

# Is KGB sabotaging French nuclear?

by Laurent Rosenfeld

In a matter of just a few days or weeks, both the French and international press have reported with banner headlines several incidents which have plagued various utilities of the French civilian electronuclear program. Most of these so-called nuclear accidents were of "the monkey wrench falling on the ingrown toe nail of the clumsy worker's foot" type, with the added flavor, of course, that they took place in a nuclear power plant—in other words were pure media hype for non-events.

There were, however, three incidents perhaps worth reporting down the 27th page of the local papers: A minor non-radioactive steam leak in the second unit of the Tricastin power plant, another non-radioactive steam leak in the second unit of Fessenheim, and the loss of a few pounds of uranium hexafluoride, a gaseous compound of natural uranium, used in the gas diffusion enrichment plant of Pierrelatte, which caused minor inconvenience for a few workers, not so much because of the very weak radioactivity of the hexafluoride, but simply because of its chemical toxicity.

All these incidents would have passed unnoticed if it were not for another incident, itself raising absolutely no danger to safety, but which took on importance because it happened in the largest fast breeder in the world, the 1200 MWe Superphénix reactor of Creys-Malville. There, about 20 tons of melted sodium leaked out of the barrel, i.e., a lock-chamber in the secondary coolant loop through which the fuel elements can be introduced into or removed from the reactor itself. The spilled sodium was not radioactive, and is contained in an armored vessel under an inert atmosphere. Clearly, safety is not impaired by this technical failure, which did not even force the utility to stop the reactor, but fixing the problem may turn out to be quite costly.

## Chernobyl anniversary

In fact, the most remarkable feature of all these unprecedented incidents and the other non-events is that they all came a few weeks before the first anniversary of the accident of the Ukrainian Chernobyl plant, which the environmentalist movements in Western Europe intended to use as a mobilization argument to support their campaign, not against the Russian nuclear program, but against nuclear power in

the West. The time coincidences in these incidents raise the question of sabotage.

According to intelligence and anti-terrorist specialists from several NATO countries and from Switzerland, Moscow has decided to launch a new form of insurgency in Western Europe: environmental sabotage. Indeed, several European countries, especially Britain and France, having shown clear hostility toward Gorbachov's "zero option" serial-manufactured "offers," the KGB and other Eastern intelligence services have decided to whip up the ecology and peace movement and to entertain the confusion between nuclear weapons and nuclear power to arouse the population against "nukes."

Less than a month ago, attendees at a strange conference of the Cini Foundation in Venice came to the conclusion that France was going to be the prime target of "nuclear terrorism."

## Possible industrial sabotage

The first case of possible sabotage was the fire at the Sandoz chemical factory in Basel last fall, which caused considerable pollution of the Rhine river. Some intelligence specialists believe that it could well have been sabotage aimed at stirring up part of the European population against the Swiss chemical industry—an act which could jeopardize an effective civil defense program against chemical and bacteriological weapons. At the time when the Sandoz fire had whipped up much hysteria in the media, there were several instances of "greenies" voluntarily pouring poisonous substances into the Rhine in order to better stimulate panic!

The second element is the revelations of Werner Stiller, a high-ranking East German officer who defected to the West. He reported that the East German secret service, the Stasi, had commissioned some of its agents to spill small quantities of radioactive materials in the vicinity of Western nuclear facilities, to set off the radioactivity control instruments and thus whip up the West German and other West European "Greens."

Let us be clear. We have currently no hard evidence of sabotage in the Superphénix or other French incidents. But two things are known: 1) The Soviets have decided to sabotage the French nuclear program in order to better jeopardize the pro-nuclear weapons consensus of the French political scene; 2) the French counterintelligence agency, the DST, has just revealed that at least 244 French companies—including 10 in the energy sector—were infiltrated by Eastern secret services. Moreover, several Soviet spies were recently unmasked around the Ariane rocket program, just a few months after the partly unexplained failure of a launch.

Former French Defense Minister Charles Hernu, who is no doubt well-informed on these matters, recently stated the point: "It is certain that we will be subjected to pressures [from the Soviets]. France is going to be the point of convergence for the efforts of all the so-called 'pacifists,' anti-militarists, and anti-security elements. This could even lay us open to terrorist actions."