

Report from Paris by Joëlle Leconte

Who's behind the steel shutdown?

The "technetronic" fanatics from the Club of Rome have recruited Mitterrand.

At the beginning of April, after returning from the United States, President François Mitterrand decided to impose a drastic austerity policy.

The first step was the Steel Plan adopted by the government, which means 35,000 jobs lost in French steel industries by 1987 and the death of the Lorraine region, with 25,000 jobs lost in the steel plants alone, not to mention the fact that three other jobs are eliminated for each steel job that disappears. Mitterrand called these shutdowns a necessary evil, a preparatory "restructuring" for the age of computers and technetronics.

The background: in the United States, a "pedagogical" visit was organized for Mitterrand to California's Silicon Valley, Stanford University, and the University of California at Berkeley, and also to Pennsylvania—notably the Carnegie-Mellon University in Pittsburgh, which has so much experience in the "reconversion" of the Pittsburgh steel industry to the post-industrial society.

This tour was arranged by some of Mitterrand's close friends, "technetronic" fanatics very close to the Club of Rome: special presidential adviser Jacques Attali; Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber, the former chief of the weekly *L'Express*, and now head of the Paris Centre Mondial de l'Informatique; and international lawyer Samuel Pissar.

The Carnegie-Mellon Institute works with the Centre Mondial de l'Informatique in Paris on plans for

social control of the dismantling of the Lorraine industrial region. Indeed, the Centre's scientific director is Raj Reddy, the chairman of Carnegie-Mellon University. The Centre was created in November 1981 by Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber with the support of Mitterrand and Attali; in 1982, it received 35 million francs from the state. The Centre trains a little group of students and unemployed workers in the use of technetronic technology and studies the "social impact" of such technology.

Last summer, the mayor of Marseille, Gaston Defferre, attended a seminar at the Carnegie-Mellon Institute with a delegation of "urban experts." The veteran Socialist mobster Defferre's reaction is not known, but the group came back with a project of technetronic conversion for the Marseille region, a project in which the Centre has its fingers.

All these plans enjoy the patronage of the powerful chief executive of Schlumberger Ltd., Jean Riboud. Riboud had been a stockholder in Servan-Schreiber's weekly *L'Express*, which has played an important role in promoting the Club of Rome's post-industrial society for more than 20 years. It was he and his friend Lazard Frères banker Felix Rohatyn who presented Jacques Attali to François Mitterrand in the 1970s. Riboud himself has dinner with the President once or twice a month and advises him on economics.

And the counsel of Riboud and Rohatyn—the latter has been appoint-

ed a "consultant" to the Elysée Palace—has more and more weight because the two are in charge of negotiating international loans to the French government, and thus will determine whether the Socialists are bailed out or not.

Jean Riboud's financial connections go further than the New York banks. As a *comi fidei* of the Swiss Schlumberger family, he is an intermediary for the Swiss financial market. France, with an officially reckoned \$50 billion in foreign debt, needs to raise loans to pay the debt service (according to *Fortune* magazine, the real foreign debt may be more than double that).

Riboud's condition for raising new loans is harsh austerity, incurring unemployment in the range of 2.75 million by the end of the year. To make this acceptable to the population, the New Left, otherwise named the Christian Left, will deploy with all the social control schemes it has received through Jesuit and Club of Rome channels, from the "quality of life" to the "right to more leisure time."

The man the government has placed in charge of transforming the Lorraine steel center into a technetronic wasteland is Jacques Chereque, the second in command at the left-Christian CFDT union federation. Finance Minister Jacques Delors, the International Monetary Fund's man in the cabinet, was trained for years in the CFDT. The industry-wrecking effort is also mobilizing the Socialist faction of New York Council on Foreign Relations pet Michel Rocard, and the circles around the fascist-founded Futuribles group, whose treasurer was previously Jean Riboud. Then there is the Fondation Saint-Simon, where one finds Riboud's brother Antoine, as well as the people who prepared actor Yves Montand's recent show touting the advantage of the economic depression.