abounds in old, derelict, abandoned plants and mills. In the valley of the Fensch river, the earliest center of France's steel industry, steel town Hayange proclaims to the visitor that it is "the cradle of Lorraine steel"; the sign has a black crepe on it. Painted inscriptions one meter high claim: "Lorraine will live!" But the coal conveyor overhead which passes above the fields in the country is still.

Houses are poor in the villages. Most were built around the turn of the century. Fields are cultivated, cows grazing; at the next turn of the road, you see a two-mile long steel mill, and the yellow dust of iron ore. Steel has been everything here since the late 1700s, when the first rudimentary wood-fired furnaces were built. Longwy, the ancient Gallo-Roman town of Longovia, is surmounted by a 100-meter high hill of ore rock. Grey dust covers everything around. The huge Usinor plant stretches two miles, and workers' houses are at a stone's throw from the mill. Talking with Dr. Delivré at the unprepossessing medical center of Usinor—one of the two loss-making steel giants of France—the problem becomes obvious: The region is in peril of dying pure and simple, and its people too.

For now, there are surprisingly few banners in the streets and posters on the walls. Does this indicate demoralization and resignation on the part of the population? It may. Tomorrow, Industry Minister Laurent Fabius comes to Lorraine—at a respectful distance from the steel centers, though, a courageous man, not a rash one. Anger exploded a few weeks ago, and a violent rampage ensued all over the region. The Communists, the radical CFDT (Confederation francaise et democratique du travail) labor union, and terrorist commandos working closely with some leaders of the latter, might well use the population's seething rage for their own purposes.

Still, the two huge cooling towers of the nearby nuclear power plant at Chooz indicate that another path is possible: a vast plan to modernize and re-equip the mills, reopen them, and churn out the product for Third World development. Such a plan would revive the whole area and its population, and give it a new sense of hope and purpose. That is what is at stake in the current steel crisis.

Interview: Jacques Delivré, M.D.

'An epidemic of moral old age'

Jacques Delivré, M.D., chief of the medical center at the Usinor mill in Longwy, Lorraine, chairs the medical commission of the French steel industry and the medical commission of the Usinor company as a whole. He is vice-president of the Institute for Labor Medicine and Ergonomics at Nancy, and a reserve colonel in the French Army. He recently received the Camille Simonin Award of the Strasbourg medical society for his "contribution to the advancement of industrial medicine and hygiene." The interview was conducted in Longwy on April 25 by Laurent Murawiec and Claude Albert.

EIR: What happened in the Lorraine steel industry?

Delivré: What happened in the Pays Haut [this area of Lorraine] is that we manufactured steel, we manufactured rolled products which the whole world needed. The Pays Haut is something apart. In 1870, Bismarck, after our defeat in the Franco-Prussian War, could not annex it, nor could Prussia grab the steel complex. There has been steel here for a long time! It started in the late 1700s. . . . France and the world needed steel. The Pays Haut was essentially agricultural. But some clever fellows discovered the ground, and the underground, with the iron ore, and there was water. The hills are woody and the blast furnaces were built.

Then people were needed to work here. . . . In 1976, when I came here, there were 25 nations represented. The Italians arrived, and, from 1900, they settled for good. Since then, Portuguese, Yugoslav, Turkish, and Maghreb workers came with their families. And there was no racism because the mill was their second christening.

Steel is being cut back, like milk . . . and the day after, TV shows us kids in Africa suffering from malnutrition, beriberi. Why don't we sell the damn milk, why don't we give it out?

EIR: So, what is the problem, in your view?

Delivré: The problem is whether the economy is really still appropriate. People defend their mill because it is as a moral life to them, a cultural life. It is the wealth of the country. If he does not study at the university, a child will go to the steel mill. Your house, your friends, your associations, your religion, I was about to say, well, that's the mill. Lose the mill, lose your life. . . . It is not just something material. . . . It is not that I disparage things material, far from that. But things social are not, as was thought in the 19th century, something for charity and assistance. Then, you were born under a good or a bad star, you had to work to eke out a living—and retirement was the antechamber of disability. This conception of labor is entirely obsolete.

The great tragedy is that in the name of profitability, men are being destroyed. Look, we need modern technologies, we need automation, we need robotization. A machine will do the work of 100 men. Computers will help. But I *need men*. And our society is *eliminating* people. . . . You need men when you modernize. Qualities are here which you did not need before. A major mistake is being committed: happiness is not being like a fetus, shrinking into the safe and inglorious life of intra-uterine comfort. You cannot make the world go away.

EIR: Why is there a crisis?
Delivré: I am no economist, no specialist, no expert. But I know that 15 years ago the steel industry should have regrouped itself, concentrated. New measures should have been taken which did not counterpose technology to social requirements, did not modernize at the expense of people. . . .

EIR: That's what the Japanese have done: they have invested in frontier technologies, expanded as a result, and they don't have the mess we've got. . . .
Delivré: Exactly! Social requirements do not go against technological ones. The more I modernize, the more I need people. Even the unskilled worker first and foremost acts through his brain. But disrespect for this idea has meant that there was no restructuring of the industry 20 years ago.

EIR: How are people affected?
Delivré: Let us examine what labor is, from the standpoint of the most advanced neurobiological research. The snake and our ancestors both had a hypothalamus, which took care of vital functions. But our neo-cortex has developed, that's man's noble part, it grew, while the snake's did not. That is crucial to understanding labor questions. . . .

There is no memory without emotion. The limbic brain, the seat of memory and emotion, is in continuous interaction and supplies the neo-cortex with its 30 billion neurons. Each of them produces its own electricity and chemicals. As all data come helter-skelter and I cannot remember them all, my neurons set out to work. . . . We retain what corresponds to our desires, our inclinations. Then it turns into reflection and action. . . . Adrenalin and cathecolamines are spread out to the nerve cells through electrical impulses and stimulate them, and all these impulses and data are going to the nerve cells—if some action has been decided on.

Now, an action can be undertaken, but not completed. Say, someone graduates as an engineer from the École Polytechnique, and he gets a top job at a steel mill, say, in Longwy. But then, all his projects fall by the wayside: no credits, no scientific research, no technological research, no proposals get approved. And thus it goes for a year, for 5 years, for 10 years, for 15 years. The action is at an end, there has been no realization. He wanted to develop things, and there is a feeling of failure. . . .

What happens then? The nerve cells do not receive orders, but they set out to work, they are set into motion: feelings of inhibition, which is a pathological state. Electrical impulses do arrive, in disorderly fashion. The love of risk, of enterprising, of effort goes fallow. . . . What emerges is an ulcer, eczema, angina pectoris, heart troubles, allergies. . . . In steel, we face a genuine SOS of the human brain.

EIR: People are being forced into early retirement. . . .
Delivré: Of course, early retirement means some pay, not the end of any welfare. But this is not the problem! Working is not just earning a living, it is reaching a true balance, a psycho-physical balance, by contributing to collective labor, the collective design through one's creative imagination and mentation. Man does not need to be sent into hibernation, to be sheltered.

EIR: What is the impact of the steel crisis?
Delivré: In the eight years that I have been here, 25% of the cases of fatigue were linked to the job itself—job shift, lack of sleep, strenuous work. The other 75% were indirectly linked to the job: relations with colleagues, with superiors, feelings of uselessness and boredom, anguish, fear of being shifted, fear that the mill will close down, family trouble. . . . Men feel useless, they do not realize themselves: inhibition as I described it, action is not completed.

EIR: What, for instance, is the impact of forced retirement, a disguised form of layoff?
Delivré: In 1977, a first steel plan was started. White-collar staff had to leave at 56 years and 8 months of age, and workers at 54. In 1979, a second plan was started: everyone had to leave at 50. That's what I told the TV a few days ago, when they interviewed me for the 8 p.m. news. . . . We have lost people young enough to be excellent technicians, and people old enough to have gathered that precious experience that no university will give you about the world and about people. We have created an epidemic of moral old age, which is the most contagious of all.

In 1977, I remember how many workers came to me and said, "Look at me, Doctor, do I look like an old man? I am still able to work!" But today, at 46 or 47, they tell me "Doctor, at my age, I could not adjust and adapt to a new job." Retirement equals old age. Earlier, steel people retired at 65, that was too late given the work they were doing. . . . But now, it's different.

EIR: What symptoms do you encounter among laid-off or retired workers?
Delivré: Dysfuntion of impulses, disorderly motion, a flow of cathecolamines, of histamines—this produces allergies—the nerve cells get stimulated. The stomach is set into motion, its wall gets inflamed: gastritis. The walls of the bile duct, of the gall bladder get a cholecyst, which leads to a bladder stone, a lithiasis. The blood vessels, the veins, the arteries

expand and contract, they get spasms. If you are 50, the walls are tired, they are not as flexible as if you were 20, they are becoming fibrous. If the arteries get spasms, less blood comes to the heart; the heart is a muscle that needs blood to work; in that case, necrosis affects parts of the heart: coronary infarction [heart attack]. Psychosomatic disorder leads to true injury. . . . Then there are depressions, nervous breakdowns, situational depressions, reacting to a shock; neurotic depressions: someone had a neurotic pattern, but realized himself on the job; the job is gone, only neurosis remains. Melancholy, depression.

EIR: What is this region going to do now?
Delivré: I don't know. M. Fabius comes to Lorraine tomorrow . . . he says that new industries will settle here . . . that's all nice, but they're panicked, the government is in a bind. Fabius promises to settle in two weeks a problem which has existed for 20 years! It is as though I had misdiagnosed a patient for 20 years, and all of a sudden, he shows all the symptoms of an acute heart condition. So I'll bombard him with 5 or 10 different medicines, to do this, to do that, and each will counteract the other. . . . You see, the extraordinary wealth of the steel industry is its men. I know them, I have lived with them for the past eight years, I have seen them on the job, at night, and by daytime. Computers are fine. I'm all for computers. But man's brain develops its own programs, not computers. Man's creative mind is everything. And there is no separation between a manual and an intellectual worker. Take one single piece away from the computer and it won't work. Take 1,000 neurons from a brain, the rest of them will take up the job.

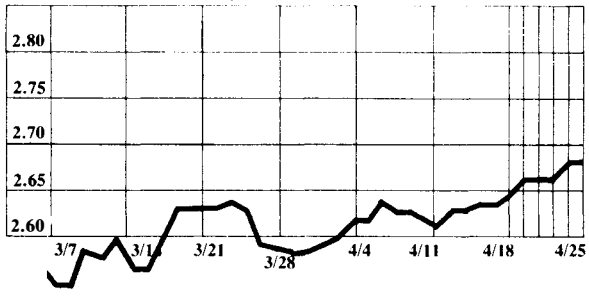
EIR: So what is to be done?
Delivré: What I am telling you now concretizes what was a mere intuition 30 years ago on the part of the young medical doctor-I was at [the battle of] Dien Bien Phu in Vietnam, in 1954—30 years this month. I was a lieutenant in a combat unit, and I had nothing to treat my men with: all the medicine had landed on the other side. I could only give them words of solace. And then I swore to myself, in this atmosphere of desperate fighting, that I would never look indifferently upon unnecessary death. And unemployment is moral death, just as they were physical deaths in Tonkin 30 years ago.

I apologize for my emotional tone, but I am revolted when anyone thinks that men are useless. A "golden handshake?" Thirty years ago I saw people with a perforated lung hit point-blank by a bullet, in the middle of the mud and dirty water we all drank, with leeches stuck on the wound, in the lung, which I had to burn with a cigarette butt—and some of them recovered! They would not have recovered in the best-equipped hospital in peacetime. But they wanted to live. So look again at the progress in neurobiology . . . today's events must help us raise questions. Man must not be subject to such things. A new conception of labor is due.

Currency Rates

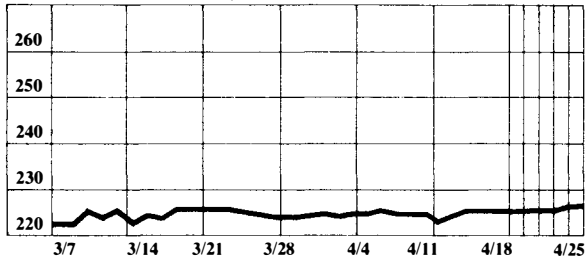
The dollar in deutschemarks

New York late afternoon fixing



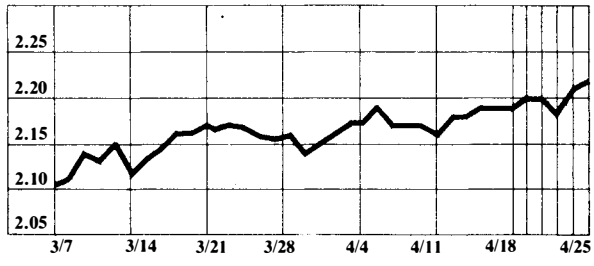
The dollar in yen

New York late afternoon fixing



The dollar in Swiss francs

New York late afternoon fixing



The British pound in dollars

New York late afternoon fixing