

## Analyst echoes LaRouche caution about Russia

by William Jones

The first clear public warnings about the possible fall of Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachov and the burgeoning civil war in the Soviet Union, outside of forecasts earlier by U.S. statesman and political economist Lyndon H. LaRouche, were sounded by Peter Reddaway, a professor of political science and international affairs at George Washington University in Washington, D.C., at a seminar at the National Press Club on Nov. 28., and in the Outlook section of the *Washington Post* on Nov. 26, in an article entitled "Life After Gorbachov: The Soviets' Grim Future."

Reddaway, who has many personal contacts in the Soviet Union, notes how, during Gorbachov's *perestroika*, "massive social confusion, disorder and economic decline have set in." He depicts the Soviet Union today as "a country drifting toward anarchy." Noting that although Gorbachov is at the center of power "at least for the next few months or even years," his "real as opposed to formal authority is sinking." "The immediate prospects are grim," writes Reddaway, "and the long-term prospects are even grimmer." He calls the coming months the "winter of popular discontent," a phrase that echoes LaRouche's September 1988 nationwide presidential campaign broadcast on the Soviet bloc food crisis, entitled "The Winter of Our Discontent."

Reddaway observed that already in October, Gorbachov was privately warning the United States "that he may be obliged to take steps that seem inconsistent with his goal of democratizing Soviet society." One of the probable goals for Gorbachov at the Malta summit, Reddaway notes, is "gaining a nod of toleration from Bush." He advises Bush that he "would be very foolish if he accepted that offer," noting the danger of Bush identifying himself with Gorbachov's falling star. Other signs of a coming crackdown which Reddaway points to are Gorbachov's attempt to gain extraordinary powers, and his "hectoring the liberal editors and intellectuals for two hours on Oct. 13."

Gorbachov "might remove a few liberal editors, or close down a publication or two or break a strike or an important demonstration with violence and arrests. . . . He might seek special powers from the Supreme Soviet and declare a state of emergency in more areas than the presently affected Armenia, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan and Moldavia." As an "extreme

step," said Reddaway, "he could postpone some or all of the approaching local and republican elections."

At the National Press Club, Reddaway focused on these elections. He said that there has been a "draining of authority" away from the central and local governments to the popularly elected councils and to the workers' committees, and that the elections during the next three or four months might see the emergence of a variety of populists, like Boris Yeltsin. "If radical populist leaders like Yeltsin were to achieve a national following, a conservative counterrevolution could, given the political divisions in the military, lead to civil war."

Reddaway discounted a near-term conservative backlash, as he sees no alternative leader and no coherent conservative program yet in sight, but nevertheless admits that "a continuing degradation of the Soviet situation could well help both arise." Such a program, he believes, would "meld socialism and Russian nationalism and call for restoring order through tough measures, saving the territorial integrity of as much of the Soviet Union as possible, giving the land to the peasants, restoring the pre-1988 system in industry and sharply tightening political and social controls."

Assuming a development where the Russians ended up with a somewhat reduced empire, Reddaway points out the danger of a "nationalist reaction due to the loss of empire, national humiliation and continuing relative poverty," comparing it to the rise of fascism in Germany under similar conditions during the 1930s.

### Wishful thinking

But Reddaway's analysis also rests on some wishful thinking with regard to the nature of a crackdown. At the Nov. 28 seminar he insisted that there was "no consensus" for a crackdown in Eastern Europe, and that the Soviet military had declared that, after the Georgia crackdown, they would not allow themselves to be used to crush rebellion. He also said he believed the Soviets would be too "obsessed with internal problems" to be concerned with Eastern Europe.

It is a rather daring hypothesis to believe that a conservative leadership would be concerned with revolt in Tashkent, but not in Prague, considering the sacrifices made by the Red Army to win these areas to the Empire. The Soviet troops in those areas—and there is no indication they will be removed—would not encounter major logistical problems in restoring order. To assume that Moscow would accept partial dismemberment of one part of the Empire while clamping down in another, grossly underestimates the political volatility of the situation in the entire East bloc as the floodgates of reaction are opened. Reddaway's claim that a more xenophobic, albeit weakened, Soviet Union would represent no major danger to the United States, and his hope that a post-Gorbachov conservative regime would "evolve towards more democratic rule later in the decade," gives Professor Reddaway's otherwise sharp-sighted analysis a "utopian" tinge, bordering on folly.