

Report from Paris by EIR's Paris Bureau

Who's afraid of the POE?

A frantic media "scandal" campaign is backfiring against the opponents of Lyndon LaRouche, inside France and abroad.

Total war has broken out in France around an absurd attempt to discredit the European Labor Party (POE), a party close to the ideas of U.S. presidential candidate Lyndon LaRouche, in the campaign for the coming cantonal elections. The elections are for just over 2,000 seats in the General Councils, the assemblies of the departments. Departments are administrative subdivisions roughly equivalent to U.S. states, but much smaller.

The POE is running 177 candidates, more than any of the other "small parties," defined as those which have so far no seat in the National Assembly, because of a proportional electoral system designed to block the proliferation of political parties.

In national elections last June, the POE surprised political observers by running enough candidates to become the only small party to qualify for national TV and radio time. This time again, the number of candidates on the POE slates has created quite a stir. In one place at least, the surprise has been a rude one for the powers-that-be: In the Rhône department, the region around the city of Lyons, the POE has filed a slate of candidates for all 25 seats. Lyons, the third largest city in France, is a power base for some of the top honchos of the French political stage, including former Premier Raymond Barre, the heavyweight Trilateral Commission member in France.

The POE put out a pamphlet called "Barre Under Influence," which details not only his Trilateral connections, but his close links with the financial circles that hope to set up a

financial dictatorship over the European Community of non-sovereign nations through the Single Europe Act of 1992, a law that would deregulate Europe's financial, credit, and money markets. Lyons is also where Lyndon LaRouche spoke to a conference on radio-frequency weapons in July, which got very positive press coverage.

The news of the full POE slate touched off a bombshell in the old silk-industry city, and a barrage of harassment started against every candidate running under the POE flag. First the Renseignements Généraux (police), then the local press (self-appointed as another form of police) started calling the candidates, asking them, "Do you really know with whom you are running?" "Don't you think you have been defrauded of your signature?" "Why don't you sue the POE?" One candidate received six such phone calls from different media within a few hours!

The Lyons edition of the right-wing daily *Le Figaro* dated Sept. 8 reported that "dirty tongues" say that some of the candidates in the list had learned through the prefecture and through the press that they were candidates! The next day, a big article in the Lyons edition of the left-wing daily *Libération* came out with the line that the POE had people sign anti-drug and anti-AIDS petitions, which then became acts of candidacies, a truly incredible assertion, given the complicated procedures to be a candidate, which include filling out five different forms.

The next day a local daily, *Le*

Progrès de Lyon, ran front-page headlines exposing "Ten Retired People on the POE Slate." Inside, a half-page article, entitled "The Grandpa Boom," asserted that the POE abused old people and manipulated them to sign. The ten "oldsters" boil down to three people interviewed, two of whom never said such things and a third who is 42 years old!

The affair went on to prime-time national news on every major radio and TV channel, and articles in nearly every national daily. POE leader in Lyons Karel Vereycken used the storm to blast Raymond Barre and Interior Minister Pierre Joxe for running a political vendetta against the POE for publishing the Raymond Barre report. These are the same networks in France as those who in the U.S. are running Michael Dukakis: the Trilateral Commission, he said.

On Sept. 13, POE national secretary general Jacques Cheminade drew journalists of the main national newspapers to a press conference in Paris. "Don't worry," Cheminade quipped, "I will not tell you that I signed a petition 15 years ago and became secretary general of the POE against my will." He then explained in detail how absurd the allegations of the press are. What people signed in several copies are clearly and unmistakably statements of candidacy, and not petitions.

Raymond Barre is very angry to see a full slate of the POE in his department, Cheminade explained, and so are Interior Minister Pierre Joxe's pro-Soviet networks—especially after LaRouche's conference on radio-frequency weapons in Lyons. The reason for these attacks, he went on, is that the financial circles who want to use "Europe 1992" for establishing their dictatorship over the economy, don't like the POE's campaign against their supranational gameplans.