

## Report from Paris by Claude Albert

### Soviets to face LaRouche in court

*In the suit filed by the American presidential candidate and the European Labor Party for New Times's defamatory article.*

**I**n a surprise move, Soviet authorities, sued before French justice by Lyndon LaRouche and the European Labor Party in France, the Parti Ouvrier Européen (POE), have answered the complaint and taken the main lawyer of the French Communist Party (PCF), Joe Nordmann, as their counsel. Usually the Soviets, when sued here, have the habit of "slipping away" and presenting no legal defense—provided, however, that the relevant subpoenas against them, delivered via somewhat whimsical diplomatic channels, ever reach them at all.

In this case, the diligence of the Quay d'Orsay (French foreign ministry) is as noteworthy as the Soviet reaction, and the prospect of a public debate between the LaRouche party and the Soviet one.

LaRouche and the POE filed a civil suit for defamation before the Paris Court after the publication last September in the French edition of the Soviet weekly *New Times* (published in nine languages) of a violent five-page slander titled "Neo-Nazis Without Swastika." Among other authors, Ernst Henry, alias Semyon Rostovsky, a longstanding KGB expert, described the POE as a tool of the CIA for "subversive and terrorist operations" and paralleled the LaRouche-associated movement in Europe to the "Nazi party": Same "financial contributions from millionaires," same "anti-Soviet, anti-democratic and racist policy," said Henry, but the POE is "even more dangerous than the Nazis with swastika" and is "capable of being used for the assassination of progressive

personalities" such as the late Swedish premier Olof Palme.

The nine individuals and legal entities subpoenaed by LaRouche and his associates include, besides Henry, the co-authors of the slander, L. Bezymenski and K. Issakov; the two main editors of *New Times*, V. Ignatenko and L. Bytchkova; and Trud publications in Moscow. In the event the main defendants had chosen not to answer, writs were also issued against subsidiary entities such as the Aeroflot company in France and the two bookstores distributing the weekly in this country, since press distributors are accountable before the law here when the primary defendants do not show up in court.

In the legal briefs they have submitted, these subsidiary parties have adopted a curious line. The counsel of Aeroflot, the official lawyer of the Soviet embassy in Paris, argued that since Air France transports part of the freight between the Soviet Union and France, Aeroflot cannot be held responsible, even though, as is printed in every issue of the weekly, "Aeroflot transports *New Times* to all the countries in the world."

One of the two news agents claims it has been carrying only one copy of *New Times* every week, "for consultation purposes rather than sale." This store has discontinued the sale of even that single copy: "It is too political," the manager explains. As for the other bookstore, the main distributor of Soviet publications in France, their counsel, also the Communist Party's Joe Nordmann, is pleading for dis-

missal of the case against them now that the *New Times* journalists and editors have answered the complaint. The latter's legal argument is due at the end of April.

While *New Times* has become a hot potato for some in Paris, it is not yet clear why the Soviets have chosen to appear. Their intention should become clearer by June 3, when the hearing takes place before the First Court of the Paris Tribunal. No doubt the case has aroused interest in French diplomatic spheres: In 1984, the POE effort in favor of the Strategic Defense Initiative, its launching of the "France and Its Army" committee to rally French military layers to President Reagan's side, had met hostility from pacifist muddleheads of the foreign ministry. A document describing the POE as KGB-manipulated was circulated by some services of the Quay d'Orsay. Today's pro-SDI Chirac government might have had something to do with the proper delivery of the LaRouche writs in Moscow, and the subsequent blow to such disinformation against the POE.

*New Times'* lies of last September against LaRouche and his movement, the type of defamation French law treats very harshly, have been aggravated by yet another serious slander which appeared in the first March issue of the Soviet weekly: Returning to the topic of the investigation of the Palme murder, *New Times* mentions the POE "among the possible authors of the crime," next to "isolated fanatics" and "different terrorist grouplets." Such absurd charges were funneled by the Soviets to Swedish press conduits after the murder of Olof Palme and used to feed an international campaign against LaRouche's movement. Several suits have been filed here by the POE against press organs which took up the slander. Judgments are pending.