-strategic Wehrkunde Conference in Munich, Germany, the weekend of Jan. 28-29. A high-ranking West German Defense Ministry official said that the Yugoslav crisis "documents the total collapse of the socialist economic and social system," with "destabilizing repercussions throughout Europe." A senior British NATO official stressed the danger of a "disintegrating Yugoslavia," where Moscow could "gain control of the strategically crucial shore of the Adriatic Sea."

That very weekend, a stream of emergency visits to Yugoslavia occurred, including the foreign minister of Italy, Yugoslavia's neighbor across the Adriatic, Giulio Andreotti, and the leading member of the German Social Democracy's Executive, Horst Ehmke. Ehmke's agenda included talks with Serbian leader Milosevic and with Yugoslavia's Defense Minister, Kadijevic.

The alarm bells about a coup began sounding in Western Europe two weeks earlier, after the Zagreb (Croatia) weekly, *Danas*, a popular, wide-circulation mouthpiece for both Suvar and the Croatian party leadership, warned that a Serbian military coup is in the wings. *Danas* declared that the current Yugoslav situation can be compared to "the last four months of 1981 in Poland," referring to the period that led to the Jaruzelski coup and proclamation of martial law in December 1981. *Danas* posed the question: "Will there be a Mr. Wojciech [Jaruzelski] for Yugoslavia?"

Propelling the crisis forward at ever greater speed is the nightmarish economic crisis. Yugoslavia, through years

of capitulation to International Monetary Fund conditions, has been destroyed by Great Depression levels of mass unemployment, combined with a hyperinflation not seen in Europe since Weimar Germany, driving living standards and food consumption down to dismal postwar levels. In the last 10 days of January, food prices for eggs, milk, and dairy products, all cheap cuts of meat and sausage, as well as the most basic staples like beans and cabbage, shot up by 140%, and from November to Feb. 1 the same categories just listed have skyrocketed by 700%. For the first time since the war, bean and cabbage consumption is being rationed by families, who are surviving on jarred and pickled cabbage, stored from previous years.

In this misery, the demagoguery of Milosevic has had an easy time in organizing Serbian nationalist passions for his power play. Last fall's mass Serbian demonstrations that led to the removal of the anti-Milosevic party leaderships in the regions of Kosovo and the Vojvodina, and the republic of Montenegro, were only a foretaste. The next round will be a full-scale Serb versus Croat collision; mass demonstrations are being planned by the large Serbian minorities in Bosnia and Croatia. The campaign for this was launched by the Serbian media shortly before the Plenum, charging that the 600,000 Serbs in Croatia had more rights under Austro-Hungarian rule before 1918, than they do nowadays. The campaign is coupled with the demand that not only Suvar must go, but the Croatian party leadership as well. Given the wartime slaughter of Serbs by the Croatian Ustashi puppet regime, once a full-scale Serb versus Croat confrontation begins, as it is now set to, this dynamic alone guarantees the opening of the final act in the unstoppable disintegration of Yugoslavia.

Interior Minister Nosiglia presides over the body does not augur well for its performance.

Argentina's social-democratic backers aren't pleased that the army's quick repression of the terrorists has earned it new popular respect. On Jan. 27, the *Miami Herald* apologized for the subversives, editorializing that "anyone who has been following developments in Argentina knows that the real threat to democracy there comes not from an insignificant left-wing fringe group made up of holdovers from the 1970s, but from the army."

Statements from the terrorists themselves belie this fantasy. On Feb. 1, the Uruguayan daily *La República* provided extensive front-page coverage on "survivors" of La Tablada, now said to be holed up in Montevideo. Reportedly linked to the Uruguayan terrorist group Tupamaros, *La República* published a communiqué of the People's Resistance Front, which issues a "challenge to the government and the armed forces" of Argentina, warning that it would make the army "pay" for

the death of MTP lawyer Jorge Baños.

The La Tablada "survivors' " choice of Montevideo as a base is understandable. Great Britain literally "created" Uruguay in 1828, by splitting a province off from Argentina. Montevideo had been a center for British contraband and other illicit operations along the Paraná and Uruguay rivers for years before Argentina's independence. After that date, the British ensured Uruguay's creation so as to guarantee their continued dominance in the Rio de la Plata basin.

Montevideo has also been a Freemasonic stronghold for over 200 years, serving as host to an assortment of theosophist, anthroposophist, and esoteric cults which then found their way into Argentina. In fact, practically every coup and destabilization operation launched against Argentina in the last 150 years, has had Montevideo as its base of operations. Uruguayan President Julio Maria Sanguinetti, a top-level Mason who delights in attacking the Catholic Church, presides over this "nation."